

BDI DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

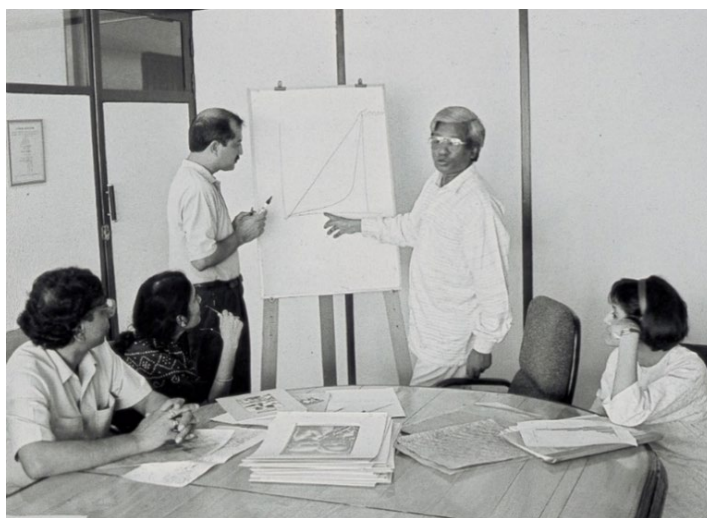
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Editor: Munir Quddus

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*A publication of Bangladesh Development Initiative, a research organization and think tank based in the United States and devoted to development issues in Bangladesh. The membership includes scholars and professionals from diverse backgrounds. Among other activities, BDI periodically organizes international conferences on Bangladesh. The organization also publishes a refereed journal, *Journal of Bangladesh Studies*, which is the only publication dedicated to research on all aspects of the development of Bangladesh, and published in US. For additional information on BDI, please visit <http://www.bdiusa.org>

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the second issue of the *BDI Development Newsletter* - a publication dedicated to covering ideas, stories, data, literature, and happenings related to the development of Bangladesh. This publication aims to inform as well as connect academics with practitioners working in the field, policymakers in government, researchers, citizens, and those who are part of the NGO and the global development community.

Sadly, on December 20, 2019, the celebrated Bangladeshi leader, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed passed away. He was 83 years old. Given his long and illustrious career in fostering social and economic development of the poor, his departure from this world is indeed the passing of an era. After consulting with my colleagues, I decided to devote this issue of the Newsletter in honor and memory of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed.

I reached out to a number of development leaders who worked closely with him as colleagues, inviting them to share their thoughts on Sir Abed's lifelong contributions to improving the lives of the poor in Bangladesh, and globally. I am glad to say that a number of them responded quickly. I have also included links to Op Ed pieces by Mahfuz Anam, Kamal Ahmed and others, published in various publications to celebrate the life and work of this great Bangladeshi.

Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus in his moving piece (which he shared for this publication), writes, "He is the principal architect of the massive transformation that has taken place in Bangladesh society since liberation... Abed was an extraordinary craftsman of the social and economic emancipation of the poor of Bangladesh. He liberated the common Bangladeshi from economic misery... Abed perfected the management of multi-dimensional and nationwide NGOs into a new science. For this alone he shall be remembered forever."

Professor Mustauque Chowdhury, who worked closely with Sir Abed as the (former) Vice Chair of BRAC, writes, "He was an institution builder par excellence. BRAC, BRAC University, BRAC Bank, bKash, Delta BRAC Housing Finance Corporation, Aarong, BRAC Dairy, BRAC Seeds, are only a few in the long list of institutions that he built. BRAC's successful replication in many other countries of Africa and Asia makes it a pioneer in South-South development and cooperation."

Professor Manzoor Ahmed of BRAC University, in his piece on Sir Abed's contributions to education used the following quote from Sir Abed: "Today, in the era of post-truth and alternative reality, amplified exponentially by social media powered by digital technology algorithms, the idea of progress itself is under challenge... Education itself is in danger of being misappropriated to serve the retrograde forces. The role of quality education -- and what the larger education community including teachers, parents and students can do to reclaim the idea of progress itself is more urgent than ever."

Many thousands attended his funeral prayers held on Saturday, December 21, 2019 at the Army Stadium. There were people from all walks of life, rich and poor, and political leaders from across the spectrum, showing their love and respect for a much beloved son of Bangladesh.

Munir Quddus
January 18, 2020

In Memory of Abed – Professor Muhammad Yunus

You Will Remain Our Companion Forever



Abed has left. But it is not possible to bid farewell to him. He remains with us as our companion forever. Since the Liberation War, he is in the very grain of our society. There is no layer and sub-layer of our societal make up which has not been touched by Abed's work. He is the principal architect of the massive transformation that has taken place in Bangladesh society since liberation.

Abed made skillful steps to walk through every dilapidated gully, every sink-hole, and overturn strange beliefs and norms set by an age of ignorance, re-worked patiently with talent and creativity to undo the past and lay a solid foundation of the future. He helped Bangladesh to change forever.

It is certainly not an exaggeration to say that there is hardly anyone among the 170 million people of Bangladesh who do not benefit in some way from Abed's programs or enjoy products and services provided by his organizations. If she is a poor person or a village woman, then she is in contact with Abed's activities at every step of her life -- in education, health, income generation, self-awareness and many more.

How can we say goodbye to Abed, who had quietly, even without us realizing it, become such an inseparable part of our daily life.

Abed was an extraordinary craftsman of the social and economic emancipation of the poor of Bangladesh. He liberated the common Bangladeshi from economic misery. He carried out his variety of enormous and widespread activities quietly. He did not wait for anyone's response to his examples; he marched forward alone, undeterred and focused, taking the responsibility of doing the entire task on his own shoulders, without complaint.

Abed changed the concept of "NGO" for the whole world. He provided the example of an NGO that does not shy away from national scale responsibility for every single social and economic issue, with a mission of completing the task, not just create islands of success. Abed gave NGO a new identity – one that works nationwide, even globally and multi-dimensionally, without falling victim to its own bureaucracy.

Abed perfected the management of multi-dimensional and nationwide NGOs into a new science. For this alone he shall be remembered forever.

Economists and researchers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal always pose a question to me. “How is it that in Bangladesh whatever starts in one location is soon scaled up as a nationwide program? Why does it not happen in our country?”

I give them a standard answer “Because an Abed is yet to be born in your country.”

Abed has left behind a self-confident Bangladesh. The story of his immense courage, vision and creativity will continue to empower all generations to come. Abed will remain the image of Bangladesh that inspires them.

Abed, it will be easy for the coming generations to take on the responsibility of building the Bangladesh of their dreams, on the foundation that you have built.

Abed, the nation will remain indebted to you forever.

Yunus Centre Press Release (21 December, 2019)

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed - BDI Press Statement In Memoriam

December 22, 2019



Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI) joins the nation in mourning the passing away of Sir Fazle Abed, founder and chairperson of BRAC. Sir Abed was a visionary leader whose work has improved the lives of millions of poor families and brought great accolades to Bangladesh. Above all, Sir Abed was a friend of the millions of poor and dispossessed in Bangladesh. The guiding principle in his long and illustrious career was his passion to uplift the nation through inclusive development and poverty alleviation. He worked hard to help the poor and reduce their suffering through education, training, improved health care, and entrepreneurship. His mission was to empower the poor, especially women and children, achieve prosperity and fulfillment for themselves and their families.

Very few citizens have made a greater impact and earned more respect of a grateful nation. Those who have known and worked closely with him were struck by his sharp mind, his humility and unassuming nature, and his vision for the development of the people of Bangladesh. He was an extraordinary man who built a large and innovative organization that reflects his vision - BRAC is known globally for dedication to uplifting the lives of the poor, innovative science-based programs, bold vision, and an emphasis on design, efficiency, transparency and massive scale. He received numerous national and international prestigious awards including the Knighthood from the British Empire.

Guided by Sir Abed's vision and exacting standards, today BRAC is one of the world's largest anti-poverty NGOs, with 115,000 employees in 12 countries offering some 138 million people services including education, micro-loans, job training and health care.

We believe history will judge that Sir Abed is among the greatest Bangladeshis who have ever lived. Today as we celebrate the life and legacy of Sir Fazle Abed, we are hopeful that a new generation of young Bangladeshi leaders will emerge to follow his vision and calling to help the poor rise from poverty and to fully participate in the development of Bangladesh as a prosperous and democratic nation.

Abed bhai: Celebrating a life well lived – Mushtaque Chowdhury

Professor of Population and Family Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University; former Vice Chair, BRAC



The passing of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed has left a void in the entire development world. We are grief stricken. The pouring in of condolences and messages following his demise bear testimony to the contributions he made to Bangladesh and to the entire humanity. In his message, Professor Muhammad Yunus called him “an extraordinary craftsman of the social and economic emancipation of the poor”. He continued, “Perhaps, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that there is hardly anyone among the 17 crore people of Bangladesh who did not benefit in some way by Abed’s work. And if that someone is a poor person or a woman from the countryside, then they must have come across Abed’s activities in every step of their life -- in education, health, income generation, self-awareness and more.” In his condolence message, former US president Bill Clinton said, “Sir Abed’s life was a great gift to humanity”. Professor Amartya Sen in his message said, “Abed was one of the foremost leaders of thought as well as action of our time... We have had very few like him in the history of the world”.

Such was Abed bhai, as we fondly called him at BRAC. I have had the privilege to work with him throughout my entire professional life. While leaving BRAC last year I exclaimed to him, “Abed bhai, I spent 33 years with my biological father but 42 years with you!”. He had smiles. On December 4, 2019, sixteen days before he breathed his last, we launched a new book on BRAC’s contributions to different sub-sectors of agriculture – crops, poultry, livestock, and fisheries¹. Although we fast-tracked the publication (thanks to the University Press Limited), but he was not in a situation to physically attend the ceremony. So I decided to present the book to him in his hospital bed before the formal launch. Between his sleeps, he woke up briefly. When an attendant relative asked him if he recognized me, he immediately responded with a smile, “Mushtaque”. When I showed him the book he looked at it and said, “Wonderful”, and went to sleep again. This was my last ‘meeting’ with him. It was indeed a most precious launch of a book!

¹ Chowdhury, M, Husain, M, Saleque, MA, and Brammer H (editors). “From the ground up: BRAC’s contributions in the development of agriculture in Bangladesh and beyond”. Dhaka, University Press Limited. December, 2019.

It will require thousands of pages to recount and document my time and experiences with Abed bhai and BRAC, which I plan to do over the next few years. There is hardly anything in development that escaped his attention and touch. He was an institution builder par excellence. BRAC, BRAC University, BRAC Bank, bKash, Delta BRAC Housing Finance Corporation, Aarong, BRAC Dairy, BRAC Seeds are only a few in the long list of institutions that he built. BRAC's successful replication in many other countries of Africa and Asia makes it a pioneer in South-South development and cooperation.

Through BRAC, Abed bhai has redefined the role for non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs are no more thought of as small, pilot projects; they contribute nationally and globally. NGOs need not also remain at the mercy of the donors. BRAC has shown how to mobilize resources internally and be up to 80 percent self-dependent. BRAC has proved that development is a professional job and there is little room for amateurism in it. NGOs need to be professional, continuously innovative, and forward looking in order to sustain and be impactful. Finally, NGOs need to be evidence-based. Abed bhai's interest, belief, and commitment to monitoring, evaluation and research was, I dare to say, largely responsible for BRAC's success. No other NGO, to my knowledge, has had such an elaborate research function and agenda².

Many have written about Abed bhai's knowledge and interest in different areas – art, culture, poetry, history, and what not. In 2013, the medical journal *Lancet* published a special series on Bangladesh³. At that time Bangladesh was experiencing a nasty political strife and the country's image abroad was seriously being threatened. The Lancet series documented the important gains that the country was making in the social sector including health and education. We decided to publicize this positive aspect of our nation by having the Lancet series launched in different world capitals. As part of this, Dr. Abbas Bhuiya (formerly of icddr,b) and I presented the findings at launching events hosted by the World Bank, USAID, The Rockefeller Foundation, the Bangladesh Mission at UN, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Institute of Development Studies at Sussex, Public Health Foundation of India (in Delhi), and the Heartfile (in Islamabad). Abed bhai joined us for the same in Oslo and Stockholm.

At Oslo airport, we were received by a senior official of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who drove us to our hotel. Abed bhai was in the front seat and we two were in the back. The official welcomed us on board and started to brief the history of Oslo. Before he could go much further, Abed bhai took over and started recalling the history not only of Oslo but of Norway and the entire Nordic countries - the role of the Vikings and the continuous wars and enmity between Norway and Sweden and so on. We were observing the reaction of our host and at one point he said, "Sir Abed, I am really ashamed of my poor knowledge about my own history. We should get you to teach us our history". This was Abed bhai.

We are lucky that BRAC was blessed with Abed bhai's leadership for a considerable time. He has now left us, but his creations and philosophy will live on to enthuse the generations to come.

² Chowdhury, M, Jenkins, A, and Nandita, MM. Measuring the effects of interventions in BRAC, and how this has driven 'development'? *Journal of Development Effectiveness* 6 (4):407-424 (DOI: 10.1080/19439342.2014.966452), October 2014.

³ <https://www.thelancet.com/series/bangladesh>

Sir Abed's Contribution to Education: Visionary, yet Practical

Manzoor Ahmed
Professor Emeritus, BRAC University, Dhaka

The journey of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed in the realm of national and human development began in 1972 with relief and rehabilitation work in the remote villages of the Salla sub-district of Sunamganj bordering the Meghalaya state of India. In the wake of the Bangladesh Liberation War, the war-driven people were streaming back from across the border. People who had stayed back in their villages had lost their livelihood and homes at the hands of the marauding invaders. The villagers needed food, shelter, protection from the cold winter and health care for the sick. The Bangladesh Relief and Assistance Committee proceeded to provide the life-saving help. Abed and a few of his colleagues had collected some funds and received support from the international relief agency Oxfam to start the relief effort.

It was abundantly clear soon that whole communities could not continue to survive on handout. Livelihood had to be restored, shelters built and the normal cadence of life returned. In other words, communities had to be rebuilt, people shown a vision of future and hope instilled in them – without relying much on the beleaguered and fledgling national government. The relief and rehabilitation agency morphed into the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC).

By way of writing the foreword in September, 2019 for a book on basic education in South Asia, Abed reminisced:

In our corner of South Asia, in the aftermath of the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, BRAC transformed its post-conflict relief and rehabilitation operation into a rebuilding and development program. Education was seen as a key component of our nation-building mission. We drew inspiration from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and launched a literacy and adult education campaign as a means of raising people's awareness about their situation and encouraging people to read the *world*, not just the *word* (Excerpt from "Foreword" in Richards, J., Ahmed, M., Islam, M. S., *Basic Education in South Asia—Fighting Poverty, Inequality and Exclusion*, University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

Eighty percent of the adults in rural Bangladesh then did not read or write. Interestingly, BRAC participants, the poverty-stricken communities, told the BRAC education workers that their priority was educational opportunity for their children, because existing primary education did not serve their children well. Almost half of the children did not have access to primary education, and the majority of those who enrolled, did not complete this stage.

Abed recalled:

In response, BRAC pioneered an innovative approach of community-based learning centres for children of age 8-14 years, two-thirds girls. The teachers, all women, were drawn from the community and supported by BRAC with training, supervision and learning materials. A strong monitoring and quality assurance regime was a key feature.

Families, mostly low-income, paid no fees. It came to be known as non-formal primary education, but its objective was the same as that of primary schools -- to equip children with literacy and numeracy skills and prepare them for the secondary school. It was a success story by the objective pursued. At its peak, over a million children were offered at a time access to primary education; and over 95 percent completed the equivalent of primary education and over 80 percent moved on to a secondary school (Ibid.)

Although such a program is still very much needed as a component of the national primary education system, BRAC had to curtail it because donor funding for this no-fee service dried up, since bilateral and multilateral contributors channeled their funds directly to the government. This in itself would not be a problem, except that the flexibility, responsiveness and devotion of teachers needed in a program for the disadvantaged children from poor families and remote areas cannot be found in the formal structure of the government schools.

Abed received numerous awards and prizes for his leadership and achievements in all spheres of development including health, women's empowerment, enhanced livelihood, agriculture and nutrition, and promoting rights and justice. He was honored with knighthood by the royal courts of the United Kingdom and of the Netherlands. He was also the winner of two of the most prestigious global awards for his contribution to education.

In 2011, Fazle Hasan Abed was declared the inaugural laureate of the Wise Education Foundation of Qatar. The citation of the award noted:

He recognized that education is a passport to social inclusion and opportunity. He discovered a successful formula, and he adapted and expanded it – first in Bangladesh and then in other countries. As a direct consequence, millions of people around the world lead healthier, happier and more productive lives. ... Under Sir Fazle's visionary leadership, BRAC has grown to become the largest provider of private, secular education in the world, contributing to the pre-primary, primary and secondary education of more than 10 million students." (<http://www.wise-qatar.org/biography/fazle-hasan-abed/>)

The Yidan Prize 2019 was awarded to Sir Fazle for his lifelong contribution to education and development in Bangladesh and 10 other countries, from Afghanistan to Uganda. It is the most prestigious and the largest in value (USD3.9 million) of education prizes, sometimes described as the Education Nobel Prize. The mission of the Yidan Prize is to create a better world through education – a mission that Abed espoused strongly.

The Play Lab project developed and implemented by BRAC Institute of Educational Development particularly attracted the attention of Yidan's international judges' panel. Play is children's work. It boosts cognitive and socio-emotional development of young children. Memory and language skills are improved and children are better able to learn and manage their own behavior.

“The team at BRAC, led by its founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, has taken these scientific findings and implemented an innovative approach that builds on BRAC's decades of experience in empowering the poor through implementation of community-led innovation in education,” said

the Judges Panel Head, Ms. Dorothy Gordon in the award citation (M. Ahmed, “Recognizing an innovative education model,” *Daily Star*, 23 September, 2019).

In his last reflection in September 2019, before he became seriously ill, on the critical role of education, Abed wrote:

Today, in the era of post-truth and alternative reality, amplified exponentially by social media powered by digital technology algorithms, the idea of progress itself is under challenge. In South Asia and elsewhere the upsurge of ultra-nationalism, rejection of pluralism and secular humanism, self-serving populism, xenophobic trends and the majoritarian subversion of the democratic institutions and values have emerged as new threats to human progress. Education itself is in danger of being misappropriated to serve the retrograde forces. The role of quality education -- and what the larger education community including teachers, parents and students can do to reclaim the idea of progress itself is more urgent than ever (“Foreword,” op. cit.)

These are words especially germane today as we consider the existential challenges our societies face and we contemplate necessary changes in education.



In Memory of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed - Munir Quddus

President, Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI)



A great man has passed away. May his soul rest in peace. Sir Fazle Hasan Abed's contributions to the development of Bangladesh are unique and unmatched. Arguably, during his long and illustrious career he was among the greatest architects of Bangladesh's prosperity. A true friend of the poor, he launched BRAC, considered today as the world's largest, and certainly one of the most innovative development NGOs. Importantly, he was an exceedingly decent man. May his example inspire millions of young people to serve their nation, Bangladesh.

For the millions of poor and dispossessed in Bangladesh, there was no better friend than Sir Abed. The guiding principle in his long and illustrious career was his passion to uplift the nation through inclusive development and poverty alleviation. His genius was that he dreamt big. Fortunately, for the poor, he was also a master strategist and business manager. He was a visionary builder of institutions. He worked hard, assembled a galaxy of talented and dedicated individuals to serve on his team, found willing partners across the globe, and navigated the treacherous domestic political scene to bring his big dreams to fruition. His life-mission was to help the poor in distress, reduce their suffering by empowering them through education, training and entrepreneurship so that they can achieve prosperity and fulfillment for themselves and their children.

Once he told me that he did not care of awards or recognition. Nevertheless, Sir Abed was the recipient of numerous prestigious international awards in recognition of his life's work, reducing poverty through disaster relief and development in Bangladesh and globally. Ashoka, the social entrepreneurship think tank recognized him as one of the "global greats." He was a founding member of the Global Academy for Social Entrepreneurship. Sir Fazle was a member of the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by the UN Secretary-General in 2010 to advise and support the Least Developed Countries. Fortune Magazine acknowledged him twice on the list of "The World's 50 Greatest Leaders" [2014, 2017]. In 2019, Sir Fazle was honored with a Dutch Knighthood.

In 2010, Fazle Hasan Abed was knighted in a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace in London, making him the first person of Bangladeshi origin to receive this honor since 1947. Among the many congratulatory messages from across the world was that of Queen Rania of Jordan who said, “More than just recognition of your tireless efforts to relieve poverty and disease in Bangladesh and abroad, this Knighthood gives further momentum to your reputation as one of the most dynamic and selfless humanitarians of our time.”

Very few citizens have had greater impact or earned more respect of a grateful nation as he did. Those who have known and worked closely with him were struck by his sharp mind, his humility and unassuming nature, and his vision for a bright future for the people of Bangladesh. He was an extraordinary leader who built a large and innovative non-profit organization that reflects his personality – The BRAC brand is known globally for its laser-focus on programs to uplift the poor, for innovative science-based programs, for its bold vision, and its emphasis on design, efficiency and transparency. It is because of the remarkable success of BRAC [and the Noble-Prize winning Grameen Bank] that Bangladesh has become more widely known to global citizens as a nation from which good ideas have traversed other parts of the world, including the West.

Guided by Sir Abed’s vision and exacting standards, today BRAC is one of the world's largest anti-poverty NGOs, with 115,000 employees in 12 countries offering some 138 million people services including education, micro-loans, job training, and health care. BRAC formerly stood for the Bangladesh Relief Assistance Committee. To reflect its enhanced global mission, the organization changed its name to stand for, *Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee* (BRAC).

Sir Abed was laser-focused on efforts to assist women and children as they are among the most vulnerable segments in the society. What an impact he has made! Thanks to his business acumen and managerial genius, today BRAC is ranked among the largest and most effective developmental NGOs in the world, with a huge global footprint “doing well by doing good.”

Among its most successful programs for the poor was the nationwide expansion of childhood immunization. With support from many sources, including the British and Australian governments, over four years (1986-1990) BRAC worked with partners to increase the share of children vaccinated against tuberculosis and other preventable diseases from 4 percent to 91 percent.

In the 1990s, BRAC introduced its "graduation program," designed to help the ultra-poor "graduate" from extreme poverty to a more stable economic life. The basic idea is to provide an extremely poor family with an asset and training. This could be a cow, a goat, or bees, or training to grow silkworms — that can increase the family’s household income over time. The income-generating asset along with a mix of services provided has proven highly effective. This includes microfinance, coaching, cash grants for the initial launch stage, health care and education. BRAC was among the first NGOs to employ randomized controlled trails (RCT) to measure the correct impact of the new program. Given the success of the project, to assist other NGOs and governments to adopt the “graduation model” BRAC published a detailed guide and "tool kit" so that others can learn and scale up the work.

On a personal note, I had a rare opportunity to spend an hour with Sir Abed last year in his office. We discussed a number of issues, especially those related to higher education. He was very proud of the success of BRAC University, which he founded and served as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. As we discussed the significance of universities in the development of a nation, he spoke of research conducted on longevity of institutions in Europe. According to one research finding, over a 500-year period in Europe, very few institutions survived the test of time, but among the surviving institutions, a prominent position was occupied by universities.

He fondly spoke of his early disaster relief work. He spoke of his association with Father Tim (the venerable former Principal of Notre Dame College, Dhaka), who came with his students to help him with the relief work in Chittagong after the 1970 disaster. When Father Tim prepared to return to Notre Dame, Sir Abed asked if he could return to work with him. Fr. Tim said that he would be happy to do so if his Board would approve. Sir Abed then wrote to the Board at Notre Dame, requesting an extended release for Father Tim so that he could assist him with much needed relief work in Chittagong. The Board granted the extended leave.

Sir Abed will certainly be remembered as among the greatest Bangladeshis who ever lived. Although, he was fond of saying that he had no desire for recognition since he was following his calling, perhaps one day the nation will appropriately honor him with buildings and roads appropriately named in his honor. As we celebrate his life, let us hope that a new generation of young Bangladeshi leaders inspired by his work will follow his calling to help the suffering of the poor so that they can graduate out of poverty and fully participate as citizens in Bangladesh's exciting journey to become a prosperous democratic nation.



Op-Ed Articles on Sir Fazle Abed

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/tribute-to-sir-fazle-hasan-abed-his-dreams-come-true-1843846>

12:00 AM, December 23, 2019 / LAST MODIFIED: 08:22 AM, December 23, 2019

Tribute To Sir Fazle Hasan Abed: He dreamt big and made them come true

Abed Bhai, as Sir Fazle Hasan Abed was lovingly called by almost all those who knew him, was well into his fatal illness when Cyclone Bulbul struck Bangladesh. As shared by Lady Abed and daughter Tamara during a recent conversation, as the cyclone wrought havoc, Abed, in a semiconscious state, was constantly rambling about what preparations have been made to rescue the victims and how quickly Brac will have to come to the aid of the children and rebuild the affected schools. Such was his attachment with the poor and the deprived.

[Click here to read the rest of this article...](#)



Mahfuz Anam is the Editor and Publisher of *The Daily Star*.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/tribute/news/tribute-sir-fazle-hasan-abed-1849885>

12:00 AM, January 06, 2020 / LAST MODIFIED: 04:14 AM, January 06, 2020

Tribute to Sir Fazle Hasan Abed

A compassionate listener and an innovative problem solver



Kamal Ahmad is Founder, Asian University for Women.

It is with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, our Abed bhai. In one life time, he founded BRAC and transformed it into the largest and one of the most respected, effective and sustainable development institutions in the world. He was a fountain of ideas to address the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities, and a genius in finding ways to implement them. In my personal association with Abed bhai, even more striking has been his unceasing interest in the work of others and his generosity to help them every step of the way. The creation and growth of the Asian University for Women (AUW) is an example of Abed bhai's abiding interests in and support for other institutions that aid in the struggle to overcome poverty and ignorance....

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/04/06/473143896/meet-the-most-influential-poverty-fighter-youve-never-heard-of>

In Memoriam: The Most Influential Poverty Fighter You've Never Heard Of April 6, 2016 10:54 AM ET

NURITH AIZENMAN



Sir Fazle Hasan Abed quit his job at Shell Oil more than 40 years ago to focus on helping the ultra-poor, like these women in a village in Bangladesh.

***NPR Editor's note:** Sir Fazle Hasan Abed is the award-winning founder of one of the largest nongovernmental aid groups in the world. It's called BRAC, and it operates in 11 countries across Africa and Asia. On Friday Abed's colleagues at BRAC announced that he has died. He was 84 and was being treated for a brain tumor. In 2016 NPR interviewed Abed. In his memory we are re-posting that story.*

He's a Bangladeshi who's been knighted by the Queen of England. A former accountant who left an executive position at Shell Oil to devote himself to the world's poorest. And when it comes to eliminating poverty, he may be the most influential man you've never heard of. Meet Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and head of a nongovernmental international development organization called BRAC. Today the University of Michigan honors Abed, who is 80, with its Thomas Francis Jr. Medal in Global Public Health.

We took the occasion to find out more about what he's learned during his 40 years in the field — and how one of his ideas might end up driving the 21st century global effort to eradicate extreme poverty

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HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW
CREATING EMERGING MARKETS



Sir Fazle Hasan Abed

FOUNDER AND CHAIR, BRAC (MICROFINANCE, DEVELOPMENT)

Born Sylhet, Bangladesh, 1936; died Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2019. University of Glasgow; Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, London (1962); LLD (hon.), Queen's University, Canada (1994); EdD (hon.), University of Manchester (2003).

“I’VE NEVER THOUGHT THAT YOU CAN DO GOOD ONLY THROUGH NONPROFIT ACTIVITIES. YOU CAN DO GOOD ALSO BY DOING BUSINESS.”

Summary

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, who founded the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (BRAC) in 1972, describes the strategic and mission-driven underpinnings for the world’s largest NGO. Born in Baniachong, then in British India, Abed studied naval architecture at the University of Glasgow in Britain before qualifying as a management accountant. He acquired British citizenship, but in 1962 returned to (then) East Pakistan to join the oil company Shell, becoming Head of Finance in the local subsidiary. In 1970 he returned to Britain in the face of increasing violence as his country struggled for independence from the rest of Pakistan, and campaigned for European governments to help end the bloodshed...

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