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Building Bangladesh from micro-level: DUMAA as a model

January 02, 2010 By: Sorowar Category: [বাংলাদেশ-Bangladesh](#)



To be honest, I am really touched after reading the annual report of DUMAA (*Dhaka University Microbiologist Alumni Association*). It was established few years back and has around 400 members who are working in home and abroad. In wider context, those kinds of initiatives spearheaded by DUMAA should regard as a blueprint to build up Bangladesh starting from the micro-level. Some of us may be surprised to think whether the aims and objectives of DUMAA are really considered as

blueprint at the first place. We must keep in mind that DUMAA is an organization with a very small population size as compared to other thousands of organizations exists in Bangladesh. What if, (my pleasant dream) all those organizations start taking similar apolitical approaches? The consequence of these apolitical efforts would give rise to fruits which are so sweet to be witnessed!

By witnessing the aggravating negative development in our country, it is quite rational to be pessimistic whether all those organizations would be active in the same pace as DUMAA is planning to do. My strong conviction is that most of the people feel for the country and want to contribute for its development. We need few successful role models to motivate others. Personally, I am optimistic that we could set this example. We are a group of educated and conscience people. Education should enlighten us. We may have differences in our opinions but the common goal is the same: the development of beloved homeland.

Nobel laureate Dr. Yunus initiated an idea with only \$20 and it is getting bigger and bigger and it has made changes in the society. He has done for non-philanthropic purpose; we would do to fulfill the responsibility bestowed on us. It should give us impetus to feel mentally more courageous. He started alone; we are starting as a group of highly educated and talented people replete with ideas. Our collective micro-efforts would bring macro-changes in the society.

Even though we are micro in terms of size and manpower, we could be a motivator organization to ignite the real change, which would illuminate every nook and corner of our country.

(N.B: This was my email response to the microbiologists groups)

Here is the annual report of DUMAA (2009-2010):

DUMAA activity: Item-1

Establishment of **Microbiology Endowment Fund** (MDDU Trust Fund) is a milestone achievement of DU microbiologists. DUMAA will continue to strive to increase the endowment fund. We consider this as a basic objective.

We have undertaken an initiative to archive the past, present and future

DUMMA activities, including scientific and social scholarly activities achieved by any members of DUMMA irrespective of their social and earthly standings and rankings. We have already archived a number of writings posted by DUMMA members/friends of DUMMA on the memory of late Professor Anwarul Azim Chowdhurey. In 2010, DUMAA will initiate publication of two electronic bimonthly (or quarterly) newsletters.

DUMAA Newsletter—It will systematically publish all the news that are sent to GMA and DUMAA e groups- results, scholarships, awards, promotion, new job—everything. It will also include literary articles written by the alumni. It will also publish results of BS and MS final exams; records of publications of the alumni, etc. It will be an electronic journal which will record achievements and activities of DU Micro graduates (there will be lots of fun statistics). The electronic versions will be archived, so that any news item can be traced years later (any new idea, pl. write to us).

DUMAA Science News:

This will be popular science newsletter where research publications of the alumni will be presented in a popular science format. DUMAA Science news will also follow recent advancements in biological sciences in general and reproduce in popular science format. It will also publish profiles of DU Micro alumni of outstanding achievement and much more.

There are many talented innovators in BD. We see in BD newspapers stories on innovations by someone in rural BD areas with little education or no formal higher education. We will follow up those thrilling news and establish contact with the innovators and provide start up fund if possible for commercialization of their innovations. (novel ideas most welcome).

DUMAA Activity: Item-2:

To show our respect, DUMAA is disbursing BD Taka 5000 per month to Mrs. Anwarul Azim Chowdhury (Prof. Azim was the founder of microbiology department, University of Dhaka). This project now stands in its third year. We started this initiative on April, 2007. Thanks to Dr. Munirul Alam (DU Microbiology teacher / ICDDR,B scientist) for proposing this initiative. Special thanks to Dr. Jamanun Nessa (DU) for continued coordination of this project.

DUMAA activity: Item-3:

How to celebrate our great days? Days like 26th March, 16th December, Eids, Bijoya?

From the time of its inception we asked whether DUMAA should be like any other mundane organization-focusing exclusively on fun, picnic and speeches “this should be done or that should have been done, etc?” If so, then how are we different than those entities, and where is our role as a paradigm organization primarily focusing on social altruism that we envisioned to be?

21st February: Probably you have seen a special program on the BD TV channels (channel i and others) “The story of Mr. Poran Sarker as a “Shada Moner Manush” (somewhere in Rajshahi). Mr. Sarker’s hobby is to go door to door and take books to the families and ask them to read. He acts like a mobile library. A group of activists arranged a program—they invited Mr. Sarker to come to Dhaka and handed over to him lots of books and money to buy more books for distribution. DUMAA actively participated in that program—DUMAA considered this is the best way to celebrate 21st February of 2009 (Coordinators: Dr. Nurul Islam and Dr. Ashfaque Hossain)

26th March: While Independence Day deserves a great celebration, the same day is meaningless to those who are struggling just to survive from day to day. Millions of people are in need of basic necessities, including food, drinking water, clothes and shelters among others in our country. This is a problem of enormous proportion in BD. DUMAA thinks that the best way to celebrate Independence Day is to bring financial independence to at least one family a year in BD. To that end, DUMAA contributed enough fund to a financially distressed family to start a small shop, so that that family can become financially independent (only USD 500 is needed for such a project). DUMAA dedicated this project to the memory of Professor Anwarul Azim Chowdhury and intends to continue to make at least one family self-reliant every year in BD (coordinators: Dr. Harunur Rashid Badal and Dr. A. K Azad).

Eid-ul- Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha, 2009: During Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha DUMAA provided new clothes to children in need in Bangladesh (coordinator: Dr. Syed Ali Rumman).

Bijoya, 2009: DUMAA arranged new clothes for children in need in BD at the occasion of Bijoya (coordinators: Dr. Bibuthi Bushon Roy and Satyajeeet

Biswas). We celebrate these occasions with our family and friends, buy new clothes for our children. Why not we try to bring joy of having new clothes to few of those children to whom these great days are like every other day of struggle just to survive.

16th December: DUMAA donated a part of the fund needed to install a deep tube well in a village in the district of Noakhali in BD. This is DUMAA's way of celebrating the victory day of 2009 (coordinators: Dr. Harunur Rashid Badal and Dr. Sheikh Abu Hossain)

DUMAA Activity: Item-4:

Instead of running fund raising drives after floods, cyclones, etc, DUMAA intends to have a sustained, long term program. The idea is “instead of giving somebody a fish, give him fishing net”. With so many DU Microbiology scattered all over the world, we should be able to make at least one family in need self reliant in BD every year. DUMAA has a panel of great donors who supported our activities listed above during 2009. With this year's experience to our account, we are confident that DUMAA is capable of undertaking bigger tasks. **Now we request all to donate \$1 per month to DUMAA and support such activities. We request all to consider these activities as a way of helping those in need at virtually no cost to us. One dollar (or BD Taka 20) per month is virtually nothing to us but cumulatively this may bring life saving changes to many. Our target is sign up 1000 individuals donating \$1 per month. Sign up yourself, your spouse, your friends, colleagues and relatives. Lots of good deed can be done with \$1000 per month in BD** (any idea, pl. write to us).

DUMAA Activity Item-5:

One may raise a question if DUMAA is a “Social Help- and/or Help the Needy” type organization? What is DUMAA's mission and vision? DUMAA is much more than a “help the needy organization”. In addition to the usual role of DUMAA as an alumni organization, social welfare activity was and has remained an integral part of DUMAA all along, we are now committed to execute this more intensely and maturely.

DUMAA activity: Item-6:

In 2010, DUMAA is poised to emerge as a stronger social change-maker organization. We will identify a situation which can be changed for better and mobilize our strength to make it happen. We will run e-mail campaigns to

media, politicians, social scientists, activists, educators, intellectuals aiming at taking a decision at national level. Prevention of wastage and proper distribution can solve many problems—DUMAA will highlight those to all. This will also give us the opportunity to educate each other.

DUMAA Activity: Item-7

We would like to see DUMAA as an active social change-maker organization. We have two clear options: One—we can concentrate on our studies, our research, our career, our family and our children; or two—we can think just for a little while beyond ourselves, and try to impact the world in our own small way aiming to make it a better place. The mission of DUMAA is— to drive and devote our minds to opt for option two.

In summary, for 2010 we have the following action items:

1. Launching of one dollar / BD taka 20 per month per person project.
2. Launching of DUMAA Newsletter and DUMAA Science News project.
3. Continuation of Think Tank—Trend Setter—Change Maker activity.
4. Initiation of Make Our Voices Heard (through e-mail campaign/personal contacts) project.
5. Enrichment of Endowment Fund.

This is annual report of DUMAA activities, 2009 and plan for 2010. We will strive to produce a report of better achievements for 2010.

Dear Fellow Microbiologists: We must not forget that we are a group of highly educated and talented individuals and we are stakeholders of our beloved country. We should have the confidence that cumulatively we can achieve many good things and we can bring positive change in all aspects at self, social, national and global level.

Best wishes to all.

Dr. Ashfaque Hossain
(ashfaquehossain@yahoo.com)
On behalf of DUMAA

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