

Proposal for establishing

BACSAF

*Bangladesh Association of
Commonwealth Scholars And
Fellows*

June 2014

Introduction

Bangladesh maintains strong bilateral ties with other countries expressed through organizations such as the Department for International Development (DFID-UK). Bangladesh and the UK has a long tradition of cultural and academic exchange, and Commonwealth Scholarship since its independence in 1971, wherein opportunity is provided to students from Bangladesh to pursue Postgraduate and Doctoral studies in various universities of the UK. Since independence more than a thousand scholars have availed of this opportunity.

To address the long-standing need and demand from the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows of Bangladesh who had attended their academic and research trainings at different UK academic/research institutions, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) felt that it is necessary to support the establishment of an association in Bangladesh.

Background

With above context in mind, a whole day gathering was organised for the Commonwealth Alumni on Saturday, February 22, 2014. A vibrant group of 68 Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship holders, of previous years gathered at the Hotel Sarina, Dhaka. They spent the whole day knowing each other, learning from each other and most importantly exploring the ways how this group of gems can actually contribute more from their respective positions. And it all started with the unanimous decision on establishing an association for the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission's (CSC) award holders.

The whole day was divided into morning and afternoon sessions. To boost up the energy of the group, the event started with a fascinating session on "Networking Skills Development", conducted by Robin Davies, Director Partnership & Programmes, British Council Bangladesh. The 40 minutes' session was highly interactive and it can be best understood from the following comment of a participant- "I have never learnt so much in only 40 minutes".

Following the much appreciated session, South Asia's Regional Manager of Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), Towhidur Rahman presented an overview of the existing CSC Alumni Associations and their activities in our neighbouring countries. This informative session was followed by lunch and group photo session.

A group of 15 scholars and fellows volunteered in putting their names forward and enthusiastically agreed to work on the proposal development for an association of

Bangladeshi scholars and fellows. From that day onwards, the group has worked together to come up with this proposal. This document will act as the guidebook for the association during its initial years.

Establishment of the Association

The aforesaid Association will be established by the interested Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows in Bangladesh with an endowment from the CSC and the British Council. It will be called 'Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars And Fellows (BACSAF)'. The British Council will support the initiation through guidance and mentoring by forming a working group and by facilitating the approval of a proposal. The proposal will be sent to the CSC for approval. The fund needed for the initial activities of the Association will be decided upon negotiation among the volunteer group, the British Council and the CSC.

Mission

Bind all Bangladeshi commonwealth alumni together, enable them to utilise their individual and collective expertise towards positive impacts on the socio-economy of Bangladesh, and contribute to a sustainable relationship between Bangladesh and the UK.

Vision: A sustainable future for the citizens of Bangladesh

Justification of an Association

A good number (more than 1200) of educators, scientists, researchers, and government and non-government officials from Bangladesh have enjoyed the benefits under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan since the inception of this programme. Upon their return, these scholars and fellows are serving in various sectors of national development of Bangladesh with distinction and honour. Unfortunately, there is no country-wide link among these alumni, let alone coordination of their valuable service to this country and their role as good-will ambassadors of the UK. Therefore, an alumni association is needed.

There are also scopes of extending their knowledge, experience and services to other Commonwealth countries in a coordinated way only if they are part of an association. Commonwealth alumni can also play an active role in the selection process of future scholars and fellows from Bangladesh in the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh.

Moreover, mentoring and assisting selected scholars and fellows prior to their departure to the UK can effectively be carried out along with the British Council, Bangladesh if an association is formed. The functions of the association will be designed focusing on four main criteria: **a) Mentorship:** Mentoring young researchers to attain a standard of international level, especially in research; **b) Connection:** Acting as a mediator in building links between the aspiring researchers and potential organisations/institutions; **c) Inspiration:** Providing motivation and inspiration to the group, who otherwise will be pushed to despair; and **d) Giving back:** The spirit of giving back to the society for the sole purpose of development will be in the heart of planning the association's future activities.

Core Objectives

- To act as an interaction forum for commonwealth award holders of Bangladesh
- To promote and foster the interest and welfare of members through networking
- To encourage mutually beneficial networking of members –by organising events around selected themes and by acting as facilitator for opportunities after the return of new commonwealth scholars
- To generate and take part in collaborative work on selected social development aspects
- To act as a positive space for promotion of sustainable relationship between Bangladesh and the UK on their shared development concerns-technology, science and education etc. This aspect is proposed to be taken up forward by participating in pre-departure orientation of scholars as well as by being resource person for joint events of UK and Bangladesh.
- To promote academic cooperation development through research and experience sharing
- To undertake corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities to address the crucial needs of the country
- To organise professional development training sessions

Key relationship with the British Council

- The British Council representative as one of the members of the Board of Patrons of the Association – thus acting as an advisor and link with the programmes and larger vision of the British Council with the Association.
- The British Council, Dhaka as the address of the Association at its inception.
- The Association as the resource group for regular British Council programmes. As the Association is a diverse group comprising of professionals, academics and researchers, they can become resource persons for carrying out some of the programmes of the British Council.
- The Association as resource group for UK Exhibition events, pre-departure orientation programmes and Education UK Information Sessions.

Key relationship with the CSC

- The BACSAF will act as a think-tank for regular cooperation and guide future policy of the CSC.
- It will generate and provide feedback from the recently returned scholars to the CSC.
- The Association will maintain database of the growth of the scholars for the CSC.
- To act as a resource organisation for conducting orientation programmes for selected scholars before their departure to the UK for higher education.

Relationships with other Commonwealth Alumni Associations

- Share information and experiences with similar associations in other Commonwealth countries. Establish alumni exchange programme for transferring knowledge and technology for development.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE/CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE-I

1. **Name:** The name of the association shall be “**Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars And Fellows (BACSAF).**”
2. **Taglines & Slogans:** We connect. We share. We contribute.

3. **Logo:** To be decided.
4. **Office:** The office of the Association shall initially be at the premises of the British Council, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
5. **Aim of the Association:**
 - a. Ensure the successful post-award role of Commonwealth scholars and fellows of Bangladesh toward attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MGD) of Bangladesh.
6. **Objectives of the Association:**
 - a. Develop and maintain a country-wide network among Commonwealth scholars and fellows to promote a healthy social and cultural forum.
 - b. Promote collaboration among scholars and fellows of allied fields.
 - c. Generate support from scholars, fellows, Bangladesh Government, and UK Government to address different development and relationship issues.
 - d. Act as a think-tank in different need-based development issues between Bangladesh, UK, and other Commonwealth countries.
 - e. Enhance academic and cultural ties of Bangladesh with other commonwealth nations.

ARTICLE-II

Rules and Regulations of the Association:

1. Definition of the terminologies:

- a. Association means the Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars And Fellows (BACSAF).
- b. Constitution means the memorandum, rules and regulations and other laws of the association framed and modified from time to time.
- d. Member means Commonwealth scholars and fellows of the association duly registered in accordance with Article-III.
- e. Financial year means the calendar year of twelve months ending on 31 December.
- f. Term means two consecutive calendar years from 01 January to 31 December.

ARTICLE-III

Procedure of Registration for Membership

Active member: Persons having degrees or training in any UK university or institution for at least three months under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Programme. An annual membership fee will be applicable for each active member; though will be waived for life-members who have paid a one-time special membership fee.

Rights and privileges of the members: All members shall enjoy the same rights, privileges, obligations and duties in the affairs of the Association and can cast vote in the election of the office bearer of the Association, and participate in all activities of the Association.

Enrolment of membership: Any person having requisite qualification as mentioned under Article-III willing to enroll as a member of the Association shall have to apply in a prescribed form obtainable from the Association under his/her signature subject to the fulfillment of conditions as specified in Article-III, and payment of a membership fee of Tk. 1000.00 (Taka one thousand only). On receipt of the application, the general secretary shall enlist his/her name in the register of the Association and place it to the Executive Committee for approval. Each active member shall have to pay an annual subscription of Tk. 500.00 (Taka five hundred only). An option of life-membership will be available with a one-time payment of the life-membership fee of Tk. 5,000.00 (Taka five thousand only) along with the membership fee.

Termination of membership: Membership shall terminate on:

- i) Demise;
- ii) Resignation;
- iii) Termination, upon failure to pay the annual subscription fee for any consecutive five years period. However, membership can revive after payment of all subscription dues;
- iv) Expulsion: A member will be liable to disciplinary action extending to expulsion on the ground of written valid complaint launched by anybody against his/her acts or deeds prejudicial to the interest of the Association. Executive Committee shall examine the case and take decision by majority of the members, accordingly which shall be placed in the general meeting of the association for final decision.

Management of the affairs of the Association:

The overall activities of the Association shall be vested on the Executive Committee and the member of the Executive Committee shall consist of 15 (fifteen) members as mentioned below:

• President	1
• Vice-president	2
• Treasurer	1
• General Secretary	1
• Joint Secretary	1
• Publication Secretary	1
• Organising Secretary	1
• International Affairs Secretary	1
• CSC/BC Representative	1
• Members	5
Total= 15 (fifteen)	

The function of the Executive Committee:

- a) The function of the Executive Committee shall be the overall responsibilities of running the Association and shall formulate policy and programme of the Association.
- b) The Executive Committee shall control fund of the Association and sanction necessary expenditures.
- c) The Executive Committee may form sub-committee as and when necessary for specific purpose in different units of the Association.
- d) The Executive Committee will also implement the decision as taken by the general body.
- e) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for organizing and formation of new Executive Committee either by selection or by conducting election of active and life member of the Association.
- f) At least one Annual General Meeting will have to be arranged by the Executive Committee in a year.

The Executive Committee will maintain all official contacts and communications

Responsibilities of the Members of the Executive Committee

Any member of the Executive Committee should not be absent without valid reasons in three consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee.

The President

- a. Will preside over the General Council and the Executive Committee meetings.
- b. Will direct the General Secretary to call meetings of the General Council and the Executive Committee.
- a. Will take decisions under exceptional circumstances on behalf of the Executive Committee, which will be reported to the next meeting of the Executive Committee for approval.

The Vice President

- a. Will preside over the General Council and the Executive Committee meetings in absence of the President.
- b. Will act as President if the post falls vacant before the term is over.

The Treasurer

- a. Will keep the accounts of the Association.
- b. Will operate the bank account of the Association jointly with the General Secretary.
- c. Prepare presentation to the Annual General Meeting a statement of the financial affairs of the Association for the preceding final year.
- d. Will prepare the draft budget for the subsequent year through discussions with the President and the General Secretary, and after approval by the Executive Committee, will place it before the General Council in its annual meeting.

The General Secretary

- a. Will carry out the day-to-day activities of the Association under the supervision of the President.
- b. Will call meetings of the Executive Committee and the General Council with the approval of the President.
- c. Will carry out all correspondences of the Association.
- d. Will implement all decisions of the Executive Committee and the General Council.
- e. Will keep the minutes of all meetings, seminars, etc.

- f. Will prepare the annual report of the Association, and after approval of the Executive Committee, will place it before the General Council in its annual meeting.
- g. Will operate the bank account of the Association jointly with the Treasurer.
- h. Can keep an advance of Tk. 2000.00 (Taka Two thousand only) to meet day-to-day expenses.
- i. Will be responsible for procurement of funds for the Association.

The Joint Secretary

- a. Will assist the General Secretary in all activities of the Association.
- b. Will carry out the duties of the General Secretary during latter's absence.
- c. Will act as the General Secretary if the post falls vacant before the term is over.

The Members

- a. Will advice and guide the Executive Committee in the execution of its activities.
- b. Will carry out any duty assigned by the President or the Executive Committee for the interest of the Association.

Election

A Bi-Annual election of the Executive Committee will be held in the general meeting by general consensus.

List of activities

1. Finalise the draft proposal and send to the CSC for approval.
2. Have regular meeting with the working group to coordinate the formation of the association.
3. Agree on list of activities for the first year.
4. Collect and manage the start-up funds.
5. Promote BACSAF through professional and personal links, especially through institutions like the University of Dhaka and Bangladesh Agricultural University.
6. Invite registration from award holders, both in country and outside country.
7. Spread the word of BACSAF outside of Dhaka, through events.
8. Launch website for the association.
9. Form a formal body to play the role of Executive Committee.

Requirement of Start-up Budget

- a. An amount of GBP 2500 i.e. approximately BDT 325000 (exchange rate of GBP 1~BDT 130) is required as the startup budget from either the Council or CSC or both.
- b. This fund is required to initiate the process of launch of the Association, creating webpage of the Association and expenses towards the registration of the Association.
- c. Part of the fund is required to organise small events for the membership campaigns across the country.
- d. Part of this fund with the amount in the form of membership fee can be kept as a fixed deposit in the bank for a definite period to organise conference/seminar/workshop.

Tentative budget allocation for the first year

Sl. No.	Activity/Work	Approximate Expenditure (BDT)	Remarks (if any)
1	Launching event	1,00,000	Inauguration ceremony
2	Digital presence	50,000	Website, social media etc.
3	Networking events (at least 4)	80,000	BDT 20000 each event
4	Promotional materials	20,000	Poster, pamphlet, brochure
5	Membership campaign	25,000	Outreach activities
6	Administration	30,000	Registration fee, election, executive meetings
7	Miscellaneous	20,000	Justification required, prior to expenditure
	Total	3,25,000	For founding year's activities