

Stepping up inclusive efforts at BRAC

BRAC has always felt the necessity to make the organisation more disability inclusive in order to uphold its reputation as an 'equal opportunity employer'. Committed to its four fundamental values, one being 'inclusiveness', in May 2013, human rights and legal aids services (HRLS) in a conjoined decision with the senior management of human resource division (HRD), social innovation lab (SIL), BRAC learning division (BLD) and the construction department, decided to strengthen efforts from each department, and as a united force, make BRAC more disability-inclusive.

Each of the departments has started to take initiatives under their jurisdictions. HRLS has taken the lead in the drive to make BRAC disability inclusive. BRAC HRD is creating a database for records on recruiting staff with disability. Currently, HRD is commencing work on collecting information on disabled persons in BRAC. The department has also created a personal information form for persons with disabilities to complete during the recruitment phase. Construction department is working to build ramps in all BRAC sites by the end of 2014.

BRAC has also been welcoming experts to combine efforts and find new solutions on this matter. SIL hosted Hezzy Smith, director of Bangladesh Programme, Harvard Law School Project on Disability (HPOD). In June 2013, Hezzy conducted an elaborate study and met with executive director, Mushtaque Reza Chowdhury to discuss his findings.

In July 2013, SIL and HRLS invited B-SCAN to conduct a learning session on disability inclusion and explore ways in which BRAC can become more accessible for people with disability.

In June 2014, Josh Goldstein from the Center for Financial Inclusion at Accion, to Bangladesh, conducted a general staff sensitisation workshop on disability inclusion in the workplace. Josh, a key figure in the campaign for disability inclusive development, is helping to start a worldwide movement that takes financial inclusion that necessary step further including persons with disabilities. BRAC's next step will be to think carefully about how to expand on its disability inclusion efforts. During a roundtable discussion involving Josh Goldstein and other external partners including ADD, CRP, and Handicap International, participants agreed on the importance of listening to clients and understanding their needs. In addition, continuing to work together will enable partners to learn from one another, and share the best practice.