

## A Workshop on Labor Markets and Growth held



Swiss Intercooperation BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University in collaboration with RAND Corporation (USA) and University of Sussex (UK) organized a workshop on Labor Markets and Growth on 2 March 2015 at the BRAC Centre Inn auditorium, Dhaka.

Mr. Md. Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, ndc, Secretary, Ministry of Industry of Government of Bangladesh attended the event as the Chief Guest while Professor Syed Saad Andaleeb, Vice Chancellor of BRAC University and Mr. Arastoo Khan, Member of Planning Commission were present as Special Guests. Executive Director of BIGD, Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman chaired the workshop.



*Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Head of Research, BIGD sharing his opinion (Right)*

The workshop was an initial event for two collaborative projects of BIGD funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The projects aim to study the formal and informal labor market nexus and growth, and the effects of disinvestment in public sector enterprises in countries in South-East Asia, including Bangladesh. The workshop solicited inputs from academics, researchers and policy-makers to shape the direction of the research so that it can be most useful and relevant to policy-makers and others concerned with labor markets and industrial policy. The Research team includes researchers Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Head of Research, BIGD and Dr. Farzana Munshi, Associate Professor, Department of Economic and Social Sciences, BRAC University; Dr. Krishna Kumar,

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Dr. Shanthi Nataraj and Dr. Italo Gutierrez from RAND (USA); and Dr. Amalavoyal Chari from the University of Sussex.

BIGD Executive Director Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman chaired the workshop.

Prof. M. A. Sattar Mandal from Bangladesh Agricultural University, Prof. Mustafizur Rahman from CPD, Prof. Selim Raihan from Dhaka University, Ms. Simeen Mahmud from BIGD, Dr. Rushidan Islam Rahman from BIDS, Dr. Kazi Ali Toufique from BIDS and Dr. Nazneen Ahmed from BIDS attended the workshop as panellists.



*Distinguished participants at the workshop*

Among others, the workshop was attended by leading academics, scholars, experts, civil society members and policy makers from different public, private, corporate organisations and representatives from trade unions.

### Nepal's Ambassador visit to MAGD

His Excellency Mr. Hari Kumar Shrestha, Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh, visited MA in Governance and Development (MAGD) programme of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University at the BRAC CDM in Savar, Dhaka on 28 March 2015. Dr. Rashed Uz Zaman, Acting Academic Coordinator and Ekram Hossain, Communications Manager of BIGD welcomed the guests at the BRAC Centre for Development Management (CDM) premises.



### *Professor Rashed Zaman (Right) handed over a crest to His Excellency (Center)*

To commemorate his visit BIGD accorded a reception programme at the BRAC CDM in presence of MAGD students. Mr. Ekram Hossain introduced the ambassador to the students, who was accompanied by Mrs. Shakuntala Shrestha and Mr. Nirmal Prasad Bhattarai, the Third Secretary of the Embassy. Dr. Rashed Uz Zaman gave an introduction of BRAC University and the Institute through a presentation. Mr. Khan Md. Nurul Amin and Mr. Nay Lin, students of MAGD and public servant of Bangladesh and Myanmar respectively, shared their expectations and experience of their study.

In response to the reception H.E. Mr. Shrestha mentioned that the students of MAGD are the future leaders and the role model of bureaucracy in the respective countries. And the students need to be prepared to work in the rural areas where modern facilities are not available and take challenges and hardship. He proposed to the BIGD to arrange exchange programme between Nepal and Bangladesh. H.E. Mr. Shrestha also thanked the institute for arranging the reception in honour to him. Mr. Shrestha also answered to a number of questions of the students about regional politics, economic growth and bilateral issues.



A video documentary film was screened at the starting of the reception as an Introduction to BRAC and BRAC University.

All 22 students of MAGD attended the programme. Of them, 20 are from Bangladesh and 2 are from Myanmar Government Cadre Service. At the end of his day-long visit, Mr. Shrestha goes around the BRAC University Savar campus to see the arrangements and facilities. He also talked to a group of residential students and staff of the campus. Mr. Rehan Ahmed, Assistant Campus Superintendent of BRAC University Savar campus facilitated the visit at the residential campus.

### **Discussion on “Effectiveness of Policy Advocacy: Lessons Learnt”**

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)\*, BRAC University and BRAC Advocacy for Social Change Unit arranged a Discussion on “Effectiveness of Policy Advocacy: Lessons Learnt” on Thursday, 12 March, 2015 at 10.15 am at the BRAC Centre Inn Auditorium, BRAC Centre.

Dr. Mahmuda Khatun, Professor, Dept. of Sociology and Mr. Hasan A. Shafie, Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, both of University of Dhaka; Mr. Tanim Ahmed, Special Correspondent, Dhaka Tribune and Afsan Chowdhury, Senior Advisor-Communications, BRAC (On behalf of Ms. Mahrukh Mohiuddin) presented four papers on **Policy Advocacy and Gender; Policy Advocacy and Environment; Policy Advocacy and Anti-corruption** and **Policy Advocacy and Health** respectively.



*Maheen Sultan, Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Afsan Chowdhury, Dr. Abdul Matin, Manzoor Hasan, Ariful Alam (left to right) seen at the discussion*

Maheen Sultan, Lead Researcher, BIGD; Dr. Abdul Matin, Secretary, Bangladesh Paribesh Andalon; Barrister Manzoor Hasan, Executive Director, South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies (SAILS) and Institutional Advisor, BIGD; and Dr. Md. Ariful Alam, Coordinator, Health, Nutrition and Population Programme, BRAC discussed on the papers.



*Participants at the Discussion*

Experts of relevant field, eminent professionals and representatives from various academic and research institutions, government, NGOs, donor agencies, international organizations; civil society members, politicians and senior journalists also attended the programme.

### CIPS Exam on March 2015

CIPS exam on March 2015 was held at BIGD, BRAC University from March 9<sup>th</sup> to March 11<sup>th</sup>. 29 participants from different government organizations have participated in the exam. Including that, 22 participants from private sector have attended the exam at BIGD, BRACU. BIGD, BRAC University is the only exam center of CIPS in Bangladesh and conducted these three day long examination. Regular classes of Cohort# 5 were held as usual.

### BIGD Executive Director's Activities

Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Executive Director of BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) held several meetings in March 2015 with number of distinguished personalities such as Ministers, prominent academics and researchers regarding the research collaboration and other relevant issues of BIGD. Among others, Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman had meeting with Cabinet Secretary, Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and discussed on "Policy engagement and research initiative" of International growth Center (IGC). Dr. Rahman also had meeting with Dr. Bjorn Lomborg, President of the Copenhagen Consensus Center, Dr. Kazi Iqbal, Mr. Faqru Huq of Planning Commission regarding on a training of UNDP, Shamsul Alam, Member-GED, Planning Commission on "Policy engagement and research initiative" of International growth Center (IGC) and Dr. Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, MP. He also met with the Secretary of Ministry of Finance and ERD Secretary and had a discussion on MAGD funding.

Dr. Rahman had a meeting with Mr. Rustam Pulatov, Assistant Country Director of UNDP at BIGD to discuss about one of our new initiatives under political governance portfolio called Areas for Research, Engagement and National Agendas (ARENA). He also met with Stuart David, Economist of DFID to discuss the activities which IGC have been undertaking in terms of research and policy engagement since IGC last March 2014, and Prof. Chitra and Farida Khan of University of Wisconsin-Parkside and Mr. Shama Prasad, Chief Engineer, LGED.

Dr. Rahman had also joined a Consortium plans meeting on local governance and development of Sharique and a working lunch in honor of Kaspar Grossenbacher, new Country Director of Helvetas Intercooperation-Bangladesh, Mr. Thirtha Sarathi Sikder and Ms Lilia Tverdun, Director, Local Governance Programme SHARIQUE HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation. Dr. Rahman had also a meeting with Mr. Barry Spergel, KfW's Consultant and Mr. Mehedi Ahsan, Sector Specialist for Resilient Cities, KfW Development Bank and had a discussion on a upcoming Project on Climate Change Adaptation and Climate Induced Migration in Bangladesh.

#### **Op-Eds:**

The Daily New Age: [The beleaguered second city](#) by Mr. Sarwar Jahan Chowdhury, Head of Operations, BIGD on 17 March, 2015.

The Daily Star: [Local Government – another Casualty of Deadlock](#) by Tofail Ahmed on 19 March, 2015