



October 2017

People's migrations towards urban settlement in search of a better livelihood is increasing day by day. Every year more than 5 lakh people come to live in the Dhaka city from all over the country. While the population of the city is increasing every day, one in every three of its inhabitants live in the slums, deprived of basic facilities. In this context, proper housing for the people living in urban poverty has become a prerequisite to achieve sustainable development goal or SDG-11 (pertaining to shelter and settlement), and to ensure planned urbanisation and continued economic progress of the country.

Experts and public representatives expressed these views at a programme titled "National Convention on Housing Finance for People Living in Urban Poverty" held on October 15, 2017 at the city. The Urban Development Programme of BRAC, in partnership with the National Housing Authority (NHA), Urban Development Directorate (UDD), Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) and BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) organised the convention.

Chief Guest of the convention Engineer Mosharraf Hossain MP, Minister, Ministry of Housing and Public Works said, 81 per cent of houses of the country are in the rural areas and 80 per cent of these are of low quality. The country is losing 235 hectares of farmland every day, which is transformed for making residence. He told that the government has already formulated a law titled "Urban and Regional Planning Act, 2016" for a planned



Proper housing for the people living in urban poverty is a prerequisite to achieve SDG-11

Experts say at the National Housing Convention

housing system not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas. "Under the law, rural people will have to take permission from union parishad chairman or municipality mayor or upazila nirbahi officer for constructing house," he added.

Engr. Mosharraf also said the government has a plan to construct about 10,000 apartments for the slum people to ensure their basic needs. The minister also called for making a planned housing system in the both urban and rural areas to stop housing on arable lands. To solve the problem, he suggested that BRAC may collaborate with the government in this initiative.

Chaired by BRAC's Senior Director for Strategy, Communications and Empowerment Dr. Asif Saleh, the event was also attended by Secretary of the Housing and Public Works Ministry Md. Shahid Ullah Khandaker, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Mr. Sayeed Khokon,

Rajshahi City Mayor Mr. Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, Barisal City Mayor Mr. Ahsan Habib Kamal, Bangladesh Institute of Planners General Secretary Prof. Dr. Md Akhtar Mahmud, BIGD Executive Director Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, MAB President Mr. Alhaj Md. Abdul Baten, Urban Development Directorate Director Dr. Khurshid Jabin Hossain Toufiq, and National Housing Authority Chairman and Additional Secretary Mr. Khandakar Akhtaruzzaman.

The aim of the convention was to establish multi-level partnerships for pro-poor city planning and housing financing to achieve the targets of National Housing Policy and SDG-11. A key note and three evidence-based housing models: BRAC Jhenaidah community-led housing model, UNDP Sirajganj housing model and NHA low-income housing model were presented at the convention.

The speakers focused on stronger collaboration

between the government and non-governmental agencies and involving mayors, other public representatives and relevant actors to promote urban planning facilitating the people living in urban poverty and providing them with housing loan services.

Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Head Urban, Climate Change and Environment (UCCE) cluster of BIGD also attended the event as a panel discussant on the plenary session titled Partnership and Collaboration on Housing Finance. Advocate Azmat Ullah Khan, Adviser, Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) presented the keynote paper, where Mohammad Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, Mayor, Rajshahi City Corporation chaired the session.

Around 75 mayors including five city mayors attended the event. The 300 guests included representatives and officials from UNDP, Policy makers, Government and Non-Government stakeholders.

Certificate Ceremony of 1st Batch Graduates of the Academy of Work (AoW) Programme

The Certificates awarding ceremony of the first batch of the Academy of Work (AoW), a residential and academic programme of trade unionists, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, was held on October 28, 2017 in the capital. The AoW is a joint collaboration of Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES), a non-profit German foundation funded by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) which endeavors to uphold the causes of working people and trade unions of Bangladesh. In an attempt to create an all-inclusive, constructive representation of workers' interests, a more effective social dialogue and a discussion about responsibilities along the global supply chain, the AoW concluded with this event after three months of residential training sessions.

The first cohort of AoW consisted of sixteen mid-level, active trade unionists from industries such as the ready made garments, construction, transport, as well as government service sectors like postal services and telecommunications.

The event was

attended by former labour and employment Secretary Mr. Mikail Shipar as the chief guest, who handed over certificates to the successful fellows. The programme was also attended by Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Joint-coordinator of Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) and Mr. Amirul Haque Amin, former Chairman of IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC) and Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed, member of Advisory Council of BILS.

Mr. Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, Executive Director of BILS was present at the event as a moderator while Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Executive Director of BIGD,





BRAC University and Ms. Franziska Korn, Resident Representative of FES Bangladesh spoke on the occasion.

Dr. Rahman emphasized on upgrading the worker - employer - policymakers relationship and skills development of trade union leaders in the ceremony. Congratulating all 16 graduates for successfully completing the course he said 'BIGD is proud to be a part of such an important and timely initiative'. He also emphasized that upgrading the worker-employer relationship will critically determine whether Bangladesh can continue to achieve the extraordinary success of the last few decades.

Through six thought provoking modules on subjects such as: (i) Labour policies, (ii) Globalization and trade, (iii) Supply chain and workers' rights, (iv) Health and safety, (v) Project management and (vi) Leadership skills, this three-month training course not only intended to strengthen the capacity of the workers'

leaders but also to ensure that the outcome of the training benefits the workers and ultimately the nation.

Addressing in the event Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow BIGD and one of the resource person of AoW said, the program will ultimately help almost 2 million workers who join Bangladesh's labour force each year to be more aware of their rights, position in the global supply chain and roles and responsibilities of international brands. In this regard he emphasized the important role of the graduates of the 1st batch to disseminate their acquired knowledge among others.

Guest speakers from the field of academia, as well as from national and international organisations also attended and shared their valuable experiences and insights with the participants at the ceremony.

Next batch of this training is expected to commence from early 2018.

BIGD's Researchers attended the launching of DIMAPPP



Dr. Mirza M. Hassan, Adjunct Fellow; Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow; Ms. Syeda Salina Aziz, Senior Research Associate and Ms. Kaneta Zillur, Research Associate of BIGD attended the launching ceremony of Digitising Implementation Monitoring and Public Procurement Project (DIMAPPP), under which BIGD will also be involved as a social accountability consultant. The Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) under the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Ministry

of Planning launched the new project at a city hotel on October 25, 2017. The primary objective of the project is to improve the overall management of public procurement in the country. With support from World Bank, the CPTU will implement the project over a period of five years from July 2017 to June 2022.

Finance Minister Mr. AMA Muhith was present at the launching as Chief Guest, while it was chaired by Planning Minister Mr. AHM Mustafa Kamal. World Bank Country Director Mr. Qimiao Fan, and Director, Governance Global practice, Mr. Vinay Sharma, spoke as Special Guests.

IDRC's Monitoring Visit to BIGD

Dr. Samar Verma, Senior Programme Specialist of International Development Research Centre (IDRC) visited BIGD, BRAC University on 25 October, 2017. Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman welcomed him at BIGD and discussed vision, mission, objectives, targeted outputs and utilization of funds in Phase II. He also expressed sincere appreciation to IDRC for the grant provided to BIGD over last three years (under the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) phase II) which has enabled so many of the accomplishments including two annual flagship publications of BIGD to be sustained by the IDRC grant.

BIGD is receiving core funding from TTI as one of the two think tanks in Bangladesh.

Later, Dr. Verma participated in a number of meetings with Research team, Communications team and Finance, Administration, IT & HR team. Different teams made separate presentations on the responsibilities, activities, the ways of works, achievements, and the targets/plans of each team to be achieved in 2018 and further on.



Researcher's other activities

- Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow of BIGD

- attended a meeting with Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) on October 4, 2017 and had discussion on the collaboration among PKSF, BRAC-UDP and BIGD on research related to urban issues. Among others Dr. AKM Nuruzzaman, Deputy General Manager, PKSF and Ms Hasina Musrofa, Head, BRAC UDP attended the meeting.

- attended a meeting with Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) on October 4, 2017 and have discussion on the collaboration among MAB, BRAC-UDP and BIGD on issues related to Urban Housing financing. Among others Mr. Md. Abdul Baten, President, and Advocate Azmat Ullah Khan, Advise of MAB, and Ms Hasina Musrofa attended the meeting.

- attended a meeting with AGA Khan Foundation regarding MoU signing between BIGD and AGA KHAN Foundation. The meeting discussed about starting online training course related to public policy. Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, ED, BIGD; Mr. Salimah Kassam, Chief Executive Officer, AGA Khan Foundation; Mr. Sujeet Sarker, Consultant AGA Khan Foundation also attended the meeting.

- Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow, CGST, BIGD attended the International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH) 11th World Congress on Adolescent Health conference, held on 27-29th October 2017 in New Delhi. The conference focused on adolescent health, mental health and well-being; gendered approach to adolescent health; challenges and opportunities that exist globally in relation to promoting adolescent health and well-being; programs and initiatives targeting adolescent health: lessons learned, priorities, promotion of investment in the field; and showcasing innovative findings and strategies on the topics mentioned, from around the world. It showcased findings of researches from around the globe focusing on promotion of adolescent health and well-being, the challenges and opportunities in the regard, evidence on what works and what doesn't, which exist globally including LMICs and SAARC region. Maheen Sultan had a poster presentation on "Insights into Adolescent Psychosocial Well-being in Selected Urban Communities in Bangladesh" based on the GAGE formative qualitative research carried out by JPGSPH and BIGD in partnership with ODI.

- Ms. Lopita Huq, Research Fellow and Ms. Sahida Khondaker, Research Associate of BIGD attended the National Consultation on Anti-Sexual Policy organized by Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB) on 29 October 2017, where AAB shared the findings from their review of the anti-sexual harassment policy and relevant laws in 2016 in Bangladesh as a part of their Safe City for Women Campaign.

- Ms. Simeen Mahmud, Head, Gender Cluster and Centre for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST) and Ms. Lopita Huq of BIGD attended the Baseline Survey Findings: Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh organized by Population Council held on October 23, 2017 at the city.

- Ms. Sahida Khondaker and Ms. Nuzhat Sharmeen, Research Associate of BIGD attended the Policy Dialogue on Gender Diagnostics and Policy of Social Protection Issues of National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) organized by Cabinet Division, Government of Bangladesh with technical support from the Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Program, held on October 26, 2017 at the city.

Executive Director's Activities

BIGD's ED Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman had several meetings in October 2017 with a number of distinguished personalities such as prominent academics, policy makers and researchers regarding the research collaborations and other relevant issues of BIGD.

Dr. Rahman had meetings with Dr. Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Commissioner, Anti Corruption Commission (ACC); Dr. Shah Md. Ahsan Habib, Director (training) Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management; Dr. Syed Mushfeque Rahman, Additional Commissioner (Customs) and Deputy Project Director, VAT Online Project, National Board of Revenue (NBR); Mr. Mohammad Anisur Rahman, Joint Director, Foreign Exchange Operation Department, Bangladesh Bank; and Mr. Golam Sarwar, Assistant Programmer, NBR regarding a project on Money laundering. He also met with Mr. Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, National Governance Assessment Framework - Expert at UNDP; Professor Dr. Syed Saad Andaleeb, Vice Chancellor, BRAC University; Dr. Zeaul

Alam, Secretary, Cabinet Division regarding a project collaboration; Mr. Robert Gallagher, Visiting Fellow, regarding research programme on urban, Climate Change and Environment; Dr. Malay Kanti Mridha, Associate Professor, BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health regarding research programmes on Nutrition Governance. Dr. Rahman had also attended a Skype meeting on Developing Public Policy course with Dr. Samar Verma, Senior Programme Specialist, International Development Research Centre (IDRC); Professor Ramkumar Mishra, Director, and Dr. P Geeta, Associate Professor, of Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE); and Mr. Mohan Das Monandhar, Chief Advisor of Nepal Administrative Staff College.

He also attended a meeting with Mr. Vinay Sharma, Director, Governance Global Practice, the World Bank (WB) and Dr. Zafrul Islam, Lead Procurement Specialist and Task Team leader, PPRP-II, WB office regarding BIGD's Role in Dimapp project.



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