

INVESTING  
IN SOLUTIONS  
AT THE HEART  
OF THE PROBLEM



CENTRE FOR HEALTH AND  
POPULATION RESEARCH

# GLIMPSE

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## *Friends of ICDDR,B Association in Japan*

The 'Friends of ICDDR,B' Association in Japan organized a discussion session on "Achievements of Japan-ICDDR,B Collaborations: Benefits to Medical Science and to Bangladesh" on 6 November 2005 at Tokyo University.

This was part of the concluding events of the two-day session (November 5-6) of the 20th Annual Conference of the Japan Society of International Health. Discussions were held to assess the impact that a research institution, like ICDDR,B, can have on the international scientific community. The session observed that: over the past forty-five years, ICDDR,B has made major contributions to the health and well-being of the people of Bangladesh and the world at large.

The session on ICDDR,B, coordinated by Dr Ishtiaque Zaman, Head of the External Relations and Institutional Development Office, was attended by over 70 dignitaries, with His Excellency Mr Serajul Islam, Bangladesh's Ambassador to Japan as the Chief Guest. Other speakers included Dr Nobukatsu Ishikawa, Member of the ICDDR,B Board of Trustees and Vice President of the 'Friends of ICDDR,B' Association in Japan; Dr Susumu Wakai, Professor of Tokyo University and Chairperson of the 20th Annual Conference of Japan Society of International Health, and



*Dr Takashi Wagatsuma and Dr Nobukatsu Ishikawa, former Trustees; Prof David Sack, Executive Director; and Dr Ishtiaque A Zaman, Head of ER&ID Office, among the 'Friends of ICDDR,B' in Japan*

Professor David Sack, Executive Director of ICDDR,B. The participants also included Japanese scientists from many renowned academic institutions, former ICDDR,B staff from Japan and Bangladesh, former Trustees, and policy-makers. A number of Japanese scientists made presentations on their research projects undertaken in collaboration with ICDDR,B for the past several years.

Ambassador Mr Serajul Islam said, the presence of this world-class health research institution in Bangladesh has enabled the country to accomplish major achievements in the health sector. Bangladesh now has better health indicators in many spheres compared to other countries with similar level of challenges, and the country continues to benefit from ICDDR,B's expertise. He also said that such an institution should be duly rewarded. "It is not unlikely that ICDDR,B will one-day be crowned with a Nobel Prize for its contribution to the humanity through discovery of Oral Rehydration Solution" Mr Islam opined. The Ambassador thanked the organizers for inviting him to the event. He said, he was very pleased to see the enthusiasm and eagerness about ICDDR,B among the Japanese people. He assured them that he will be happy to assist in the work of the 'Friends of ICDDR,B' Association

in Japan to raise the profile of and support for this institution.

Professor David Sack had meetings with senior officials of JICA, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Japan Bank for International Cooperation. He also gave a special lecture at the University of Tsukuba. Prof Yukiko Wagatsuma, a Japanese scientist who was with ICDDR,B until the early part of 2005, was instrumental in preparing an excellent itinerary for Prof David Sack.

Prof Sack said, the recommendations coming out from collaborative research will hopefully be duly implemented and will help improve the health, nutrition, and population sectors in Bangladesh. He also expressed his hope that Bangladesh will provide to the world more success stories in many new areas of health research in the coming years.

An Executive Committee of the 'Friends of ICDDR,B' Association in Japan was formed. During the next couple of months, the Committee will be discussing ways to raise the profile of ICDDR,B in Japan and will set its terms of reference for promoting ICDDR,B in Japan. Dr Yoshifumi Takeda, former Trustee of ICDDR,B, was declared to be the first President of the Association. ●

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# Queen's Baton Relay passes through ICDDR,B

The Queen's Baton Relay (QBR) carrying the Queen's message to the athletes, now on tour across the Commonwealth countries as a prologue to the 18th Commonwealth Games to be held on 15-26 March 2006, passed through ICDDR,B on 19 September 2005. The QBR team was accompanied by AusAID personnel and senior officials of the Australian High Commission in Bangladesh. Seventy-one Commonwealth countries will compete in the Commonwealth Games 2006, representing 16 sports and an integrated programme of events.

While visiting the Centre, the QBR team learned about the many activities of ICDDR,B especially those funded by Australian Agency for International Development.

During the visit to the Centre's hospital and laboratories in Dhaka, the team



a. ICDDR,B's Executive Director Professor David Sack receiving the QBR team



b. A nurse of the Dhaka hospital holding the Queen's symbolic Relay Stick while a young patient is curiously looking at it

showed special interest in Virology Laboratory which is engaged in HIV/AIDS-related studies and surveillance. Members of the QBR team expressed their satisfaction with the humanitarian services rendered by the Centre

through its treatment of poor patients free of charge in Bangladesh and also through its research and training activities that generate new technical information and develop human resources for improved healthcare for people all over the world. ■

## Tribute to Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad

The first anniversary of the death of Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad was commemorated on 4 July 2005. ICDDR,B and the Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad Trust jointly held a two-day symposium titled "Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad: Creating and translating nutrition and biochemical

Friedman School of Nutrition at Tufts University and Vice President of the International Nutrition Foundation made the keynote address. Dr William B Greenough III, Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, and Dr Marshall Larry Reiner from the Boston Children's

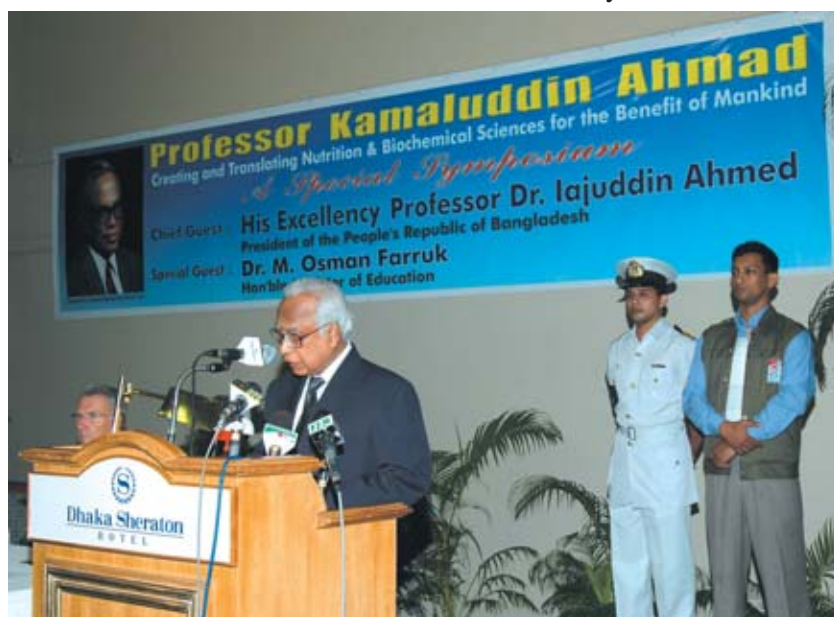
Hospital at Harvard University also spoke on the occasion. Dr Charles Larson, Director, Health Systems and Infectious Diseases Division of ICDDR,B delivered the vote of thanks.

In several scientific sessions, presided over by Professor David A Sack, Executive Director of ICDDR,B, and with Dr

M Osman Farruk, Bangladesh Minister for Education, as Chief Guest, many national and international scientists and intellectuals highlighted areas of interest to Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad.

The event was concluded with a panel discussion by: Dr Naiyyum Chowdhury,

Secretary of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences; Dr William B Greenough III; Dr Mushtaque R Chowdhury, Deputy Executive Director of BRAC and Dean of the James P Grant School of Public Health; Professor Harun KM Yusuf, Professor Anwar Hossain of the Department of Biochemistry, University of Dhaka; Professor Mamunar Rashid, former Director of NIPSOM; Dr Charles Larson of ICDDR,B; Dr Zeba Mahmud of the Micronutrient Initiative; and Mr Nazir Ahmad, son of Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad. A collection of commemorative articles on Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad was released on the occasion. ■



Professor Dr Iajuddin Ahmed, Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, inaugurating the commemorative symposium on Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad

sciences for the benefit of mankind." Professor Dr Iajuddin Ahmed, Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session of the symposium held on 3 July at the Sheraton Hotel in Dhaka.

Professor Irwin H Rosenberg of the

## GLIMPSE

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# SUZY Project in Its Third Year

The SUZY Project started in 2003 with an aim of introducing dispersible zinc tablets as a treatment for diarrhoea and making it available to the entire under-five population of Bangladesh!

The SUZY team was excited about the Project and ready to tackle the varied and complex project activities, like the production of dispersible zinc tablets in Bangladesh, the nation-wide marketing and promotion of these tablets, and supportive research, as well as bringing and keeping the key stakeholders on board.

The overall lesson we have learnt within the past two years is that: for a project of this dimension, one can define the goal, but the way to reach the goal is always subject to change, requiring flexibility, creativity and, of course, patience of all stakeholders.

The most challenging part of the SUZY Project is to bring all stakeholders together to undertake a joint effort to reduce under-five mortality in Bangladesh by about 75,000 children per year. These stakeholders, coming from very different backgrounds, have different perspectives and, apart from the project aim, all of them have their own specific interests.



A pictorial poster illustrating the usefulness and method of intake of dispersible zinc tablets

The private sector will always have an economic interest as its existence depends on making a profit. The involvement of private doctors, drug-sellers, and the pharmaceutical industry is essential for project implementation and to build

sustainable partnerships; the Project has had to support strong private-sector participation in a manner consistent with good business practices.

The key players and decision-makers in the public sector need to understand that the aim of introducing zinc tablets into the national diarrhoea-management guidelines is to improve child health in Bangladesh rather than to make a profit. ICDDR,B, dedicated to finding realistic solutions for major public-health problems through research, is implementing several study protocols under the SUZY Project to prove the potential benefits promised by zinc treatment. Given this variety of understanding, it is definitely a learning process for all of us, and everybody is challenged to accept different points of view, to finally come to a consensus and to build joint ownership of the project aim.

This story gives new insights into the progress we have made within the past two years and shares the lessons we have learnt so far.

## Local production of dispersible zinc tablets in Bangladesh

On 20 July 2005, ICDDR,B signed a contract with Nutriset, a French pharmaceutical company that owns the patent to dispersible zinc tablets, to purchase a patent license for producing zinc tablets in Bangladesh. ICDDR,B has chosen ACME Laboratories Ltd. (a local pharmaceutical company) to obtain the sub-license for manufacturing zinc tablets. ACME, with its commitment to the SUZY Project, was found to be capable of supporting the marketing campaign on a large scale through its own network. Importantly, the company also meets the required quality standards.

The Memorandum of Understanding between ACME Laboratories Ltd. and ICDDR,B was signed in October 2005. ACME has already requested the Directorate of Drug Administration to register dispersible zinc tablets as an over-the-counter (OTC) drug and to allow a waiver on the product for mass media and campaigning. Thus, the production and distribution of dispersible zinc tablets is far closer to becoming a reality in the very near future.

This is the result of two years of negotiation and experience with partners, and it is quite different from the original plan. For several reasons, substantial changes have been required to finally find a way for sustainable local production of dispersible zinc tablets.

## Promotion of dispersible zinc tablets on the national scale

The next major step in preparation for the actual roll-out campaign is the identification of partners and the joint development of strategies for the promotion and distribution of zinc tablets in Bangladesh. Therefore, the communication committee of the SUZY Project has recently been reactivated. This committee was built in November 2004 to develop the communication strategy and marketing plan for zinc tablets in collaboration with the Social Marketing Company (SMC) and a local advertising company. Bringing marketing people, scientists, and public-health professionals together to promote a new product reveals profound differences in understanding, resulting in barriers not always easy to overcome. An example to illustrate this learning process is the discussion about the primary target group of the marketing campaign. While the SUZY Project is especially concerned about the poorest of the poor, the marketing experts promoting any product primarily target the most easily 'catchable' part of the population, which is definitely not the poorest people. Once this part of the population is 'caught', it is our hope this will serve as a vehicle to reach the poor. There is a need to understand these dynamics from the marketing point of view and to build trust. It is not the intention of the marketing professionals to simply sell the product, but to promote it. Thus, it is understood that the primary target group will comprise those people who have easy access to media that deliver messages about zinc. By activating different channels of communication, we will reach most people, including the poor.

The success of the marketing campaign depends mainly on the effectiveness of the communication messages. Therefore, we have paid adequate attention to the preliminary formative research, resulting in the generation of baseline data about the understanding of diarrhoea, its causes, perceptions, and ways of managing it in the complex context of Bangladesh. Even the name of the disease was found to vary widely. From the point of view of the scientists and health professionals, there are misconceptions about diarrhoea among the general people of Bangladesh, e.g. getting the disease by sitting under a particular tree or perceiving diarrhoea to be linked to an evil spirit. It is not our intention to clarify all the different perceptions of diarrhoea, which have been developed over the ages and are deeply rooted in people's culture and tradition. All we want to try is to reach as many people as possible with our messages about zinc and to translate the benefits of zinc using their own

'language'. However, the formative research has made one thing very clear: if zinc is to become generally used as a treatment for diarrhoea in Bangladesh irrespective of social, economic or ethnic factors, there is no universal argument to convince all users of the benefits of zinc. The communication committee, consisting of SUZY team members, marketing professionals from ACME, and an advertising company, will have to face this challenge of elaborating distinct culturally-appropriate promotional messages for parents and caretakers of children according to their social, educational and economic status, for licensed and un-licensed healthcare providers, homeopaths, drug-sellers, and others.

### Research in support of zinc

From the very beginning, the Project has been supported by operations research, which has been shown to be an essential driver for the development of implementation strategies. As the Project involves a variety of stakeholders and targets a wide range of the population, we have to understand certain dynamics within Bangladeshi society. The following examples illustrate the importance of operations research more for a project like SUZY. To communicate the benefits of zinc more effectively to healthcare providers and thus support the marketing activities, a study has investigated the interac-



*A project field worker carrying out an interview in a remote rural area about zinc tablet*

tion between medical representatives and licensed and un-licensed healthcare providers. In Bangladesh, this interaction is the dominant drug-promotion activity reaching thousands of care providers and will be an essential part of the promotion and distribution of zinc tablets. We have observed care providers spending 90-120 minutes per day receiving medical representatives. Licensed care providers prefer a concise presentation of the product, while un-licensed providers require more



*A patent sublicensing agreement between ICDDR,B and ACME Laboratories Ltd. for the production of dispersible zinc tablets was signed at the ACME headquarters on 17 December 2005. Dr Alejandro Cravioto signed for and on behalf of ICDDR,B and Dr Charles P Larson signed as the Project Director and Principal Investigator of the SUZY Project of ICDDR,B.*

*Dr Jabilur Rahman Sinha signed for and on behalf of ACME Laboratories Ltd. The signing ceremony opened the doors for Nutriset to visit ACME and provide them with technology transfer to launch production of Baby Zinc dispersible tablets. ICDDR,B has thereby successfully completed an important step towards bringing zinc to every child below five across Bangladesh in the treatment of diarrhoea irrespective of gender, equity and socioeconomic status. This partnership between ICDDR,B, ACME, and Nutriset moves us much closer to reaching these goals.*

interaction, explaining drug indications, prescription guidelines, and expected outcomes. Based on the findings of this study, we have developed different communication messages, which are currently being tested in the field.

Another example reflecting the benefits of operations research is the study done under the NGO Service Delivery Programme (NSDP). This study has piloted introduction of the zinc treatment protocol into two selected NSDP field sites and evaluated the additional benefit of training provided to the healthcare providers, including community-based depot-holders. Following a baseline survey, healthcare providers received

training and were supplied with zinc blister packs for sale. The follow-up surveys are currently being done. Interestingly, baseline findings suggest that depot-holders are much less involved in the management of childhood diarrhoea than expected. Whether the introduction and availability of zinc blister packs will alter this pattern is yet to be determined.

Nested in this 'NSDP study' we have also carried out a willingness-to-pay survey. Before introducing dispersible

zinc tablets to the market, we will have to fix a price. Therefore, we have to consider the actual cost of production, the demand for dispersible zinc tablets, which depends on the success of the promotion campaign and, of course, the willingness to pay, which again is influenced by the perceived demand for the product and the economic status of the target population. Thus, we have to fix a price competitive with other zinc products on the market. The survey was

useful in different ways as it has not only verified the willingness to pay among different income-groups that showed a slightly higher willingness in the higher-income group, but it has also shown our communication messages to be effective, resulting in an increased willingness to pay in the lower-income group after they had been informed about the benefits of zinc for their child's well-being.

Besides the operations research directly supporting the project implementation, studies are also being conducted to further investigate the benefits of zinc. One of these studies is evaluating the impact of zinc treatment for diarrhoea with and without follow-up supplementation on the immune and clinical responses. This study is currently being carried out in Mirpur to see if additional supplementation with zinc has any beneficial effect on the clinical and immunological outcomes in children aged 6-24 months with acute diarrhoea caused by enterotoxigenic *E. coli* (ETEC) or other aetiological agents. The study also aims at determining if these regimens have any effect on the future occurrence of acute childhood diarrhoea, ARI, and skin infections in children.

There are still many stories to tell about the SUZY Project! We have not even touched on the training and dissemination activities of the Project. We also have not told you about the very interesting conference in April 2005. If you would like to have the full picture of what has been done so far and what is going on in the SUZY Project, you are cordially invited to visit our regularly-updated home page:

<http://www.icddr.org/activity/SUZY>.

If we have aroused your interest in the SUZY Project or raised concerns, you are most welcome to contact us.

*Contributed by Charles P Larson, Susanne Grimm, and Sumona Liza*



# Staff Arrivals and Separations

## Arrivals

Dr Alejandro Cravioto, a Mexican national and internationally-renowned scientist, joined ICDDR,B on 14 July 2005 as Deputy Executive Director. This position is newly created to facilitate scientific and research leadership in the Centre and to act as chief executive of the Centre in the absence of the Executive Director.

Dr Cravioto obtained his PhD degree in Medical Microbiology and Microbial Genetics in 1981 from the University of London, UK; MD degree in 1973 from Universidad Nacional



Autónoma de México, Mexico City; Diploma in Tropical Public Health with distinction in 1977 from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; UK; and Residency in Pediatrics during 1973-1976 in the National Institute of Pediatrics, Mexico City, Mexico.

Before joining ICDDR,B, Dr Cravioto was the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City and simultaneously was Director of PAHO/WHO Collaborative Centre for Human Resources at the same university. Previously, he held other positions in various organizations. These include: Councillor, National Commission of Medical Arbitration, Office of the President of Mexico; President, National Fund HIV/AIDS in Mexico; Professor and Chair, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City; Director, Division of Microbiology, Center for Research in Infectious Diseases, National Institute of Public Health, Cuernavaca, Mexico; Deputy Director, National Institute of Child Health and Technology, Mexico; and Head, New Immunizing Agents Program, National Institute of Child Health and Technology, Mexico.

However, he spent most of his career in teaching and supervising graduate students at his alma mater--Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. He served as honorary professor in two other universities in Peru and Argentina.

Dr Cravioto holds prestigious positions as President, Chair, and Member in the governing and trustee boards of more than a dozen national and international organizations and has membership in a number of national and international associations, academies, societies, and editorial boards of journals. For his outstanding works, he received 11 national awards, including one from the Mexican Government. He also received Albert Schweitzer Medal from the Albert Schweitzer World Academy of Medicine in Warsaw, Poland and Medal of the Instituto de Medicina Regional de la Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, Corrientes, Argentina. Dr Alejandro Cravioto is a prolific author with more than 100 publications both in English and Spanish, including two books and several non-research publications.

We also welcome our new colleague Ms Sheila Ryan, an Irish national, who joined the Centre on the 1st May as Senior Associate in the External Relations and Institutional Development Office. Ms Ryan has an MA degree in Development Studies from the University of East Anglia, UK and also has diplomas in Banking and Auditing, Office Management and Systems and Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Ms Ryan has extensive working experience in the field of banking, human resource planning and development,



management, organizational planning and social development. Previously, she worked at the Centre during 1991-1993 as a consultant to the Maternal &

Child Health-Family Planning (MCH-FP) Project. Ms Ryan has worked in Bangladesh as a consultant with various international donors, including CIDA, EU, DFID, UNICEF, and USAID. She has also worked as a consultant with various local NGOs in Bangladesh.

## Separations

Dr Lauren Blum, Medical Anthropologist in the Public Health Sciences Division of ICDDR,B, left the Centre on 27 September 2005 to join



her husband in the Congo. During her five-year tenure, she contributed to community nutrition intervention studies, MINIMat, drowning inves-

tigations, reproductive health and arsenic research. Dr Blum also studied human behaviour in infectious disease outbreaks, such as dengue, Nipah virus, and diarrhoea. She trained many social science students conducting research at the Centre.

Dr Beena Varghese, who was working as a Health Economist in the Health Systems and Infectious Diseases Division, left the Centre for



Bangalore, India, on 9 October after completion of her three-year term. During the early period of her tenure, Dr Varghese was Head of the Health Econom-

ics Unit of the Public Health Sciences Division. Her work on health equity, especially on the reproductive health status of poor women in rural Bangladesh compared to other countries in the South Asian region, was commendable. She also investigated whether targeting of health interventions based on socioeconomic class is relevant for developing countries.

Glimpse bids a warm farewell to Dr Lauren Blum and Dr Beena Varghese and wishes them all the best. ◆

# Centre's present and former staff honoured

Recently, several of our former and present personnel have been honoured by various organizations at home and abroad for achievements in their respective fields. Glimpse congratulates all of them:

ICDDR,B alumnus, James F Phillips, Senior Associate in the Policy Research Division, Population Council, New York, received the 2004 Marjorie Horn Operations Research Award presented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This award is given to outstanding individuals who have excellence in conducting and utilizing research. The Marjorie Horn Operations Research Award is named after USAID's former Deputy Chief of the Research, Technology, and Utilization Division, who held the post prior to her untimely death in September 2002. Her commitment to conducting and utilization of research for the betterment of the lives of women and men around



James F Phillips receiving the 2004 Marjorie Horn Operations Research Award from USAID's Jeff Spieler (Photo credit: Laryssa Chomiack, USAID)

the world was inspirational to those who worked with her. While at ICDDR,B, Dr Phillips focused on measuring the demographic components of family-planning programmes and conducting field experiments in reproductive change. He directed the Matlab Community Health and Family Planning Project in Bangladesh, which demonstrated the role of family planning services in reducing fertility in the country. Dr Phillips worked for the Population Council in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States. He holds a masters degree in Population Studies from the University of Hawaii and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Michigan, USA. Dr Phillips received the award for his pioneering approaches to programme-relevant research, his dedication and commitment to the improvement of family-planning and reproductive health programmes, his support for building the capacity of researchers and institutions in developing countries, and for his perseverance in working to ensure the broad application of research results.

As an advisor to the Ghana Health Service, Dr Phillips led the way in bridging the gap between research results and programme implementation. These efforts included the development of a methodology by which studies were used for building consensus for health service reforms at the national, regional, and community levels. In 2000, Dr Phillips and his colleagues used this methodology to launch the Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) initiative, which mobilizes volunteers, resources, and cultural institutions to support community-based primary healthcare throughout Ghana.

Professor Frances Aboud, Adjunct Scientist of the Centre, received the 2004 Public/Community Service Award of the Canadian Psychology Association on 9



Prof Frances Aboud

June 2005 at the annual meeting of the Association.. She was rewarded for the community service that she rendered to the people of rural Bangladesh while working at ICDDR,B. Professor Aboud's work in Bangladesh concerned early childhood development programmes with mothers and children. She conducted research on some NGO programmes in rural Bangladesh designed to improve the physical, mental and social well-being of children. As a result of her research, the programmes have been improved and re-evaluated. She also explored gaps in the knowledge of specialists and coordinators of early childhood programmes. Consequently, Professor Aboud presented a course on basic principles of child development to 20 personnel from 8 different NGOs.

Dr Bonita Stanton, former Principal Investigator of the Urban Volunteer Programme of ICDDR,B and now Chair of Pediatrics at Wayne State University,



Dr Bonita Stanton

USA, has been named an editor of the 18th edition of the 'Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics.' The publication served as the gold standard--nationally and internationally--among the textbooks on paediatrics for

more than 60 years. Dr Stanton will share editorial duties with Dr Robert Kliegman, Chair of Pediatrics at the Medical College of Wisconsin and Dr Hal Jenson, Director of Research at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Dr Richard Behrman, former senior editor, will serve as an editorial advisor. The textbook, published by WB Saunders Co., will be released in 2007.



Dr Abbas Bhuiya

Dr Abbas Bhuiya, Senior Social Scientist of the Centre, has recently been elected a member of the Board of COHRED (Commission on Health Research for Development). COHRED is an international organization established in 1993, based in Geneva with a strong global network. COHRED is mandated to develop national systems for effective health research all over the world, especially in low-income countries to identify priorities, conduct essential research that guides their health policies and practice, and to manage a system through which the efforts of all players can be harmonized. Dr Bhuiya's work at the Centre on community health, interactions on health and poverty, health and non-health interventions for equity will benefit COHRED while he himself will have the opportunity to bring back global perspectives to the Centre's work.



Dr A H Baqui

Dr Abdullah Hel Baqui, Associate Professor, International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, has been named an Honorary Editorial Consultant to the British journal *The Lancet*. Dr Baqui spent most of his career at ICDDR,B, addressing issues of urban health, maternal and child health. Although he is now based at Johns Hopkins University, he continues to collaborate with the Centre and is a member of the editorial advisory committee of the *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*.

Mr Md. Musharrof Hossain, Senior Manager, Human Resources, was elected President of the Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management (BSHRM). Created in December 2001,



BSHRM is mandated to promote growth of human resources professionals in the country through providing education, networking, knowledge sharing, and transfer of best practices across all sectors. Mr Musharrof Hossain was also the founder General Secretary of the Society since its inception. He lectures as a guest faculty of Human Resources courses in the MBA programmes of several leading private universities in Bangladesh. He is also a member of



Professor David Sack presenting a bouquet to greet Mr Musharrof Hossain

the Society for Human Resources Management in the USA. The Centre management congratulated Mr Musharrof Hossain on his election as President of BSHRM in a formal gathering of senior officials at the Executive Director's Conference Room.

Dr Tanvir Ahmed, Senior Research Investigator in the Immunology Unit of the Laboratory Sciences Division has recently returned to ICDDR,B after completing his postdoctoral fellowship programme at USDA-Human Research Center on Aging at Tufts University. The Ellison Medical Foundation-International Nutrition Foundation has awarded him a two and-half-year fellowship programme. During this fellowship, he was awarded three more competitive Young Investigator awards for oral and poster presentations at different scientific meetings in the USA. The most recent



Dr Tanvir Ahmed at work in the Immunology Lab of ICDDR,B

one was the prestigious Paul F Glenn First Runner-up Award for meritorious research in the area of biomedical gerontology at the American Aging Association Meeting held in June 2005 in Oakland, California. This was a reward for his presentation of "T cell receptor proximal effect of vitamin E supplementation in old mice: reversal of the age-associated decrease in effective immune synapse formation in CD4+ T cells". In addition, Dr Ahmed also received two fellowships in the USA and South Africa. ■

## ICDDR,B Alumni Reunions at home and abroad

The Fourth Alumni Reunion was held on 8 December 2005 at ICDDR,B. Over 400



The alumni enjoyed a cultural function before dinner

alumni and senior staff members of the Centre participated.

The 3:00-9:00 pm events included: presentation of historic photographs by Mrs. Jean Sack, discussions, tours, tea, a cultural show by present staff members, alumni and their family members, followed by a dinner and raffle draw at the Rooftop Pavilion of Sasakawa International Auditorium of ICDDR,B.

Mr. MR Bashir, President of the ICDDR,B Alumni Association, chaired the meetings held at the Sasakawa International Auditorium. He thanked the Centre management, specifically Executive Director Prof David Sack and his colleagues, for their valuable support and facilities extended to the alumni. He said, "the Centre belongs to us, and we belong to the Centre." The alumni were pleased to know that they can have their pathological tests done at the Centre's laboratories for only 50% of the actual charges and can use the Library free of charge on presentation of the ID cards issued to them.

An illustrated souvenir was published on the occasion and was distributed among the participants. Chairperson of the ICDDR,B Board of Trustees Professor Terence H Hull wrote in his message sent for the souvenir "...The alumni have a role in the life of the Centre. You are all role models for our younger staff, and keepers of the history of ICDDR,B, from the early days of the Cholera Hospital and the 'Barge' at Matlab..." Former Director Professor Demissie Habte also sent his greetings to the alumni wishing them a successful Reunion Day.

Professor David Sack, Executive Director of the Centre, in his speech and

specifically in a write-up in the souvenir, acknowledged the contributions of the former staff members in enabling the Centre to win prestigious prizes, like the Gates Award for Global Health in 2000 and the Independence Day Award 2005 from the Bangladesh Government.

Mr. MA Wahed, General Secretary of the ICDDR,B Alumni Association, presented a summary of the alumni activities during 2004-2005.

### USA

Nearly 70 ICDDR,B alumni and their families gathered on 19 June 2005 for a reunion picnic on the Chesapeake Bay in Northern Maryland. Included were former employees of the Cholera Research Laboratory: Henry and Bunny Mosley, William and Qaneta Greenough, David Sachar, Elias Abrutyn, Joe Gomes,



ICDDR,B alumni reunion/family picnic in the USA

Rohana Atikaris (Susan Woodward), and AF Raisur Rahman. American researchers and administrators joined with dozens of Bangladeshis who have settled in the USA.

A potluck lunch, boating, photo archives and movies, personal memories, and many warm greetings were shared at the Charter Hall Retreat Center. The group named Em Pannah and Abdullah Baqui as their USA Chapter representatives of the ICDDR,B Alumni Association, working with the Child Health Foundation in Columbia, Maryland.

### UK

On 10 September 2005, a small alumni reunion was held in a private park near the London School of Hygiene &

Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Brian and Pauline Seaton (1977-1982) invited over 65 UK-based alumni. Hannah Lemon (2004-2005) arranged the venue with assistance from Ann Ainsworth Hill of



*ICDDR,B alumni reunion/family picnic in the UK*

LSHTM. Professor David Sack and Mrs. Jean Sack welcomed the participants to share stories, catch up on personal news, and picnic on samochas, fruit, and mishtis.

The group included MA Wahed and relatives, alumni Andrew Hall, Sally McGregor, Ayesha Siddika, and Sohel Saikat, ICDDR,B's graduate student Fahmida Tofayel, ERID official Sheila Ryan, and Peter McLean, chairperson of partner UK charity agency, International Health Solutions Trust. ●

## ***JHPN invites articles on water and sanitation***

The Editorial Board of the Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition (JHPN) recently approved for inclusion of a new section on Water and Sanitation. Dr Steve Luby, Head of the Infectious Diseases and Vaccine Sciences Programme of ICDDR,B is the Section Editor. For more details of the scope and coverage of the new section, Dr Luby may be contacted at [sluby@icddr.org](mailto:sluby@icddr.org) or [jhpn@icddr.org](mailto:jhpn@icddr.org). The other

sections are: Emerging Infections, Health Systems, Immunization, Nutrition, Population, and Reproductive Health.

High-quality articles relating to public-health aspects of water and sanitation are invited from the contributors.

Recent statistics show that the impact factor of the Journal has doubled. Text of the Journal and information for contributors can be accessed online at <http://www.icddr.org/jhpn>.

During 2004 and 2005, the Journal had published three theme-based issues on Health Equity, Healthcare Use, and A New Research Agendum for Introducing New Vaccines in Developing Countries'. Two more theme-based issues on Arsenic and Water Contamination in Developing Countries and Reproductive and New-born Health, are scheduled to be published in 2006.

The Journal, published under the leadership of Professor David A Sack, Executive Director of ICDDR,B, is indexed/abstracted by all major indexing/abstracting systems, including PubMed/Medline, Current Contents: Clinical Medicine, Google Scholar, Popline, Embase, Elsevier GeoAbstracts, CAB health, and many others.

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