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**HAEFA
BEYOND BORDERS**



Brown University Professionals Visit the FDMN Camp Health Post

Dr. Ruhul Abid, Associate Professor of The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and the President of Health and Education for All (HAEFA), actively participated in the 1st International Scientific Symposium and Workshop on 'Development of A Translational Research Platform in Bangladesh'. This scientific seminar on translational research development in Bangladesh was Dr. Abid's brain-child and the day-long conference was organized by Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (SWACHIP) on July 19th, 2023. Preceding the symposium, **Dr. Ruhul Abid**, alongside esteemed guests **Dr. Sharon Rounds**, Associate Dean for Translational Science at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and **Dr. Bharat Ramratnam**, Professor of Medicine at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Chief Scientific Officer at Brown innovation and Research Collaborative for Health (BIRCH) & Vice President of Research at Lifespan, embarked on a cultural exploration of the heritage of Bangladesh, visiting notable landmarks, museums, and cultural sites.

They extended their journey to the HAEFA Health Post (Balukhali Camp 9 and Kutupalong Camp 1W) at Rohingya Refugee Camp in Cox's Bazar. They highly appreciated the efficient healthcare service delivery by the professional team of HAEFA in those health camps in such resource limited settings. Subsequently, they visited the Balukhali camp, where they observed the outdoor treatment facilities and the HAEFA Diagnostic Pathological Laboratory.

Continuing their expedition, the delegation inspected the Ramu Upazilla Health Complex, engaging with medical staff and observed the healthcare services provided at various medical corners. Their journey culminated at the scientific symposium, where they shared groundbreaking insights on developing and advancing the translational research platform in Bangladesh which is their prime area of expertise. This endeavor underlined HAEFA's unwavering commitment to advancing scientific research and healthcare system in Bangladesh.

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HAEFA's Ongoing Projects

[* Click on each to learn more](#)



Healthcare Services for Rohingya Refugees in Kutupalong, Balukhali and Bhashan Char



Cervical Cancer Screening and Treatment at Cox's Bazar

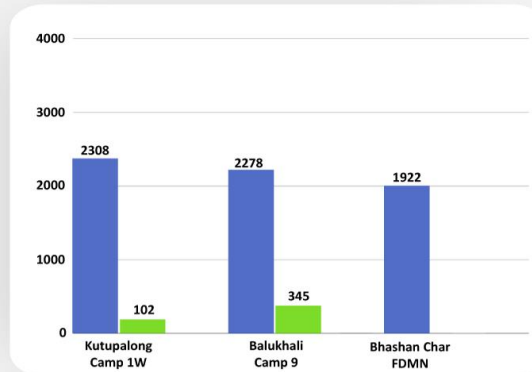


Mobile Medical Health Clinics for Host Communities in Ukhiya



NIROG: Empowering NCD Care through Digitalization in Noakhali

Health care delivery to FDMN population from HAEFA health camps in September



Visiting Patient at Camp 1W for Health Care Check-up

Family Planning Services

HAEFA's teams continue to conduct a monthly Family Planning session at FDMN Camp

September 2023

211 people were provided with different family planning services in the form of dispensing free condom, contraceptive and proper counselling on family planning.

Cervical Cancer Screening Update : September 2023

SEPTEMBER

1951 VIA SCREENING

VIA POSITIVE 26

COLPOSCOPY TEST 14

THERMOCOAGULATION 2

BIOPSY 4

AUGUST

VIA SCREENING 1742

VIA POSITIVE 19

COLPOSCOPY TEST 13

THERMOCOAGULATION 5

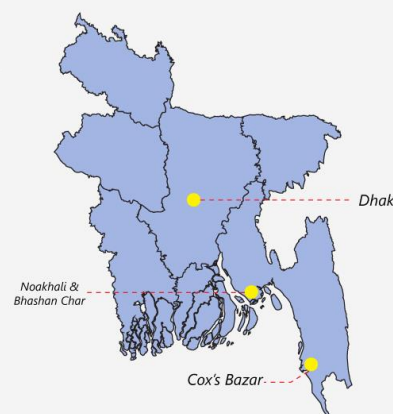
BIOPSY

COX'S BAZAR

HAEFA's New Endeavour: Mobile Health Clinics for Host Communities

September 2023 :

HAEFA introduced a weekly Mobile Health Clinic dedicated to improving the quality of life for neighbouring communities by providing free primary medical care services. The Mobile Medical team has provided primary health care services to over 328 host community members so far.



ARTICLES

[* Click to read full article](#)

- ➔ **Scabies in Rohingya Camps: An Overlooked Health Crisis**
- ➔ **Member Spotlight: Introducing MD. CHONCHOL MAHMUD**
- ➔ **A Successful Treatment Approach: Ray of Hope.**
- ➔ **Meet HAEFA's Editorial Staff!**

HAEFA's Odyssey with Global Health Leaders in Bangladesh

In the pursuit of universal health coverage and the enhancement of the healthcare system of Bangladesh, Health and Education for All (HAEFA) embarked on a transformative journey that reached a pivotal moment on July 19th, 2023. Dr. Ruhul Abid, the visionary President of HAEFA and Associate Professor at Brown University Alpert Medical School, was invited to a groundbreaking science symposium titled 'Development of A Translational Research Platform in Bangladesh: Encompassing Biomedical and Clinical Research.' This symposium, organized by Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (SWACHIP), marked a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts to advance healthcare research field in Bangladesh.



Among the esteemed guests were luminaries in science and healthcare technology, including Dr. Sharon Rounds, Associate Dean for Translational Science at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Dr. Bharat Ramratnam, Professor of Medicine at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Chief Science Officer of the Brown innovation and Research Collaborative for Health (BIRCH) also Interim Vice President of Research at Lifespan Health System, accompanied by Dr. Ruhul Abid and Mohammad Monjur Iqbal, Senior Director of HAEFA, they brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the symposium.

Before delving into the scientific discussions, Dr. Rounds and Dr. Ramratnam immersed themselves in the rich tapestry of Bangladesh's history, culture, and heritage. Guided by HAEFA personnel. They explored iconic sites, beginning with the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum dedicated to the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, followed by the Liberation War Museum, Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, ancient Panam City, and The National Martyrs' Memorial. They also visited to Bengal Boi, a unique bookstore, aimed to enrich minds with local culture, art, and literature.



The narrative took a turn on the 17th of July when the guests visited HAEFA Health Post (Balukhali Camp 9 and Kutupalong Camp 1W) Rohingya refugees camp in Cox's Bazar. Witnessing the efficient management of healthcare services by the professional team of HAEFA in Kutupalong. Subsequently, they proceeded to the Balukhali camp, where they observed the outdoor treatment program and the HAEFA Diagnostic Pathological Laboratory and expressed their admiration for the exceptional quality of the pathological laboratory and optimum healthcare service delivery in such resource limited setting

The compassionate healthcare delivery in remote environments showcased HAEFA's resourcefulness and dedication. An extensive perspective on healthcare practices was provided by the visit to Ramu Upazilla Health Complex on the 18th, which further highlighted their devotion to patient follow-ups, data entry, individualized disease management and infection prevention.



Culminating in the Science Symposium on the 19th of July, the esteemed professionals, now well-acquainted with Bangladesh and HAEFA's endeavors, took center stage as keynote speakers. Their innovative thoughts and beliefs resonated through the symposium, serving as a testament to HAEFA's commitment to advancing scientific research in Bangladesh. The four days of insightful exploration and collaboration not only enriched the guests' understanding of Bangladesh but also fueled HAEFA's determination to pave the way for groundbreaking advancements in healthcare. The narrative seamlessly wove together the journey, accomplishments, and shared vision of HAEFA and its distinguished guests, creating a compelling story of dedication and progress in the realm of global healthcare.

Scabies in Rohingya Camps: An Overlooked Health Crisis

By *Ishan Abdullah*,

Scabies is a highly contagious, yet easily preventable, skin infection that has been shown to have a disproportionate disease burden among countries that are overcrowded and impoverished. In 2017, the WHO designated Scabies a Neglected Tropical Disease that indicated its lack of proper preventative intervention that leads to its cyclical propagation among these marginalized communities. Considering the hyperdense living space, poor hygiene, and resource limitations of the Rohingya refugee camps, many could have foreseen that an outbreak of Scabies was “inevitable”. However, recent data collected by the World Health Organization (WHO) has shown an unprecedented prevalence rate among the Rohingya population. As their estimates have shown that 40-70% of camp residents are currently infected with Scabies, it has become clear that this epidemic is not one that can continue being swept under the rug.

Scabies is caused by the parasitic infestation of the *Sarcoptes scabiei* mite. The mites burrow into the upper layer of the skin, where they lay eggs, leading to the characteristic symptoms of itching, localized pain, rashes, and bumps. It is most prevalent in young children and babies, and is frequently localized in skin folds such as between the finger and toes.

Scabies spreads through direct skin-to-skin contact and can also be transmitted through contaminated clothing and bedding. Prolonged or “crusted” scabies infections may lead to perforations of the skin barrier that allow for secondary bacterial infections. These infections may exacerbate other health conditions and may have an easier route to the patient’s bloodstream which leads to fatal sepsis. However, in areas that have adequate access to healthcare resources, Scabies is easily treatable before these complications arise with topical creams such as Permethrin cream or other oral scabicides. Through adequate hygiene and distancing measures by infected individuals, the disease can also be easily prevented before it is spread amongst the other family member and community.

Within Rohingya camps, there are numerous infrastructural barriers that could be explanatory towards the recent outbreak. Individuals within the camps are often placed in close-quarters contact with others as there is a stark scarcity in living space for such a large quantity of people. The WHO's report, indicating that 52% of Rohingya camp residents are young children, highlights the increased risk of Scabies transmission among this vulnerable group with developing immune systems. Further, camp residents often share clothing within their families and have limited access to clean water and soap to disinfect these articles or themselves. These barriers to prevention are exacerbated by the lack of medication to treat the thousands of infected patients that present to the already overcrowded medical centers in the camp. Even if more scabicide medication were immediately available, it wouldn't address the rapid

reinfection rate brought about by the infrastructural considerations and persistent lack of hygiene mentioned above. As stated by Karsten Noko, Head of Mission of MSF in Bangladesh, “drugs alone will not prevent reinfections if they are not accompanied by measures addressing the conditions which have caused the outbreak.”

Considering the implicit ease of reinfection, attempting to treat the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya that present with Scabies is not a sustainable, nor a plausible solution. This public health catastrophe is rooted in infrastructural and preventative measure deficiencies that can not be solved overnight. Rather, it will take a concerted and coordinated effort to make long-term preventative changes that focus on changing the physical environment instead of aiming to mitigate a problem once it has already occurred.

Continuous reallocation of financial capital from supporting organizations is a determining factor behind this initiative’s success. However, recent budget cuts from the United Nations and World Food Programme will drastically reduce the power of humanitarian organizations, like HAEFA, to make these structural changes within the camps. As such, there is a dire need for the world and donors to remember that even though the Rohingya crisis has become less prominent in the media, provision of their basic human needs have not become any less important.

This Scabies epidemic in Rohingya camps should no longer be seen as the next “inevitable” event for disadvantaged peoples, but rather an unacceptable problem that must be changed from the ground-up. To help emphasize the importance of preventative measures, HAEFA medical doctors in Cox’s Bazar attended a training session on scabies control strategies that was organized by the WHO. With this targeted training, it is hoped that future communicable disease outbreaks in the Rohingya camps will be stopped at their earliest stages.

MD. CHONCHOL MAHMUD: The IT Expert Transforming HAEFA with Technology.



Meet **Mahmud**, the assistant IT manager at HAEFA, where he plays a significant role in leveraging technology for the HAEFA's success. Hailing from the serene district of Meherpur, his educational journey began at Kurimela Kindergarten. From a young age, **Mahmud** exhibited a curiosity for knowledge and a thirst for learning that would guide him throughout his academic and professional career.

Mahmud completed his Secondary School Certificate at the Bamundi Nishipur School and College. This phase laid the foundation for his educational pursuits and ignited a passion for academic excellence. He continued his educational journey by obtaining his Higher Secondary School Certificate from Police School and College from.

Mahmud embarked on a new adventure by pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics at the renowned Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST). Throughout his undergraduate studies, he excelled in various courses, including Electricity and Magnetism, Mechanics, Calculus, and Differential Equations, honing his analytical and problem-solving skills. However, it was during this time that **Mahmud** discovered his undying passion for information technology

Driven by his love for both science and technology, **Mahmud** decided to pursue a Master's degree in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP). This transition allowed him to explore a whole new realm of knowledge, where he delved into subjects such as Advanced Data Communication, Digital Forensic, Cloud Computing, and Big Data Analytics. Though the shift presented its fair share of challenges, **Mahmud's** unwavering dedication and love for information technology helped him overcome obstacles and pursue his dreams.

Today, **Mahmud** boasts an impressive array of skills in programming languages, frameworks, and tools. He is well-versed in HTML5, CSS3, PHP, Laravel, WordPress, JavaScript, jQuery, VueJS, Git, SQL, MySQL, Google Firebase, Bootstrap, and more. This wide repertoire of technical expertise serves as a testament to his commitment to staying ahead of the curve and continuously updating his skill set. Moreover, **Mahmud** has supplemented his knowledge through training programs, including Advanced PHP & MySQL and AVES Crew Management Software.

With such a solid foundation of skills and experience, **Mahmud** has flourished professionally. He first served as an IT Manager at Information Tools South Asia Co. Ltd. from 2017 to 2021, where he made significant contributions to the company's technological advancements.

It was through his former boss, Manzur Iqbal, that **Mahmud** discovered HAEFA. Intrigued by the organization's mission, he joined the team in 2021. Although he briefly left in 2022, **Mahmud's** unwavering dedication to the HAEFA's cause led him back in 2023 after being inspired by his mentor, Manzur Iqbal. In his current role as the assistant IT manager, **Mahmud** spearheads the development of the "NIROG" software. His responsibilities include data input, server maintenance, troubleshooting, and ensuring the website and software are user-friendly. Every day, **Mahmud** engages in meetings, collaborates with colleagues from across different locations, and tackles server issues head-on. Despite encountering challenges ranging from decision-making to collaboration, **Mahmud** remains steadfast in his commitment to helping HAEFA achieve its health goals through the smart use of technology.

Beyond his professional endeavors, **Mahmud** finds solace and joy in various extracurricular activities. He played cricket as an all-rounder in the Department of Physics team at SUST, showcasing his prowess and team spirit on the field. Additionally, he served as a general member at his university that nurtured his passion for sports and camaraderie.

During his scarce moments of spare time, **Mahmud** indulges in his favorite hobbies. He revels in watching cricket matches, playing cricket himself, immersing in movies that transport him to different worlds, and finding solace in the melodious rhythm of songs. These activities allow him to unwind and rejuvenate, fostering a balanced lifestyle essential for sustained success in both personal and professional realms.

What truly captivates **Mahmud** about HAEFA is its project goals. He cherishes the friendly work environment and the presence of colleagues who willingly lend their support. With an unwavering commitment to enhancing healthcare through technology, **Mahmud** strives to achieve the organization's health goals, aligning his personal aspirations with the HAEFA's noble cause. Looking ahead, he envisions expanding his IT knowledge by venturing abroad to explore new horizons, gain valuable experiences, and contribute to the field in meaningful ways.

In conclusion, **Mahmud's** journey from a young student to an accomplished IT professional at HAEFA is a testament to his resilience, adaptability, and unwavering passion for technology. Equipped with a diverse skill set and a commitment to self-improvement, **Mahmud's** contributions shape the future of HAEFA and the lives it touches. As his story unfolds, **Mahmud** continues to forge ahead, transforming dreams into reality and defying limits through the power of technology.

Ray Of Hope

My name is Abdul Motalof, I am 57 years old. Just like my other village fellows, I hardly ever think of my health or that it's the biggest asset that I have. I am a farmer. There is this myth in our country that farmers' can never fall ill, as they work very hard physically. All these beliefs were not helping me much when I first started noticing some irritation on my skin around my inner thighs.

I did not give this irritation much importance as it was hardly anything to draw my attention. But soon I was forced to look at them with concern because that mild irritation had turned into red rashes and begun to itch uncomfortably. Soon the rashes started to spread as well. That is when I became worried and decided to do something about it. I headed to two different local quacks as I thought of it more efficient. Both of them diagnosed my situation differently and prescribed me with different medicines which didn't help my condition, rather worsened it. As the days were passing by and the condition was worsening, I was getting more worried about what would happen to my family if I never got cured. It is not just about you when you have a whole family to feed and all are dependent on you.

As my suffering worsened, I started seeking advice from people around me. That is when I heard about HAEFA medical centre from one of my neighbors. He received treatments for different health conditions from HAEFA for his family members several times and all of those treatments were effective. Even though I was quite skeptical, I considered to give HAEFA a try. The duty doctors received me with such cordiality that I was taken aback. First, they listened to my trouble intently, recorded everything in an electronic device, diagnosed my condition as Tinea Incognito and even gave me free medicine for the disease. I was surprised and very happy with their help and support. They discussed with me that I was a bit late to seek medical help as my tinea had spread through all over my legs and lower abdomen area at that point. They helped me to understand the importance of right diagnosis at right time and the serious drawback of maltreatment.

They asked me to start my anti-fungal treatment right away and advised me thoroughly on proper skin care practice. To my absolute amazement, my skin condition started to respond to the treatment immediately. My itching subsided and the redness started to fade in a few days. I completed a 28 days long treatment course following their advice. On the day of my final follow-up with HAEFA, I came out of their medical center with a beaming smile and perfectly healthy body. I will always remember that HAEFA has taught me to never take own health and body for granted, never delay any kind of treatment process and most importantly, always put hope and trust in the right place.



Picture: Before treatment



Picture: After treatment

Meet HAEFA's Editorial Staff!



Dr. Samia Tasneem, *Mentor and Advisor* to the Newsletter Editorial Board. She joined HAEFA in 2020 and serves as the Honorary Chief NCD Consultant. Dr. Tasneem is a Heart Transplant Cardiologist at St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, Australia.



Sajia Haque is the *Editor-in-Chief*, as well as the Intern Coordinator for HAEFA. She joined in 2021. She lives in Dhaka, Bangladesh and is a fifth-year medical student at Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College.



Ishan Abdullah is an *Associate Editor*. He joined HAEFA in 2019. He lives in Washington, D.C. and is a first-year medical student at the George Washington University.



Areeb Uzzaman

He is currently based in Maryland, U.S., pursuing his undergraduate degree in international business at the University of Maryland, College Park.



Somayea Sultana Mim

She is a 4th year medical student at International Medical College and Hospital, Gazipur, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Tanzina Toma

She graduated with a degree in English Language and literature in 2023 from Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh, Bangladesh.