

## Public Health Consortium

The Public Health Consortium was formed in light of the unprecedented COVID-19 Public Health crisis facing our communities in Bangladesh and around the world. It was noticed that COVID has not only exposed chronically ill-equipped health systems worldwide but also brought into question the capacity of higher education institutions of Public Health to develop the competent professionals urgently required to tackle such health challenges. It has forced us to more critically reflect upon our collective role within our national community to develop Public Health professionals to address Bangladesh's priority health needs. Thus, the Public Health Consortium, consisting of 18 universities, was formed to discuss our own health context and support each other, collaborate and innovate our own home-grown practical and feasible solutions. The Consortium is led by our Dean Dr. Sabina Faiz Rashid and Learning and Design Consultant Mikhail I. Islam.

The first meeting was held in August 2020 to collaboratively discuss, examine and develop solutions around COVID-19 and the involvement of university-based Schools/Departments of Public Health. It gave the Consortium to critically reflect upon our collective role within our national community to develop Public Health professionals to address Bangladesh's priority health needs. After the first two sessions, the meetings now have adopted a workshop styled approach where each of the collaborators present their current research and everyone in the Consortium brainstorms ideas to make the research more community centric.

Over the time period, though few of the schools could not continue to be a part of the Public Health Consortium, it now consists of American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB), Bangladesh University of Health Sciences, Daffodil International University, Hamdard University, International University of Bangladesh, Leading University, State University of Bangladesh, Varendra University, Asian University for Women, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, University of Comilla, Jahangirnagar University and University of Rajshahi.

The following workshops were organized to discuss ongoing projects from various organizations to brainstorm ways to make them more community centric:

October 2020 Workshop I: Psychological Impact of Covid-19 Among Urban Population in Dhaka by State University of Bangladesh

December 2020 Workshop II: Antibiotics Usage and Self Medication Practices Among Rural Community of Bangladesh by American International University Bangladesh

January 2021 Workshop III : Effectiveness of health education-based intervention method to reduce noncommunicable diseases risk factors among the slum population in Dhaka City, Bangladesh by Bangladesh University of Health Sciences

March 2021 Workshop IV: The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health & wellbeing among home-quarantined Bangladeshi students: A cross-sectional pilot study

And

Psychological responses during the COVID-19 outbreak among university students in Bangladesh by Jahangirnagar University

April 2021 Workshop V: A Cross-sectional Analytic Study of the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Prevalence of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Among Family Caregivers of Persons with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities by Hamdard University

For BRAC JPGSPH, this was an effort to create a platform of collaboration with other Public Health Schools and to foster relationships together and to jointly work in research and funding opportunities in the future. It was also created to promote cross university learning which is being ensured through the ongoing workshops.