

EC-UN Joint Initiative Knowledge Fair in Brussels - a success: BASUG Project nominated as Best Practice

The on-going 2-years project of BASUG in Bangladesh “Ensure development for vulnerable and underprivileged women in Bangladesh” was nominated by the European Commission-United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative as one of the Best Practices and was showcased at the first “Migration for Development Knowledge Fair” at the Musee du Cinquantaire in Brussels from 1- 4 December 2008. The project is being funded by Seva Network Foundation and Zwarte Zaken Vrouwen Nederland.

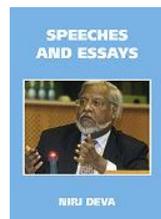
The objective of this project is to increase women’s participation in decision making processes within the family and within the community, in view of working towards a gender balanced society. This project is an attempt to



(BASUG Chair Bikash Chowdhury Barua during his presentation at the EC-UN knowledge fair in Brussels on 3 Nov 08)

utilize the women force for income generating activities, particularly by engaging them in small enterprises. This will increase the level of competency among rural poor women in starting and managing their own small scale business. Consequently, this generates extra income, as well as self confidence and thus ensures women empowerment. The new joint initiative of EC-UN aims to complement the international dialogue on the benefits of migration for development by supporting civil society and local government actors to innovate and scale-up existing small-scale initiatives that make migration work for development. The Knowledge Fair showcased the ongoing Migration and Development initiatives from around the world. Civil society actors from across the world were present to share their knowledge (More See Page 2)

BASUG chief holds meeting with Euro Parliamentarian Deva Nirj



BASUG President Bikash Chowdhury Barua held a meeting with the prominent European Parliamentarian, Mr Deva Nirj at his office at European Parliament building in Brussels on 27 January 2008. The meeting was arranged to apprise Mr Deva Nirj, Chairman of EU-Bangladesh Friendship Group of the activities of BASUG, its present and future plans in relation to migration and development, gender and other issues etc. Mr Deva Nirj is also the Chairman of Friendship Groups for China, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Afghanistan in the European Parliament.

Mr Deva Nirj expressed his satisfaction at the activities of BASUG and assured his support to the organization in future. In reply BASUG chief expressed his thanks and gratitude to Mr Nirj for the assurance. Mr Deva offered Basug chief to become a member of EU-Bangladesh Friendship Society and instructed his office to do the needful in this regard. It may be mentioned here that, Mr Deva Nirj, a Sri Lankan- British MP is the first Asian to be appointed by Queen Elizabeth II in 1985 to the office of Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Greater (Photo right: BASUG President Bikash Chowdhury Barua is seen with Mr Deva Nirj, MEP at his office at European Parliament in Brussels) London – a position which he holds for life. In 1999, Mr Deva became the first Asian-born person to be elected as a Conservative member of the European Parliament for South East England (1999-). He was the candidate to succeed Kofi Annan as Secretary General of the United Nations in 2006. Mr Deva Nirj serves as the chairman of working group of Development committee overseeing of the country strategy papers for Asia, Central Asia and Far East. He is also a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.



EC-UN Joint Initiative Knowledge Fair in Brussels (cont. from Page 1)

and discussed how they had made migration work for development. To support the efforts of local actors a Call for Proposals was launched at the Fair to provide €10-11 million in the form of small grants for concrete development initiatives in sixteen target countries: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Georgia, Moldova, Ecuador, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, The Philippines, Cape Verde, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia. Proposals can be submitted under 4 thematic funding windows: Remittances, Migrants' capacities & skills, Migrants' communities & networks and Rights. The opening day's program was addressed among others by Ms Leila Rispens Noel of Oxfam Novib and member of the Joint Initiative Advisory board, Jacques Barrot, vice-president of the European Commission, Commissioner for Justice, Liberty and Security, Ad Melkert, United Nations under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator, UNDP, and Mr. Stéphane Gallet, Chargé de Mission Département du Développement Solidaire of France.



Four best 'knowledge shares' were selected among the displayed best practices. Two of them were from the Netherlands- Sankofa Foundation (*Special envoy to UN Peter Sutherland (3rd from right) addressing the press conference.*

Photo: BASUG) and Damayang piliipino sa Nederland foundation. The closing ceremony was chaired by Elizabeth Thomas-Hope,

member of the JMDI advisory board. The EU Director General, Mr. Manservisi in his speech underscored the need for recognition of the activities of diaspora and migrant organizations and support to them to achieve their goals. Earlier in Manila at the 2nd GFMD (Global Forum on Migration and Development) a press conference was held disclosing the initiative of the EC-UN on migration and development. The press conference was addressed among others by the UN Under Secretary General, Dr Peter Sutherlands.

2nd GMD in Manila: BASUG joins

A rights-based approach to migration, bring GFMD back within the formal mandate of UN, ratify and reinforce the UN human rights accord for protection of the rights of the migrants and their family members, ensure healthy working atmosphere for the domestic workers, recognise the contribution of the migrants in the development process both in receiving and sending countries, access of appropriate funds to enable the migrant organisations to make effective and meaningful contributions to development process- these are among the key recommendations adopted at the Civil Society dialogue of the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Manila on 27-28 October 2008.



(Photo: Dutch government delegation with the civil society representatives during GFMD)

More than 220 non-state actors from across the world representing civil society organisations, development agencies, professionals, human rights activists, migrant leaders, researchers, workers unions, faith based organisations and individuals came together in the capital city of the Philippines to discuss the issues relating to migration and development and suggest ways to solve the existing problems, millions of migrants, their families have been facing today. The delegates coming from different corners of the world engaged in discussion and debate with a view to ending up with an organised input to the following government level dialogue on 29-30 October 2008 in Manila. The significance of the 2nd GFMD is that Manila conference gave the civil society organisations and their representatives more time and space by allocating two days for the civil society discussion, equal to the time and space allocated for the government level dialogue. *(Cont.....see Page 3)*

2nd GMD in Manila: BASUG joins (from Page 2)

Just before the start of the interface, the Dutch government delegates held a separate and exclusive meeting with the civil society organisations from the Netherlands and wanted to know what they could bring to the following government level dialogue, he added. This gesture of the Dutch government could be a good example for other governments to follow, commented a fellow migrant leader from India who sat next to me. The discussion at the ‘interface’ prompted some government delegates from countries like Norway, France, Greece and UAE to show their eagerness to work with their civil society representatives at national level prior to the next GFMD in Greece.

Delegates from the Netherlands accredited to the 2nd GFMD in Manila were: Sandra Megens (NetEcuNI/DFD), Bikash Chowdhury Barua, (BASUG), Mulu Gashaw (Ennos), Mekka Abdelgabar (Vond), Doris Alfafara (MWPN), Sylvia van den Berg (Ayni Bolovia), Sarah Osman (ADPC), Abdouh Menehbi (EmCeMo), Norberto Hacbang (CFMW), Auke Witkamp (THP), Frans Bouwen (THP), Inanc Kutluer (NMI), William Roos (FNV



Mondiaal) and Leila Rispens-Noel (Oxfam Novib/IAC-GFMD 2008). The Dutch government delegation included: Rob K. Visser, Director General, Ministry of Justice, Han Maurits Schaapveld, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pier de Vries, Policy Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pim M van Vliet, Policy Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brigitte M H Nijland, Policy Advisor, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and Kathleen G Ferrier, Member of the Parliament. *(Photo left: Migrant leaders from the Netherlands at GFMD. From right Bikash, Mekka, Mulu, Sarah, Doris, Sandra and Sylvia)*

BASUG Discussion in Dhaka: “Remittance & Women Empowerment don’t come automatically”

BASUG in collaboration with Seva Network Foundation and INAFI (International Network for Alternative Financial Institutions) Bangladesh organised a discussion on “Remittance & Women: Does it really empower women?” in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 1 November 2008. The discussion held CIRDAP auditorium was participated by different stakeholders including representatives from the development organisations, government agencies, international agencies, print and electronic media, women activists and development workers.

Professor Ms Tasneem Siddiqui of RMMRU of Dhaka University presented the key note paper on “Women Migration from Bangladesh: Present and Future” while Government Secretary of Ministry of Expatriates, Welfare and Overseas Employment, Md Abdul Matin Chowdhury addressed the discussion as the chief guest. The discussion was also addressed among others by Dr Radj Bhondoe, Director of Seva Network Foundation, the Netherlands, Dr Golam Mustofa, President, BAIRA, Dr Ms Rozana Rashid, Consultant, RMMRU, Atiqun Nabi Chowdhury, Executive Director of INAFI Bangladesh, Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of BASUG and Muhammad Jahangir, BASUG Chief Coordinator in Bangladesh and Executive Director of CDC (Communication Development Centre).

(Photo right: Seva Network Foundation Dr Radj Bhondoe addressing the Basug discussion in Dhaka)

In her keynote paper Dr Ms Siddiqui said, relationship between remittance and being empowered do not come automatically. Civil society, migrant worker agency, government and private sector will have to take much targeted program so that woman can use her remittance in a way which will lead to empowerment. When a woman goes abroad, she added, she has to negotiate with many situations in a very vulnerable situation. This negotiating skill in the end empowers her to take decision and upon return she gets more confident in power sharing within the family. Ms Siddiqui further said, woman migration and empowerment have some social costs too. After return woman may not negotiate in certain issues with the family and it will rise in family conflict and also lead to disintegration of the family. Woman participation in international market makes them the main bread earner. So, they are establishing a certain position in the society as the main bread earner.



Secretary of the Ministry of Expatriates, Welfare and Overseas Employment Md Abdul Matin Chowdhury said, empowerment does not belong to the person itself, it also depends on the situation. If we *(See Further Page 4)*

BASUG Discussion in Dhaka (from Page 3)

look around the globe, we see that about 50% of the migrants are female, but in our country it is about 4% to 5% only. One of the main reasons of this, according to him, was lack of education among the female majority. Regarding remittance the chief guest, money does not empower women completely. She needs to know how to utilize the money in a productive way. Remittance that they receive must not be spent on enhancing the beauty of the house. This year in Better Business Forum, we have come out with the idea to incorporate NBR in investing in the power sector,

which will be a better way to utilize the money, the government Secretary said. Migration and remittance still possess a complex issue in our society and we need to emphasize more into it in order to cope a sudden change in the world scenario and saving this industry from a devastating condition.

In his speech as special guest, Director of Seva Network Foundation said, the subject remittance and women is becoming very important. He added, it is needless to mention that remittance plays a very important role in poverty elevation and we as migrant organisations in the western Europe have been lobbying with the



governments to get our ideas included in the official development policy of the country we live in. Bangladeshis are contributing a lot in the development process by sending huge amount of remittance to their country, he added. In his inaugural speech BASUG chair Bikash Chowdhury Barua said, it was their second such discussion in Bangladesh, the first one was a brainstorming meeting with different stakeholders on “violence against women” held in Dhaka in 2007. BASUG he added, as an active migrant organisation in the Netherlands is active in the Netherlands and at European level on different issues including migration and development, remittance and gender. INAFI Bangladesh Executive Director Mr Atiqun Nabi Chowdhury said, empowerment of a woman begins from the moment she stands in the queue for getting her passport. The more she is trained the more her empowerment increases, he added.

From among the participants who took part in the discussion included: Dr. Nazrul Huq, Deputy Director, BCCP, Nasirul Huq, Chairman of Everbright Foundation and Chief Reporter of Daily Suprobhat Bangladesh, Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Executive Director, Children and Earth Welfare Society, Syed Shafiqul Huq, WARBE Development Foundation, Ms. Mahbuba, INAFI Bangladesh, Mahabubul Nabi, Democracy Watch, Shakirul Islam, OCAP, Ms Rokeya Din, Chairman, Anondobag Shishu Palli and Ms Taskina Taskin, Reporter, Anonnya.

Pre-consultation meeting at Dutch Foreign Ministry on 2nd GFMD

In connection with the GFMD in Manila a consultation day on Migration and Development was organised by the Dutch Foreign Ministry at its main building in the Hague on 23 September 2008. Representatives from the migrant organisations, mainstream development organisations and civil society groups took part in three separate workshops organised on the day in order to find out the expectations from the 2nd GFMD in Manila. Director General of the Dutch Foreign Ministry, Jan Henneman gave the inaugural speech. It was also addressed by Director, Migration & Alien Affairs, Drs. Hans-Maurits Schaapveld. A total of 78 representatives took part in the discussion on the consultation day. Among them were representatives from Oxfam Novib, ICCO, COS, BASUG, Favon, DFD, Ayni Bolivia, Cordaid, Africa Diaspora Policy Centre, Amnesty International, MWPN, Habagat, THP, Sankofa, Vital Aid Foundation, IOM and VOND.

BASUG Board meeting on 21 February

The first board meeting of BASUG in 2009 will be held on 21 February at the Mondriaan conference hall in Den Haag. The meeting will discuss different aspects of the organisation including the annual budget, evaluation of the activities, present and future plans etc. The meeting will also discuss the activities of the Remittance project which is now being implemented in Bangladesh and in the Netherlands. Members have been requested to attend the meeting which is scheduled to start at 12:00 noon.

BASUG Secretary joins UN NGO meeting in Paris



BASUG continued to gather professional experience in the field of migration and development by attending and taking active part in international conferences. BASUG Secretary, Sudhier Nannan took part in the UN conference on “Reaffirming Human Rights for all: The Universal Declaration at 60” at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France on 3-5 September 2008. He had the privilege to hold a brief meeting with former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers. *(Picture shows BASUG Secretary, Sudhier Nannan with the former Dutch Prime Minister Mr Lubbers at the UN conference in Paris).*

BASUG-Oxfam Novib-INAFI project on Remittance: MoU signed

BASUG in collaboration with Oxfam Novib has started a one year project in January. The project title is: ‘Institutional Support to enhance formal channel of remittance and investment in financial instruments in Bangladesh and in the Netherlands’. The project activities in Bangladesh are being carried out by BASUG’s local partner, INAFI (International network of Alternative Financial Institution) Bangladesh. The objectives of the project among others are: a) to encourage Bangladeshi migrants to use formal channel of remittance transfers both in country of origin and country of destination, b) conduct financial literacy training both in country of origin and country of destination, c) dissemination of information among the migrants, their family members and potential migrants and d) mapping on demand for various skills in different European countries and updating on current situation of Bangladeshi migrants in the Netherlands and in some parts of Europe BASUG will hold two trainings and one workshop including a Bangladesh Day in the Netherlands during the project period. Work on training module is being done by INAFI Bangladesh and is expected to be ready by end March this year.

INAFI-BASUG sign MoU

In this connection signed a MoU Understanding) at a Bangladesh on 1 auditorium. The MoU by senior government *BASUG & INAFI*



BASUG and INAFI Bangladesh (Memorandum of formal ceremony in Dhaka, November 2008 at Cirdap signing ceremony was attended *(Photo: Signing MoU between*

official, representatives from different national and international development agencies, human rights organisations and media. Bikash Chowdhury Barua, Chair of BASUG and Atiqun Nabi Chowdhury, Executive Director of INAFI Bangladesh signed the MoU. Executive Director of Seva Network Foundation, Drs Radj Bhondoe was present at the MoU signing ceremony.

Dutch experience with Norwegian dev partners shared in Oslo

Norwegian Development Network (Bistandstorget) and Development Fund (Utviklingsfondet) jointly organised a meeting on ‘possibilities and experiences relating to Diasporas, refugees and immigrant organisations in development cooperation’ in Oslo on 25 November 2008. The meeting first of its kind in the history of Norwegian development cooperation was attended by different development stakeholders both from the Norwegian government, mainstream development organisations, diaspora organisations, and representatives from Danish development network Norad. Two speakers from outside Norway were invited to the meeting to share their experiences of their respective countries. One was BASUG President & Vice Chairman of DFD-Diaspora Forum for Development, Bikash Chowdhury Barua and the other was from PRNGO, a development organisation working with DANIDA from Denmark, Ms Marianne Fredsriksen. The meeting held at the office of Development Fund in Oslo was also addressed by Ane Mygland of Norwegian Development Network, Alic M Ennals, Project Coordinator of Development Fund, Akhenaton Oddvat de leon, chairman of Norway Immigrant Council, Gunvor Schanke, Department for Civil Society, Norad, Oddveig Nygard of Association of NGOs in Norway, Alfredo Biamont (case from Peru), Babar Qazi, Rahma Islamic Relief Fund in Norway (Pakistani migrant organisation), Fakra Butt, Umar Rana and Arvid Solheim of Development Fund (The Way Forward). *(See Page 6 for more).*

Norway meeting: Role of Dutch Govt & Oxfam Novib lauded (from Page 5)

In his speech BASUG President who represented DFD in the meeting lauded the role of the Dutch government and some of the mainstream development organisations, especially Oxfam Novib saying that Oxfam Novib has been very supporting in this regard including providing financial and capacity building training to the active migrant organisations in the Netherlands.



On 25 November morning BASUG President held a meeting with Immigrant Council at Oslo Town hall and on 26 November morning he had a separate meeting with Norwegian

Development Fund at its office. The City council meeting was attended by Immigrants Council chairman, Akhenaton Oddvar de Leon, Secretary to the Board of Immigrant Organisations and Senior Executive Officer of City Council Imafidon Edokpolo Osa and Project coordinator of Norwegian Development Fund, Alice Ennals. The next morning an exclusive meeting took place at Norwegian Development Fund office at 10:00 hours between BASUG President and Project Coordinator Alice Ennals.

Live Radio Talk on International Migrants Day

In observance of the International Migrants Day, DFD-Diaspora Forum for Development in collaboration with Radio 1812 held a Live Radio talk on migration and development issues on 18 December. The talk was held at the studio of Radio Amigo (www.amigofm.nl), a Surinamese migrant radio station in Rotterdam. The participants in the radio talk were: Ms Kathleen Ferrier, member of the Dutch Parliament, CDA, Dr.S. Sital, Chairman, Gobar Human Rights Defence, Dr Ahmed Ziauddin, Adviser, BASUG, Tuky Santillan, DFD board member, Grace Cabactulan, DFD board member and Bikash Chowdhury Barua, Vice Chairman DFD and President of BASUG. Sudhier Nannan, Secretary BASUG was the moderator. The live radio talk lasted for one hour and fifteen minutes.

Discussion at ISS

In observance of the International Migrants Day, Scholas International Relations Committee of Institute of Social Studies (ISS) organised a discussion on “re-thinking migration for development” at the Institute aula in The Hague on 11 December 2008. Professor Irene van Staveren of ISS, Ms Fe Jusay of Respect NL and Bikash Chowdhury Barua of BASUG were the main speakers in the discussion. The participants included students from different continents who came to the Netherlands for higher studies.

Expanding Horizon donates 2 computers to BASUG

Expanding Horizon, a development organisation based in Amsterdam donated two ‘used’ computers to BASUG on 25 January 2009. Chairman of Expanding Horizon, Koos Palmboom said that his organisation was going to start a IT project in Bangladesh. In this regard the organisation has gone into agreement with its Bangladeshi partner, BCCP in Dhaka. Chairman of Expanding Horizon also visited Dhaka to see for himself the possibility of the project. The computers were handed over to BASUG by a supporter of Expanding Horizon, Ms Marianne S.Smit and her husband, Rob Catlender. BASUG President received the computers.



(Picture shows Marianne S. Smit and Rob Catlender handing over the computers.)

“Together we can make this world a better place to live in”