

Association For Environment And Human Resource Development (AFEAHRD)
(*A commitment to change*)

Report of the Study Circle on Environment and Health

Study Circle on Environment and Health Report December 2003.

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Executive Summary: The next few pages contain a brief summary report of the 'Study Circle on Environment and Health', a project carried out by the 'Association for Environment and Human Resource Development (AFEAHRD)' in collaboration with the 'National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)'.

Study Circle on Environment and Health initiated its first round activities from April 2003 and ended through a central meeting on October 2003. The followings are a brief description on participants' profile, its methodology and an evaluation. The outcome of the ten circles ended successfully with quite a handful of worthy recommendations, which we believe would go a long way in pointing out some causes & consequences of common pollution related health problems along with their probable remedial actions which we hope to place before the policy makers.

Facilitators, Organizers and Coordinators selection procedure and their responsibilities: Study circle Facilitators, Organizers and co-ordinators were selected through interview process held at AFEAHRD office on April 19, 2003. They were assigned to carry out the following responsibilities:

Organizer: Organizing the SC members, carrying out administrative as well as organizational activities and report writing.

Facilitator: To make the SC discussion lively and maintain neutrality for the smooth completion of the process.

Coordinator: Coordinating the whole SC process.

Training of the trainers (ToT): Mr. Zaheed Hossain Majumder and Mr. Abu Mokeram Khondaker were given three days' intensive training on facilitating Study Circle program by NDI. These two then trained the Facilitators, Organizers and supporting staffs rendering service for the SC on voluntary basis.

Group Selection Criterion: Due importance was given before selecting the SC group participants. Prior to the selection, team comprised of Coordinator and Organizer had to visit the prospective areas in order to talk personally with each and every member of the groups. A Project Management Committee (PMC) was formed with senior members of AFEAHRD. The core objectives of the committee were to monitor the project, selecting the project staff and SC groups. Their responding pattern determined the suitability for being selected as a member of a SC Group. Our utmost endeavor was to develop two types Study Circle Groups; one with professionals and the other general citizens' circle with cross-sectional people. Amongst the ten circles, 6 were professionals, comprised of College lecturers, Immams, MBA professionals, IT professionals, AFEAHRD staff circle and Journalists. The remaining four were groups comprised of general people.

Ground rules for discussion: The ground rules confirmed the spontaneous and unhindered participation of each and every participant. Some salient features of ground rules were: Each has to be given equal opportunity to talk, opinion of others has to be

respected, will listen attentively to what others say, we will learn from each other & will wait for my turn to talk. Some of the house rules of the SC were: To arrival on time, give scope to others, will avoid side talk, cooperate with the facilitator, be an attentive listener, turn off the mobile phone & will not interfere while other talks. To make all these things work well, a mock Study Circle was arranged at NDI Office at Gulshan, Dhaka with the facilitators, organizers & a couple of AFEAHRD staffs taking part in it. This mock SC was facilitated by Mr. Abdul Momeen where the facilitators were specially trained to deal with unpleasant situations like making one participant understand that he/she is taking too much time and thus depriving others from expressing themselves. Facilitators were also trained to discourage discussion of irrelevant issues. The participants appreciated rules like raising hand before making questions, non-interference while another participant is talking. And last but not the least, participants were given a multiple-choice question answer form to evaluate the Study Circle process. Evaluation made by them has been shown in a different paragraph.

The Gender Factor/Maintain Gender Equilibrium: Right from the beginning of the project, we tried to maintain gender balance in the SC groups. Out of the total 120 participants, 42 were female. Two groups were formed exclusively with women while in others; there were women participants too.

Date, time and venue of the Study Circle: The participants were given absolute autonomy to select & determine venue & time of each of their circles. The extent of the autonomy was so flexible that pre-fixed date of discussion had to be rescheduled so that it becomes more convenient for them to participate. As for time, the 'Imam' group opined to start the discussion of their group at 6.30 in the morning, Students & Lecturers at the Mid of the Day & Joar Shahra & Mirpur at night, which was in absolute compliance with their intention. In addition to this, they were given ample time to raise questions and get things clarified in the two-hour sessions. As for the venue, we tried to cover different location of Dhaka city. As for example, Mirpur, Pollobi & Sector-13 (North West Dhaka). Elephant Road (Center Dhaka), Gandaria, Old Dhaka (South Dhaka), Sahjahanpur (East Dhaka), Gulshan-2 & Joarshara (North East & North Dhaka).

Features of the circles are given below:

Immam circle: Prominent and leading Immams from different Jame Mosques of Dhaka city were participants of this circle.

College Teacher Circle: Twelve-women lecturers from Mirza Abbas Mohila Degree College were participant of this circle. Mostly they discussed on their personal experience.

Journalist circle: Young Journalist of front line dailies were participants of this group.

Dhaka University Student Circle: Students from various department of the university of Dhaka are participated in this circle.

M.B.A. professional circle: This group was formed with MBA professionals.

Pollobi, Mirpur general circle: This has been a group with cross-sectional people of the areas.

Gandaria women circle: This group was comprised of professionals like lady doctor, teacher and housewife.

IT Professional Circle: Professionals of Information Technology (IT) from different location and different institution of Dhaka city were members of this group.

Joar Sahara citizen circle: Cross sectional Citizens of Joar Sahara, Kuri (North Dhaka) were members of this group.

AFEAHRD'S voluntary staffs circle: This was formed with twelve Study Circle volunteer staffs of AFEAHRD. This circle was conducted by AFEAHRD and was as a test run. Mainly Facilitators, Organizers and supporting staffs were involved in the discussion.

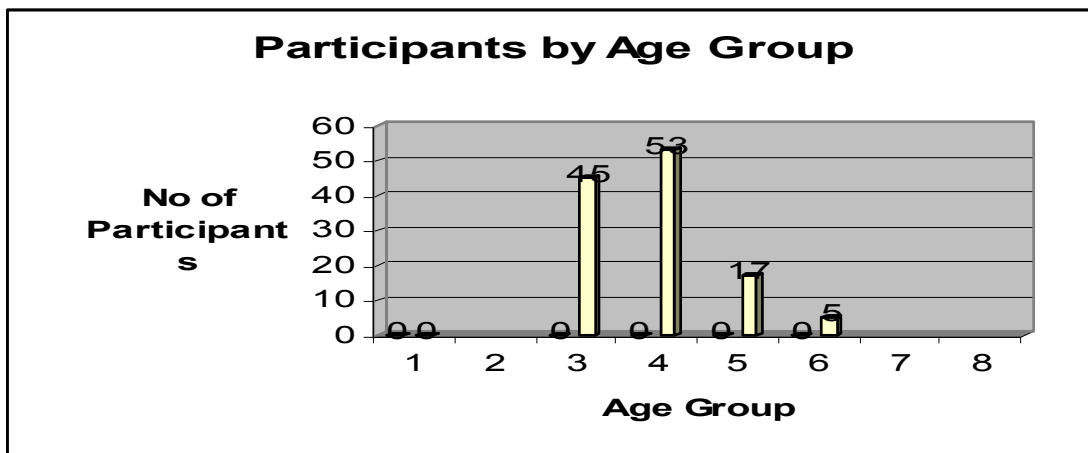
SL. NO.	Name of the Circle	Date	Time	Venue
01.	AFEAHRD'S Staff circle	April 20-25, 2003	From 5.00pm to 7.00pm	Conference room NDI Gulshan, Dhaka
02.	College Teacher Circle	May 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25, 2003	From 2.00pm to 4.00pm	Mirza Abbas Mohila Degree College, Shahjahanpur, Dhaka
03.	Dhaka University Student Circle	May 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30, 2003	From 2.00pm to 4.00pm	Conference room, 103 Elephant road, Dhaka
04.	MBA Professional Circle	25/05/'03, 31/05/'03, 07/06/'03, 14/06/'03, 20/06/'03	From 10.00am to 12.00am	Conference room, Sheba Telecom, Landview complex, Gulshan-2, Dhaka
05.	Pollobi Mirpur Citizen Circle	June 03, 04, 05, 06 and 08, 2003	From 4:00pm to 6:00pm	PKSF conference room Mirpur, Dhaka
06.	Gandaria woman Circle	June 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11, 2003	From 4:00pm to 6:00pm	Gandaria Mohila Sammity, 18, Dinonath Sen road, Gandaria, Dhaka.
07.	Immam Circle	June 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14, 2003	From 6.30am to 8.30am	270 Mollartac, Uttara, Dhaka.

08	IT Professional Circle	June 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18, 2003	From 7:00pm to 9:00pm	Gandaria Mohila Sammity, 18, Dinonath Sen road, Gandaria, Dhaka.
09.	Joar Shahara Citizen Circle	June 11, 15, 17, 19 and 20, 2003	From 7:00pm to 9:00pm	77, Joar Shahra, (3 rd Floor), Dhaka.
10.	Journalist Circle	July 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, 2003	From 9:00 pm to 11:00pm.	Conference Room, AFEAHRD, 103, Elephant Road, Dhaka.

Participants' Profile of Running 'Study Circle': As it has been stated earlier, because of a well articulated participant selection criterion, we were able to form SC groups with people of varied age, profession and education. Variations of age, sex/ gender profession as well as education of the participants' has been shown below:

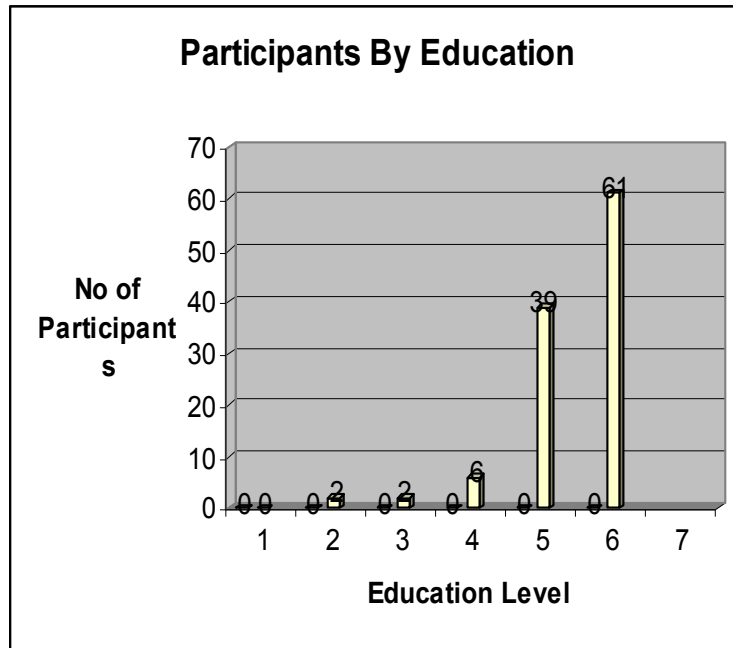
Participants by Age

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>No of Participants</u>
16-25	45
26-35	53
36-45	17
46+	5



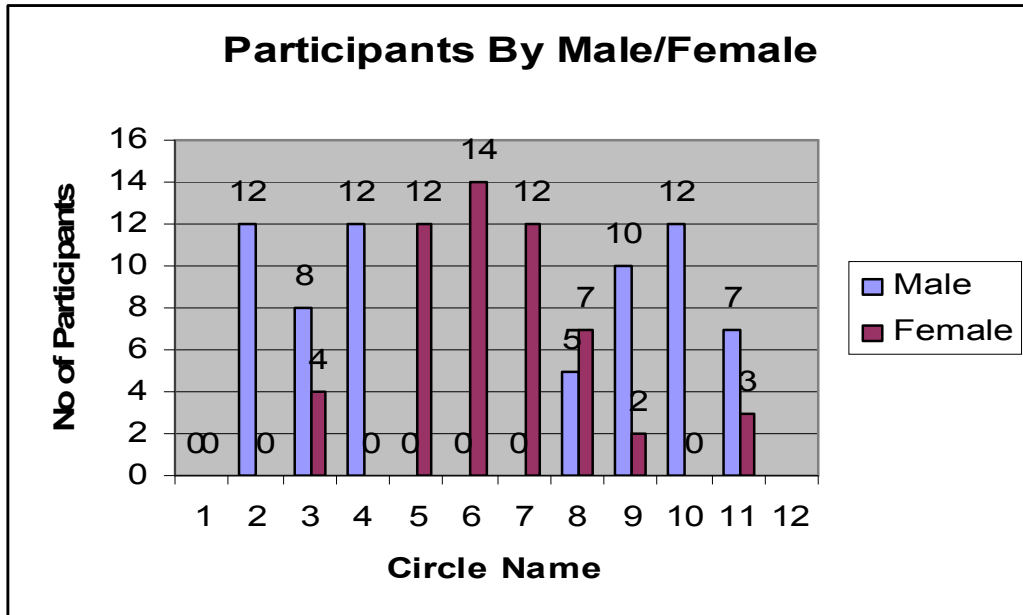
Participants by Education

<u>Education Qualification</u>	<u>No of Participants</u>
Below S.S.C	2
S.S.C.	2
H.S.C.	6
Graduate	39
Post Graduate	61



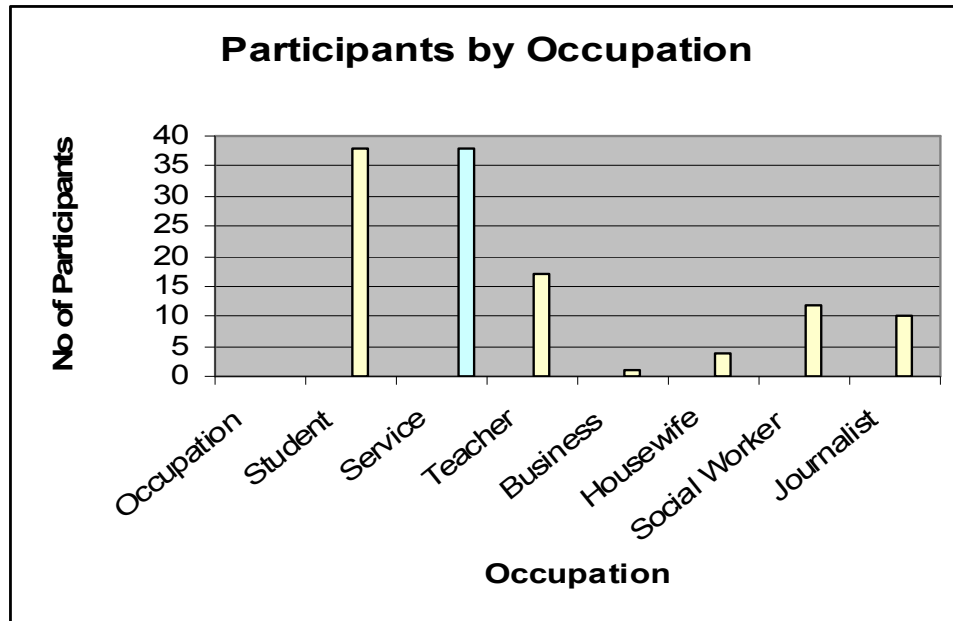
Participants by gender

Male	Female	Circle Name
12	0	I.T Professional
8	4	AFEAHRD Staffs
12	0	MBA Professional
0	12	College lecturer
0	14	Gandaria Women
0	12	Immam Circle
5	7	Mirpur Pollobi citizen circle
10	2	Joar Shahra Citizen
12	0	Dhaka University Students



Participants by Occupation

Occupation	No of Participants
Student	38
Service	38
Teacher	17
Business	1
Housewife	4
Social Worker	12
Journalist	10



Common platform of discussion and activities other than discussion: Each of the groups was given some common questions to initiate discussion. They were given an informative booklet with the following topics: 1) Unplanned Urbanization 2) Solid Waste Pollution 3) Air Pollution 4) Sound Pollution and 5) Water Pollution. In addition to this, we also provided them an Annex comprised of Environmental laws and affiliated newspaper clippings. The numbers of participants of the circles were between 10 and 12. Each circle discussion ran for 5 days with 2- hours discussion time. The purpose of the SC was to take initiative in a peaceful and democratic way in order to protect the Environment in general and health in particular.

Study Circle Discussion and its outcome: Other than discussion, the response pattern of the SC participants came out in the form of finding out causes, consequences as well as indicating on the remedial steps that could be taken on each specific type of pollution. This has been shown below. The order denotes from common to group specific.

Unplanned Urbanization

Important Recommendations:

- # Inter-departmental coordination has to be maintained amongst water supply and sewerage authority, Electric supply authority, telephone & telegraph, gas connection authority. Administrative functions of greater Dhaka have to be decentralized.
- # All commercial activities could be transferred to commercial capital Chittagong.

- # Service delivered by the Government run city corporation could be assigned to private sectors.
- # Play ground, parks, ponds, wetlands have to be maintained properly. These have been kept in consideration while developing new towns and cities.
- # Industrial area, Commercial area, Residential area have to be setup in particular areas.
- # Houses have to be built as per approved design and there have to be ample open space around them while building.
- # High-rise buildings have to be built with proper earthquake resisting mechanism.
- # Community mobilization group could be formed with teachers, head of religious institutions and ward commissioners of municipal areas with view to gear up local area development.
- # Laws have to be enforced strictly. This has to be complemented with the enforcement of Metropolitan court Act.
- # Dhaka City Corporation and other related Ministries' employees have to be trained so that they deliver their service more efficiently.
- # With a view to ease traffic congestion, diversion roads could be constructed and in special cases, some roads could be made one-way. Cities and towns have to be expanded to its out skirting areas.
- # All types of illegal establishments including unauthorized slums have to be evacuated in order to implement planned development works.
- # Laws have to be enforced properly and existing laws loop holes has to be amended.

Other Recommendations:

- # While planning, the case of sustainable development has to be kept in mind.
- # Coordination between the Government and Citizen has to be made stronger.
- # Broadcast media have to take stronger initiative to promote planned urbanization. For advertisements in medias like Television, Radio, Press or Cinema, there has to be either visual or non-visual elements promoting environment.
- # In order to widen the roads, the initiatives have to be from the part of the citizen.
- # Road junctions have to be brought down in order to bring down traffic congestion.
- # Concerned departments of the Government have to be made more accountable so that people can rely on such mechanism.

Solid Waste Pollution

Important Recommendations:

- # Waste should not be treated as waste but as asset. Waste could be turned into biogas and natural manure/compost.
- # Instead of roadside dustbin, imitative could be taken to collect waste from each and every home. If roadside dustbins are to be kept, these have to be built using modern technique and with cover so that garbage does not spill over.
- # Waste has to be disposed regularly and at night.
- # Awareness has to be developed to separate Degradable; non-degradable and harmful waste at home.

Medical waste could be destroyed inside the medical compound. If these are to be brought out of the compound, it has to be done using custom-made vehicle so that germs does not spread. Recyclable items like syringe, saline, bottle could be collected separately.

Scientific and sustainable policy has to be adopted for waste disposal management.

Under no circumstances, medical waste should be mixed with other waste.

Number of public toilets has to be increased with adequate trained manpower for proper maintenance. Public toilet could be built at re-fueling stations with easy access for general mass. There could be separate toilet arrangement for women.

Other recommendations:

Punitive measure could be adopted for throwing waste indiscriminately.

Consciousness could be strengthened through mass media, like Radio, TV, Drama, Leaflet, Billboard etc. Teachers, Head of the religious institutions could be trained to motivate people not to throw waste indiscriminately. Local area based decentralization could be done for waste disposal and local ward commissioner could be assigned the responsibility to coordinate the job.

'Rapid Action Team' could be formed for waste disposal with concerned individuals from the ministry of Environment and Forest, City Corporation and Ministry of Health.

Nurses and midwives of hospitals could be trained for proper disposal of medical waste. Punitive measure could be taken for those violating rule.

Mills and factories have to be re-allocated for the town.

Non-government organizations could be given annual contract to dispose waste.

People could be motivated to bury dead animals and left-over of sacrificial animals in their own community.

Air Pollution

Important Recommendations:

Brick-kilns has to be re-allocated at a particular place far from the city.

Chimneys have to be made taller and natural gas has to be used instead of firewood.

Construction work of roads has to be carried out at night.

Old vehicles have to be banned from playing the city streets.

The following measures could be taken to ban smoking:

#Smoking in public places has to be banned.

Higher taxes has to be imposed on cigarettes and materials used to manufacture them.

Selling of smoking related items at public places has to be banned and such items must not to be sold to customers below a particular age limit.

Advertising of smoking by popular models in theater, cinema halls or in any other mass media has to be banned.

The Government could fix particular places for smokers.

Insecticides to destroy flies, mosquitoes, could be used at a limited extent.

Proper ventilation facilities have to be kept while building houses.

Driver could be trained by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to prevent air pollution.

Sound Pollution

Important Recommendations:

Law has to be enforced properly. Concern authority have to take strict measure so that decibel limit applicable to silent areas, residential areas, commercial areas, industrial areas, mixed areas are followed by individuals vehicles etc.

Sound limit measuring machines has to be set up at different parts of the city so that it is monitored properly.

Hydraulic horns have to be banned and the use of horns has to be kept within the acceptable decibel limit.

High sound from defective vehicles could be checked by imposing laws.

The use of mike in residential, silent areas, in front of schools, colleges and hospitals has to be banned. In the case of use for special purposes, the use has to be kept limited. The use of mike in metropolitan area has to be banned in areas other than specified by the municipal authority. The use has to be restricted only for campaign, meeting, procession etc.

Mills and factories adjoining residential areas have to be reallocated in industrial areas far from residential areas.

Activities like media campaign, formation of civic committees of campaigns could be carried out by heads of religious institutions in order to raise civic consciousness.

Traffic system has to be modernized. Programs like training for both the traffic police and drivers, recruiting more traffic police and strict laws for traffic rule violations could be initiated.

Other Recommendations:

Specific place could be fixed for procession, mass gathering etc. Silent procession, leaflet, sticker could be promoted to prevent sound pollution.

Civic consciousness could be raised for not to use firecrackers, radio and television with high volume.

Blowing of horns could be banned in front of schools, colleges and hospitals.

Playing music with volume in shops selling audio cassette has to be banned.

Institution based teaching to prevent sound pollution could be adopted.

Residential areas should be developed far from rail track or airports.

'Rapid Action Team' has to be formed by government to keep constant vigilance.

Water Pollution

Important Recommendations:

- # Connecting sewerage line to rivers has to be banned. This could be done with strict laws.
- # Sewerage line has to be arranged separately from water supply lines. These are to be maintained properly.
- # Discharge connection for toxic produced in mills and factories has to be diverted to waste treatment plant instead of discharging those into rivers, canals etc.
- # Illegal encroachment and structure from riverbanks has to be enforced to prevent such encroachment. A total enforcement of wetland law has to be enforced.
- # Age old and defective vessels has to be removed. Strict sanction has to be imposed so that vessels do not discharge any toxic materials in the water bodies.
- # In order to prevent water logging, water drainage lines has to be checked on timely basis and kept obstacle free.
- # Dredging has to be done regularly so that rivers are kept navigatable.
- # Instead of utilization under ground water, surface water could be recycled for everyday use. Rainwater could be preserved to meet the purpose.
- # In the case of newly developed town, digging of ponds could be re-excavated.
- # Sanction has to be imposed so that no body throws bodies of dead animals into river bodies.

Other recommendations:

- # Water supply pipes have to be changed after a specific period of times.
- # Mass media could be used to raise civic consciousness.
- # In order to prevent water born diseases, people have to be made conscious to use their water reservoirs regularly.
- # People could be trained for not to misuse water and be conscious for cleanliness.
- # Composed could be used instead of chemical fertilizer.
- # Excessive use of bleaching power could be brought down in water.

Representative Team: The recommendation represents a well aware conscious civic group powered to raise their voice for effective change and development in public welfare. With the recommendations at hand, we have decided to approach the policy makers at both regional as well as national level so that these are materialized if not all together but in phases. The hierarchy will be from the local ward commissioner to the Member of Parliament and Ministers of concerned ministries. We have formed a core group which we have named '**Representatives Team**' with two participants from each of the Study Circle groups. Other than sitting informally with people in different areas of Dhaka, This group will approach the policy maker with the recommendations. At the interim period between the closure of Study Circle and Report Presentation and Discussion Meeting, this group sat Five times for discussion with a view to materialize the recommendations. Organizing the Report Presentation and Discussion Meeting has been one of their grand successes.

How we compiled the discussion: As we have mentioned earlier, our discussion pattern approached in three stages; finding causes, assessing consequences and placing forward recommendations. At the beginning of the discussion, our organizers and

facilitators had to take notes from each and every Study circles. After compiling those notes they handed it over to the coordinator for verification. Once the coordinator had gone through it; it was again given back to the representative committee to distribute it to the Group participants to check whether any crucial point is missing or not. Their feed back was re-compiled and was given the form of final report which has been presented at the 'Report Presentation and Discussion meeting'.

Report presentation and discussion: It has been mentioned earlier that we segmented the whole Study Circle into two parts; discussion and a set of recommendations in light of the discussion. As part of the presentation process we organized the following events:

The following honorable guests were present as a guest of honors:

Guest of honor:

Mr.Md. Nazim Alam

Chairman, Standing Committee, Ministry of Environment and Forest

Dr. Owen Lippert

Resident Director

NDI, Bangladesh.

Prof. Janilur Reza Chowdhury

V.C. BRAC University

President, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA)

Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed (Retd. Professor DU)

Vice President, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA)

Mr. Makram Ouais

Senior Program Manager

NDI

A.N.M. Wahed (Former DG DOE)

Environmental Advisor, AFEAHRD

Dr. M. A. Bari, (Physicist)

Prof. Kazi Modina, (Retd, Chairman Geography Dept. Eden University College)

ECmember, AFEAHRD

Report Presentation and Discussion Meeting

Date: October 17, 2003

Venue: 'Bhashkar Novera Hall', National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka

Program Scheduled

Sl. No	Programs	Time	Venue
01	Rally on Environment and Health	9:00am to 9:45am	From Shahbag National Museum to via TSC and back to National Museum
02	Tea break	9:45am to 10:15am	Bhashkar Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka.
03	Report presentation and discussion meeting.	10:15 am to 12:30pm.	Bhashkar Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka.
04	Break for pray and lunch	12:30pm to 2:30pm.	Bhashkar Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka.
05	Certificate distribution and prize giving ceremony	2:30pm to 3:30pm	Bhashkar Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka.
06	Tea break	3:30pm to 4:00pm	Bhashkar Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka.
07	Cultural program on 'Environment and Health'	4:00pm to 6:30pm	Bhashkar Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka.
08	Closing	6:30pm	Bhashkar Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbag, Dhaka.

Rally: Participants from different circles organized a rally on Environment and Health. The prime objective of this rally was to create mass awareness among general people on the impact of Environment of Health.

Certificate distribution and prize giving ceremony: This was a joint program by NDI and AFEAHRD. At the distribution ceremony, the recipients reiterated their commitment for the protection of Environment.

Cultural Program on Environment and Health: Cultural program was organized by members from various circles. Events like song, drama, dance were the main attraction of this program.

Evaluation from the Participants

Evaluation is to be the nucleus of any fact finding investigative process. This has been no exception for the case of the Study Circle on Environment and Health program. This was carried out through a questionnaire distributed amongst the SC participants. The evaluation was carried out on the four following features. These are:

- * Study Circle process
- * Facilities and services given to the SC members
- * Supporting Booklet and
- * Capability of the facilitators'

Study Circle process and methodology:

The process and methodology as a whole represents raw response by the participants. It depicts their opinion as well as what they thought of this process. Although there has been done negative opinion, but most of it has been in the affirmative. The questions and their responding pattern are given below:

Question 1: Participants were asked to comment on the overall process of the study circle:

- 0% bad.
- 4% partially good
- 15% good
- 81% excellent.

Comments:

1. Such SC can play a vital role in National Development.
2. It's nice initiative and we expect it to be continued in the Dhaka city.
3. The process is satisfactory.
4. We expect it to be materialized.
5. We expect greater participation by mass people.
6. Matters of public interest could be solved through such process.
7. Such initiative would help to raise self-consciousness.
8. Such initiative should be made part of the National decision making process.

Question no. 2: Participants gave their opinion on how they consider their participation in the study circle.

- 68% of the participants felt that participation in the study circle was extremely valuable.
- 22% felt that it was highly valuable.
- 10% thought it as valuable.
- 0% not valuable.

Comments:

1. We have gained a lot.
2. Varied opinion through this process.
3. It should be given a spill over effect to the mass people.

Question no.3: Participants were asked to give their opinion whether the study circle met their expectation or not?

- 33% of the participants felt the study circle **fully met** their expectation.
- 45% felt it **met** their expectation.
- 20% felt it **partially met** their expectation.
- 2% felt it **not met** their expectation.

Comments:

1. I would consider it a success when i will be able to apply knowledge gained from it to the society.
2. Shortage of time served as drawback to broader discussion.

Question no. 4: Participants were asked to give their opinion on the objectives of the study circle and whether they have been met or not?

- 30% of the participants think that the objectives of the study circle have been **fully achieved**.
- 47% thought they have been **achieved**.
- 23% thought they have been **partially achieved**.
- 0% **not achieved**.

Comments:

1. Difficult to comment on this right now.
2. Success of the objectives depends on implementation of the recommendations.

Question no. 5: In this question, participants were asked to give their opinion about the relevance of the topics in present day context for the study circle discussion.

- **69%** of the participants considered the topic as being **highly relevant**.
- **27%** considered the topic as being **relevant**.
- **4%** considered the topic as being **partially relevant**.
- **0%** considered the topic as being **not relevant**.

Comments:

1. More and more SC's could be organized on such topics.
2. Environment and health is very relevant in present day context.

Question no. 6: Participants were asked to classify study circle as a method of learning or discussing:

- **59%** participants responded that study circle was **highly appropriate as a method of learning**.
- **28%** thought it was **most appropriate**.
- **13%** thought it was **appropriate**.
- **0%** **not appropriate**.

Comments:

1. We have known a lot and hope that the recommendations would be materialized.
2. It's very useful for awareness building.
3. It is suitable for grow ups, not for children.

Question no. 7: Participants were asked to give their opinion on the idea behind the subject matters of the study circle.

- 64% of the participants thought they understood the idea.
- 35% thought they understood the idea fairly well.
- 1% thought they understood the idea to some extent.
- 0% not understood.

Question no. 8: Participants were requested to evaluate the usefulness of the study circle as a method of learning and encouraging public dialogue in Bangladesh:

- 54% of the participants said the study circle was useful.
- 42% said the study circle was more than useful.
- 3% said the study circle was partially useful.

- 0% said the study circle was not useful.

Comments:

1. Participation at mass level is necessary.

Question no. 9: Do you think that study circle method is effective for solving the existing problems?

- 0% not effective.
- 9% partially effective.
- 30% effective.
- 61% more effective.

Comments:

1. For comment, i have to analyze more.
2. Provision for monitoring could have assisted it more effectively.

Question no. 10: Participants were asked to give their opinion about the relevance of topics in light of the subjects.

- 12% of the participants thought the materials provided were inadequate.
- 62% thought the materials were adequate.
- 21% thought the materials were more than adequate.
- 5% thought the materials were not adequate.

Comments:

1. More topics detracts from discussion.

Question no. 11: Participants were asked to give their opinion on weaker sides of Study Circle.

- More irrelevant issues were discussed.
- Some talked while others remained silent.
- Disturbances took place as ground rules were violate in some cases.
- Lack of equal participation.
- Bigger space and more lively environment were required.
- Female facilitators' were less competent.
- Group members should not be from the same organization or community.
- Participants were absent minded about their discussion.
- As it is a new initiative, it has some misconception.

- More time is required for fruitful discussion.
- Participants should be more sincere on arriving in time.

Facilities:

As this stage, participants' were asked to comment on the facilities as well as services they were given by the session organizing organization, i.e, AFEAHRD. Though some answered in the negative, most of them responded in the affirmative. The questions and their response pattern is given below:

Question no. 1: Participants were asked to give their opinion about assistance they go from the organizers:

- 0% Bad.
- 8% Partially good
- 32% Good.
- 60% Excellent.

Comments:

1. The organizers did not keep records properly.
2. Quite well, but could have been made better.
3. Their conduct was satisfactory.
4. Alhamdullilah, arrangement has been fantastic.

Question no. 2: Were you able to discuss in a friendly environment?

- 1% couldn't participate.
- 3% partially could participate.
- **20%** could participate.
- **77%** fully participate.

Question no. 3: Participants were asked to comment on the environment and arrangement of sitting:

- **0%** bad.
- **8%** medium level.
- **32%** good.
- **60%** excellent.

Comments:

1. .It could have been better.
2. Rooms should have been more spacious.

3. Such sessions should take place in offices of the organizing institution.
4. As this is the first initiative of such circle, the arrangement is quite satisfactory.

Question no. 4: Participants were asked to comment on whether time scheduled for discussion was all right or not?

- 0% absolutely not.
- 19% partially correct.
- 14% appropriate.
- 67% most appropriate.

Comments:

1. Each of us should be more conscious about time.
2. I'm satisfied as the discussion sessions have taken place in the morning.

Supporting Booklet

We provided the participants two supporting documents to brainstorm with prior to the beginning of discussion. One of those was an informative booklet, while the other was an annex with existing laws and paper clippings. The participants were asked to comment on some features of the booklet. Their response pattern is given below:

Question no. 1 Participants were asked to comment on whether the booklet had sufficient information or not?

- 6% of the participants thought the materials had information more than necessary.
- 21% thought the materials had adequate information.
- 61% thought the materials provided partial information.
- 12% thought the materials were not adequate.

Comments:

1. More information is required for proper discussion.

Question no. 2 Whether they consider the information of the booklet easily understandable and useful or not?

- 0% not useful.
- 21% partially useful.
- 42% more than useful.
- 37% useful.

Comments:

1. More information should be incorporated.
2. The booklet has helped a lot.
3. Information given in the booklet should be clear and easily understandable.

Question no. 3 Whether information in the booklet has encouraged them to participate in the discussion or not?

- 1% felt it has **not met their expectation**.
- 34% felt it **partially met their expectation**.
- 40% felt it **met their expectation**.
- 25% of the participants felt the study circle **fully met their expectation**.

Comments:

1. we expected further encouragement.
2. I'm satisfied.

Question no. 4 Participants were asked to give their opinion on supporting booklet.

- It's good. But could have been made more attractive with more picture and information.
- It is so excellent for discussion.
- It has helped a lot to sort out problems.
- The booklet is very useful because it helps a lot in discussion.
- Pictorial presentation is more useful than presentation through information only.
- Unplanned urbanization should have been at the concluding part instead of at the first part.
- As the booklet is based on pollution of Dhaka city this has been really wonderful.
- This can be helpful for students.
- Supporting documents given with this very useful.
- Relevant Laws could be included in the booklet.
- It is informative and contains good information.
- It should have latest and relevant information.
- It is less informative.
- We are in need of more information on some waste like tannery and medical waste.
- Understood partly from the booklet.

Facilitator

Three female and two male facilitators conducted the sessions. We gave the participants the following questionnaire to express their views on facilitators' behavior and competence. Most of them were satisfied on facilitators' facilitation. But a limited number gave negative view.

Question no. 1: Participants were asked to give their opinion about the knowledge of the facilitator on the topic of discussion.

- 51% of the participants responded that the knowledge of the facilitator was **excellent**.
- 36% responded that the knowledge of the facilitator was **good**.
- 11% responded that the knowledge of the facilitator was **partially good**.
- 2% responded that the knowledge of the facilitator was **bad**.

Comments:

1. She was so helpful.
2. She needs to be smarter.

Question no. 2 : Participants were asked to give their opinion about the skill of the facilitator and his/her ability to create enough opportunities and a friendly environment for lively discussion.

- 58% of the participants felt the facilitator created excellent opportunities and a friendly environment to express ideas freely and without fear.
- 21% of the participants appreciated that the facilitator created good opportunities.
- 19% of the participants felt that the facilitator created adequate opportunities.
- 2% of the participants felt that the facilitator created inadequate opportunities for discussion.

Comments:

1. She was able to ensure everyone's participation.
2. She was cooperative.

Question no.3 Do you think that facilitator handled the dominant participants well?

- **0% Bad**
- **8% Partially good**

- **40% good**
- **52% Excellent**

Question no.4: Participants were asked to give their opinion about the skill of the facilitator in managing the dominant members and encouraging the silent members to share their ideas.

- 40% of the participants felt that facilitator was excellent in managing the dominant members and encouraging the silent members to share their ideas.
- 40% of the participants felt that facilitator did a good job in managing the study circle well.
- 20% of the participants felt that facilitator did a fairly good job in managing the study circle.
- 0% of the participants felt that facilitator did a bad job in managing the study circle.

Comments:

1. Facilitators should have been more lively.

Question no.5: Participants were asked whether it was possible for the facilitators to remain impartial at all times or not?

- 2% not neutral
- 5% Partially neutral
- 21% neutral
- **72% Fully neutral**

Comments:

1. She was absolutely impartial.

Question no.6: Participants were asked if they agreed that the facilitator listened sincerely to what they said and remained unbiased:

- 71% of the participants fully agreed on the sincerity of the facilitator on what they have said.
- 26% of the participants only agreed.
- 3% of the participants only partially agreed.
- 0% Not agreed.

Comments:

1. We were able to draw her attention.

Question: Participants were asked to give their brief advice:

- People from all walks of life should participate here.
- To keep this process continued rather than bringing it to a halt.
- It helps us to know ourselves.
- As an awareness building mechanism and for remedial action, it is necessary.
- This should not be confined to educated people only.
- Soil pollution should have been included as a part of discussion.
- Broadcast media can play a strong role in giving the discussions a greater outreach.
- This type of discussions could be spread all over the country incorporating the Government.
- Discussion venues should be well decorated.
- Such discussion could be made more subjective.
- It can have a revolutionary impact on younger generation.
- Environmental awareness is of great importance in a developing country like ours. Study Circle can play a vital role in materializing such collective efforts.
- Relevant authorities could be involved in such initiative.
- Such initiative would be beneficial from personal to social and national level.
- Bangladesh is a poor country. So, poverty alleviation should get more importance than environment and health.
- Discussion on each issue should be for two days instead of one day.

Concluding Comments: As it has been stated earlier, this has been a new experience for us. The participation and response of the participants were spontaneous and wonderful. We are optimistic that such initiative would strengthen collective approach at the grass root level, which happens to be the mostly neglected sector. No wonder this can create an alternative effective method to promote democratic practices amongst the general mass. The way people accepted this process gave us vigor and courage. This has already started getting spill over as 'Imam Group of Mollartek', Uttara, Dhaka. They have already started preaching the necessities of basic cleanliness in the 'Khutba' of Friday prayer (Khutba-discussion on religious issues) where the highest number of devotees show up. Some 'Imams' have already talked to their family members to promote the practice of basic cleanliness in their families. Members of the SC group of College teachers are also discussing common causes, consequences as well as probable remedial actions of these to their students in daily class lectures.

Despite all these, is quite difficult on one's own to materialize the recommendations. With the recommendations at hand, we have approached the policy makers at both regional as well as national level so that these are materialized, if not all together, but in phases. The planned hierarch of approach will be from the local ward commissioner to

The Members of Parliament and Ministries of concerned ministries. We have formed a core group, which we have named 'Representatives' Committee' with two participants from each of the Study Circle groups that we have carried out. Other than encouraging

sitting informally with people in different areas of Dhaka, this group has accompanied us in our approach to the policy makers with the recommendations.