

Agricultural Research Update

Study initiated

IFPRI-BRAC joint study on seed, fertilizer and innovation in Bangladesh

This IFPRI-BRAC joint study will be an in-depth analysis of the seed, fertilizer and agricultural inputs industry in Bangladesh. Specific emphasis will be given to the country's major cereal crop (rice) and secondary cereal crop (wheat and maize), the regions in which these crops are cultivated, and the type of farmers and farming systems that stand to benefit (or lose) from technological advances introduced by the public and private sectors.

Nutrition Research Update

Trial of fortified rice begins

An MOU has been signed between BRAC and University of Washington to conduct studies on ultra rice in Bangladesh supported by PATH. Ultra rice is low-cost fortified rice which, when blended with normal rice, cooked and eaten, improves micronutrient deficiencies. BRAC and University of Washington will jointly conduct an acceptability trial of ultra rice in Bangladesh. The study is expected to begin soon. It is hoped that the study findings will be useful to scale up ultra rice to address micronutrient deficiencies in the country.

Ongoing studies

Quick assessment of Alive and Thrive (A&T) activities: changes in process and impact indicators in one year

This study has been initiated to evaluate the impact of the intervention on infant and young child feeding (IYCF), delivered under Alive and Thrive project of BRAC.



RED dissemination seminar on 'Eradicating extreme poverty in Bangladesh - national strategies and activities' was held on 08 August 2011 in Dhaka. Guests on the podium are (L-R) Mr. Arifur Rahman, adviser, DFID, Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to the caretaker government, Dr. Mahabub Hossain, executive director, BRAC, Prof. WMH Jain, director, RED, and Prof. Sarder Aminul Islam, department of sociology, University of Dhaka.

Seminar on Extreme Poverty Eradication Held

Nayma Qayum and Mrinmoy Samadder of RED presented research findings on national strategies and activities on eradicating extreme poverty in Bangladesh on 08 August 2011 at BRAC Centre, Dhaka. They reviewed national policies and programmes, non-government development activities, and the role played by media in eradicating extreme poverty. "The strengthening of local government is the key to cutting poverty," said the chief guest Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser of the caretaker government of Bangladesh. "Bangladesh cannot get rid of poverty with a highly centralized government in place," he added. Academics, journalists, NGO activists and representatives of donor agencies attended among others. Dr. Mahabub Hossain chaired the seminar.

Data collection is going on. The findings will be used for further improvement of the programme.

Case study: qualitative assessment of A&T incentive package in Shahjahanpur, Bogra

A case study has been conducted to assess the effectiveness of the incentive package to be introduced for *Shasthya Shebikas* and *Pusti Kormis* in existing A&T *upazilas*. This will help understand the process, dynamics, and perspectives of the various players and stakeholders involved and contextualize the findings of the above evaluation. Data analysis is underway.

Performance incentives to *Shasthya Shebikas* and *Pusti Kormis* for facilitating IYCF practices among rural women

This qualitative study aims to explore the perceptions of the health workers [*Shasthya Shebikas* (SS) and *Pusti Kormis* (PK)] about future incentive package as well as the motivational factors for facilitating IYCF practices. Preliminary results show that due to heavy workload SSs are demoralized and



Nayma Qayum and Mrinmoy Samadder of RED are presenting the research findings

the price hike in market has made their life difficult to involve themselves in a non-monetary voluntary work. The draft report is underway.

The effect of micronutrient powder and hand hygiene on linear growth faltering, iron deficiency anaemia and calcium deficiency among Bangladeshi infants

In collaboration with Hospital for Sick Children (Canada) BRAC is conducting a study to explore the relative effect of alternative intervention package (water-based hand disinfectant and home

fortification with multiple-micronutrient powder plus nutrition education) to prevent linear growth faltering and infectious diseases among low birth weight infants in Bangladesh. Started in 2009 both implementation and assessment are going on. This trial will provide important information on the factors associated with linear growth faltering and will further elucidate the biological, behavioural and environmental factors that influence the malnutrition and infection cycle in early infancy.

Facilitating IYCF practices among rural women: benchmarking baseline status in two A&T upazilas

A baseline survey in two upazilas under A&T programme has been conducted to assess the status of specific performance indicators for all S5s and PKs. The report is under preparation

Studies completed

Perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of adolescent girls and mothers regarding IYCF in Bangladesh: the issue of improving infant nutrition

In collaboration with the University of Toronto (Canada) this study was conducted to explore the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding IYCF practice among rural adolescent girls and mothers. Initial results reveal that knowledge of optimal IYCF practices is not adequate among adolescent girls. All the adolescent girls and mothers know that babies need to be fed only breast milk up to 6 months of age, but other liquid is fine as well. Notions of insufficient or 'spoiled' breast milk, gender biases in feeding, and generational shifts in feeding practices were commonly reported.

Validating a revisited food security measurement tool used in Food Security and Nutrition Surveillance Project

This study aimed to highlight the information on consumption pattern and dietary diversity of the households in Bangladesh. RED conducted this study using a sub-sample of the Food Security and Nutrition Surveillance Project (FSNSP) in 2010. The draft report shows that cereals (mainly rice), vegetables (both leafy and non-leafy), potato, and fish constituted the main food items consumed in the households. None took diet which combined all the eight food groups.

Anthropometry, dietary and depression assessment of BRAC Aarong and Ayesha Abed Foundation's (AAF) workers in Bangladesh

Focusing on the women employees of BRAC Aarong and AAF, RED conducted a study to assess their anthropometry, dietary consumption pattern as well as depression

level. The study was done for developing a potential strategy to improve their current situation and socioeconomic status. A draft report has been prepared.

Health Research Update

Ongoing studies

Treatment of tuberculosis in hard-to-reach areas: how well are we doing?

A survey was conducted in July 2011 to explore the knowledge, attitudes and practices, and health-seeking behaviour of tuberculosis (TB) suspects and general people regarding TB in hard-to-reach areas. The information was compared with the data for other areas. The study also explored the constraints to service utilization, challenges faced by the *Shasthya Shebikas* in implementing the programme, etc. Data are being analyzed

Treatment compliance for vivax and falciparum malaria in endemic areas

BRAC Health Programme has been implementing malaria control and prevention activities in 13 endemic districts under National Malaria Control Programme since 2007. No study on treatment compliance has been done in Bangladesh. This study aims to identify the factors associated with compliance (or non-compliance) and help in better management of malaria. Data were collected from all patients who were registered with six BRAC upazila offices in the preceding six months and received anti-malarial drugs. The draft report is expected by October 2011.

Environmental Research Update

Studies completed

Impact of BRAC water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme on the prevalence of water-related diseases in Bangladesh

The study findings reveal that the prevalence of water-related diseases significantly reduced from 9.4% in baseline (2006) to 7.1% in midline (2009) and 2.3% in end line (2011) ($p < .001$). Under-five children were more likely to have inflicted with water-related diseases across the surveys. Users of safe water for bathing were less likely to have water-related diseases. Higher score on hand-washing by soap/ash at critical times was associated with reduced prevalence of water-related diseases as revealed from end line survey. Effective intervention on safe water, sanitation and hygiene practice has potential to reduce water-related disease burden in the community.

Impact of BRAC WASH programme on water, sanitation and hygiene practices in educational institutions of Bangladesh

Analysis shows that tubewell was found to be the source of drinking water in all the study institutions. Overall, availability of sanitary latrines in educational institutions increased to 98% in end line from 91% in baseline. It was also found that the use of sanitary latrine among the students and teachers increased significantly in the end line survey compared to baseline. The number of educational institutions having had installed separate latrines for boy and girl students significantly increased from 46% in baseline to 60% in end line. The absenteeism of girl students during menstruation was reported to reduce from 44% in baseline to 33% in end line survey. Improved water, sanitation and hygiene situation was found in educational institutions at end line survey.

New Research Unit Established



RED has established a new Impact Assessment Research Unit to carry out impact assessment of different BRAC programmes on the society at large and the programme participants

in particular. Andrew Jenkins will lead this unit as coordinator. He has joined RED on 1st August 2011. He has been in BRAC Donor Liaison Office since October 2009, and also previously worked in BRAC during 1977-80. Welcome Andrew.

Yasuyuki Sawada Joins RED



Dr. Yasuyuki Sawada, associate professor of economics, University of Tokyo, Japan has joined RED as a visiting scholar from October 2011 for one year on sabbatical leave. He will conduct

research on poverty dynamics in Bangladesh. Welcome Yasuyuki.

Capacity Development

Sharin Shajahan Naomi has obtained masters of arts in human rights from Curtin University under Australian Leadership Award 2010. Congratulations to Naomi.

Rumana Ali got masters in women and gender studies under a joint degree programme of University of Lodz, Poland and University of Oviedo, Spain. Congratulations to Rumana.

Symposium Attended

Professor Rezaul Karim, adviser, RED attended a symposium on 'Improving maternal and child nutrition in Bangladesh' as a special guest and delivered a talk on 29 September 2011. His presentation included, among others, the nutrition situation in Bangladesh and HarvestPlus activities in Bangladesh. He argued for the government to adopt biofortification as a crop breeding policy in the country. The symposium was organized by Nestle Nutrition Institute and the government of Bangladesh.



Prof. Mark Bray gave a seminar on 'Comparative education research: approaches and methods' at BRAC Centre Inn, Dhaka on 10 August 2011. Others sitting on the podium are (L-R) Mr. Samir Ranjan Nath, programme head, Educational Research Unit, RED, Dr. Mahabub Hossain, executive director, BRAC, Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, senior adviser, BU-IED, and Dr. Shahjahan Mia Tapan, former professor of Institute of Education Research, Dhaka University. Prof. Bray is a Chair Professor in the Comparative Education Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong. Educationists, researchers and representatives from national and international development organizations attended the seminar. RED has organized the seminar and Dr. Mahabub Hossain chaired.

Recent Publications

Internal publication

Research monograph series

Ahmad A and Haque I.

Economic and social analysis of primary education in Bangladesh: a study of BRAC interventions and mainstream schools. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. 67p. (Research monograph series no. 48)



Alim MA and Rafi M. An

assessment of HRLE *shebika* with a focus on their effectiveness. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. 50p. (Research monograph series no. 47)



Bhattacharjee A and Das NC.

Profile of the adolescent girls: findings from the baseline survey for social and financial empowerment of adolescents (SoFEA) programme. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. 37p. (Research monograph series no. 46)



Reichenbach L and Shimul SN.

Sustaining health: the role of BRAC's community health volunteers in Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Uganda. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. xvi, 94p. (Research monograph series no. 49)



RED Working paper series

Banu M, Nasreen HE, Nahar S.

Factors affecting the performance of delivery centre. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. viii, 24p. (RED working paper no. 25)



Ghosh SC, Rahman ANMM,

Raza WA. Agricultural practice and its relation to poverty and food security in selected river basins in Bangladesh: a situation analysis. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. vi, 20p. (RED working paper no. 24)



Leppard M, Rashid S, Rahman A, Akhter M, Nasreen HE.

Voice and accountability: the role of maternal, neonatal and child health committee. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. vii, 30p. (RED working paper no. 26)



CFPR Working paper series

Das NC and Shams R. Asset

transfer programme for the ultra poor: a randomized control trial evaluation. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. 29p. (CFPR working paper no. 22)



Nirjash

Nirjash, vol. 22, August 2011. Dhaka: BRAC, 2011. 68p



External publication

Journal articles

Lemaire M, Islam QS, Shen H, Khan MA, Parveen M, Abedin F, Haseen F, Hyder Z, Cook RJ, Zlotkin SH. Iron-containing micronutrient powder provided to children with moderate-to-severe malnutrition increases hemoglobin concentrations but not the risk of infectious morbidity: a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, noninferiority safety trial. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2011;94(2):585-93.

Nasreen HE, Nahar S, Mamun MA, Afsana K, Byass P. Oral misoprostol for preventing postpartum haemorrhage in home births in rural Bangladesh: how effective is it? *Global Health Action* 2011;4:7017- DOI: 10.3402/gha.v4i0.7017

Book

Akter A. Household level vulnerability to sea-level rise in Bangladesh: risks, perceptions and adaptation in the coastal areas. Saarbrücken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2011. 56p

Newspaper articles

Ahmed SM. Why doctors do not go to villages (In Bangla). *Samakal* 02 Oct 2011.

Hossain S. It is difficult for doctors to go to villages (In Bangla). *Banik Barta* 14 Sep 2011.

Nath SR. Private tutoring. *Daily Star* 21 Aug 2011.

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Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
Phone: 9881265, 8824180-7 (PABX)
Website: www.brac.net/research

