

Zero Hunger, Zero Emissions University Student Workshop

Dates: September 1st - September 3rd, 2018

Location: CCDB Hope Foundation, Savar, Bangladesh

Objective

The purpose of the Zero Hunger, Zero Emissions University Student Workshop was to engage university students across Bangladesh about key issues related to food security, emission reduction and climate change in the country's longterm future. This allowed students to partake and think through a scenario building exercise; and provided valuable insight for the second Zero Hunger, Zero Emissions workshop.

Recruitment

Online application forms were distributed in the first week of August 2018, and within a week more than 600 university students had applied for the program. The applications were designed to gauge levels of interest, knowledge and passion with the goal of bringing together a diverse group of engaged students across the country.



Acceptance Criteria

Applications were sorted in two rounds. The first round was a simple scoring of all the applicants based on their show of interest, knowledge and passion. Scoring was done by multiple moderators to allow a filtration system. Once applications' scores were ranked and averaged,

the top fifty were selected. From this, a group of 20 was chosen based both on the participants' scores but also in attempting to maintain diversity in terms of gender, public/private university, department, and location.

Ultimately, 10 women and 10 men were chosen for the program, representing 12 universities across the country (North South, Independent University Bangladesh, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Jahangirnagar University, University of Chittagong, Institute of Applied Health Sciences, USTC, Chittagong, University of Dhaka, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Military Institute Of Science & Technology, Bangladesh University of Professionals, Khulna

University, the University of Barisal). Departments varied from Environmental Science, Anthropology, Law and Justice, Sociology and Agriculture. Additionally, most students were either in their third or fourth year with a few students in their second year.

Structure

The Zero Hunger, Zero Emissions University Student Workshop was a residential program held at the CCDB Hope Centre, Savar from September 1st to September 3rd. The reason for making the program residential is that it allowed participants to engage with each other more holistically, producing a better learning environment for everyone.

The program occurred over three days with each day dealing with a separate issue connected to scenario building. The first day opened with a basic introduction to climate change issues in Bangladesh, food security issues in Bangladesh, and a short introduction to scenario building where participants brainstormed their own drivers for the future of the country.

The second day focussed on issues of marginalization, particularly in reference to issues of class and gender in the country, and participants were asked to think about how power dynamics may play out in each of the scenarios produced by the first Zero Hunger, Zero Emissions workshop.

The third day was dedicated to the scenarios, where participants in groups were required to create a fictional timeline for their given scenario, a short skit of their scenario utilizing the various aspects of food security, climate change and power dynamics they had been introduced to on the previous days, and a letter from the future to the present explaining whether or not zero hunger and zero emissions were achieved.

Zero Hunger, Zero Emissions Outputs

Drivers

After the participants learnt the basic scenario building methodology, they were asked to brainstorm drivers that they thought would be most important in shaping Bangladesh's future in terms of food security, emissions and climate change.

Based on their suggestions, the three most common themes were: Governance, Education and Technology.

This varied somewhat from the drivers decided upon by the first Zero Hunger, Zero Emissions workshop where the two main drivers were: Governance and Environmental Regulation. The

students thought that Education and Technology were important because they formed shaped cultural behavior regarding how people consume energy and food, whereas the latter provide options or obstacles to achieve either zero hunger or zero emissions goals.

Theatric Stills

Once the participants had learnt about issues of marginalization in Bangladesh, they were tasked in groups to create “theatrical stills” what power dynamics may look like in each of the four scenarios. This activity was drawn from August Boal’s ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ methodology.

The Green Road: A Society Guided by SDGs



This theatrical still shows the “Green World” where food security has been assured; society is more inclusive and digital technology is both more wide spread and useful. The person on the utmost left is showing eating happily, depicting food security. The two people on the right are shown using technology productively; and the person in the middle represents the government authority attempting to be as inclusive as possible.

The Middle Road: Society Muddles Along



This theatrical still shows a government that is attempting to be functional, but due to wrong information is unable to meet basic dietary needs leading to the malnutrition. The person on the far right is shown handing incorrect information to the government authority; whereas the person on the phone is depicting a successful 'digital Bangladesh' even though they are undernourished.

The Divided Road: A More Authoritarian, Unequal Society



In this theatrical still, the autocratic government is shown silencing protests and other forms of dissent while the people are starving and hungry, particularly rural women depicting on the right of the image. However, the woman on the right is shown on her phone and thereby fairly well off given the inequality present in society ("the poor become poorer and the rich become richer. All people do not have equal rights").

The Rocky Road: A Much More Fragile Society

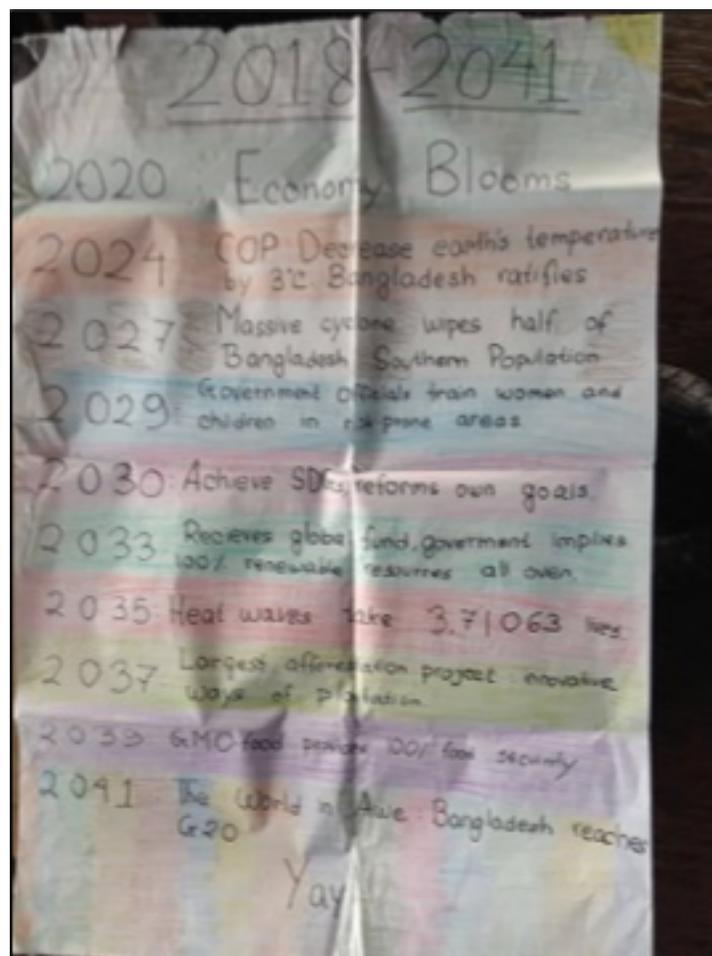


From one of the participants in the group: “the backboneless government is sitting on the chair and having bribes from the corrupted guy. The rich people are leaving the country. On the other hand, the poor are suffering. The woman is working hard in society but she is not able to express her wants”.

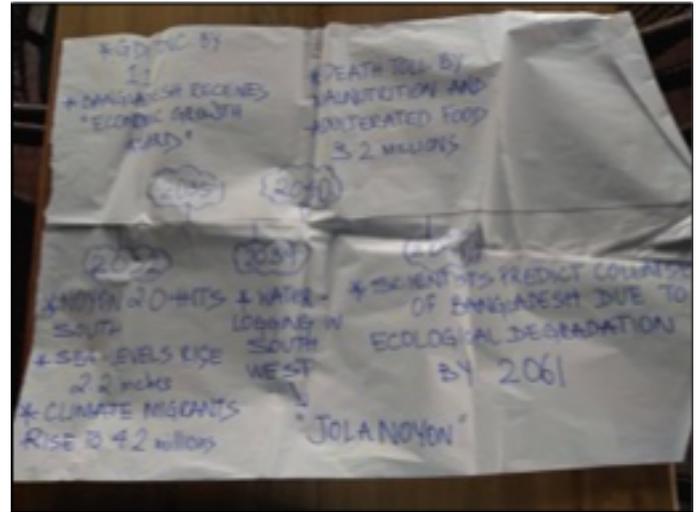
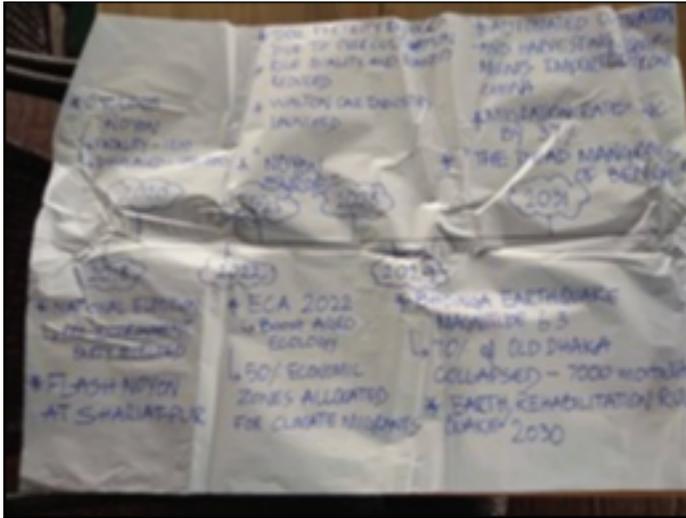
Timelines

Each of the groups were tasked to create a fictional time about how Bangladesh could potentially get from the present day to the given “future scenario”.

The Green Road: A Society Guided by SDGs



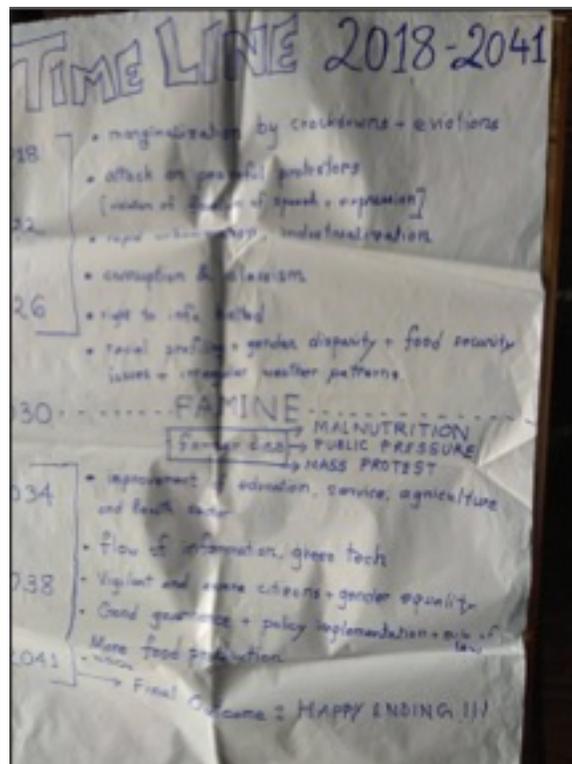
After this timeline was presented, participants discussed the feasibility of different elements in the timeline, particularly in terms of whether GMOs would actually ensure food security.



The Middle Road: Society Muddles Along

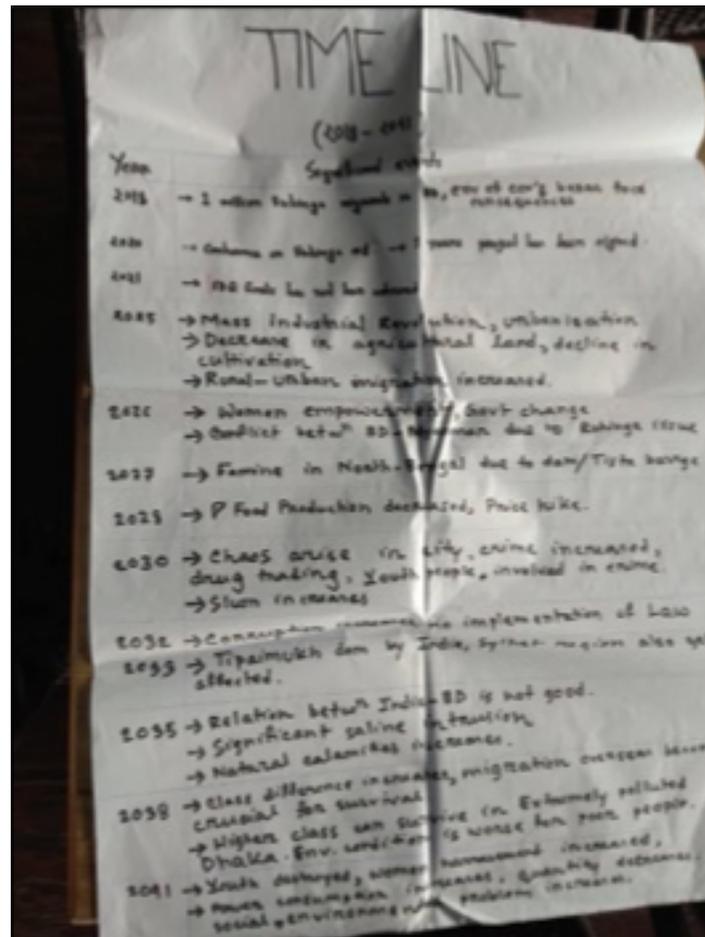
Note: Noyon was a name of one of the participants, and so for fun the group named all the cyclone disasters after him.

The Divided Road: A More Authoritarian, Unequal Society



Note: This timeline presented a future where things head negatively towards a famine, and then improve afterwards. Hence, the Divided Road scenario seems to be reached in 2030 after which things are shown to improve.

The Rocky Road: A Much More Fragile Society



Short Plays

Each of the groups also had to create a short play depicting their scenario with emphasis on food security, climate change and power dynamics.

Videos of the plays can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1CINGlim42drSg2FxnZwCSZskOJQall1c>.

Letters

Each of the groups then wrote a letter from the future scenario road to the present, reflecting on how the country developed regarding food security and climate change.

Dear Tara,

I know it's stupid of me to write and feel everything I am feeling right now, but I have to talk to you. Because I know how happy you would be if you knew how our world has changed. You know how you used to talk about making space for your flowers in between my rice field? It came true, not for me but for everyone else. Everybody now has various trees on their roofs and possibly wherever they can make a little space. I don't know how to put my feelings in words. For a fact, I know you would be alive and well now, if we had what I have now. Our daughter Asha now trains women and children to protect themselves during disasters, she earns what I got in 6 months back then. Our son Sohel goes to school with the rich children of our village. It feel so different, because Selim left this world for he was too poor to be in the shelter with them during the cyclone. But I know you are happy now, we are too. We get to eat nutritious food at all times, I wish you could try the new rice they made, tastes a but funny, but keeps my heart strong.

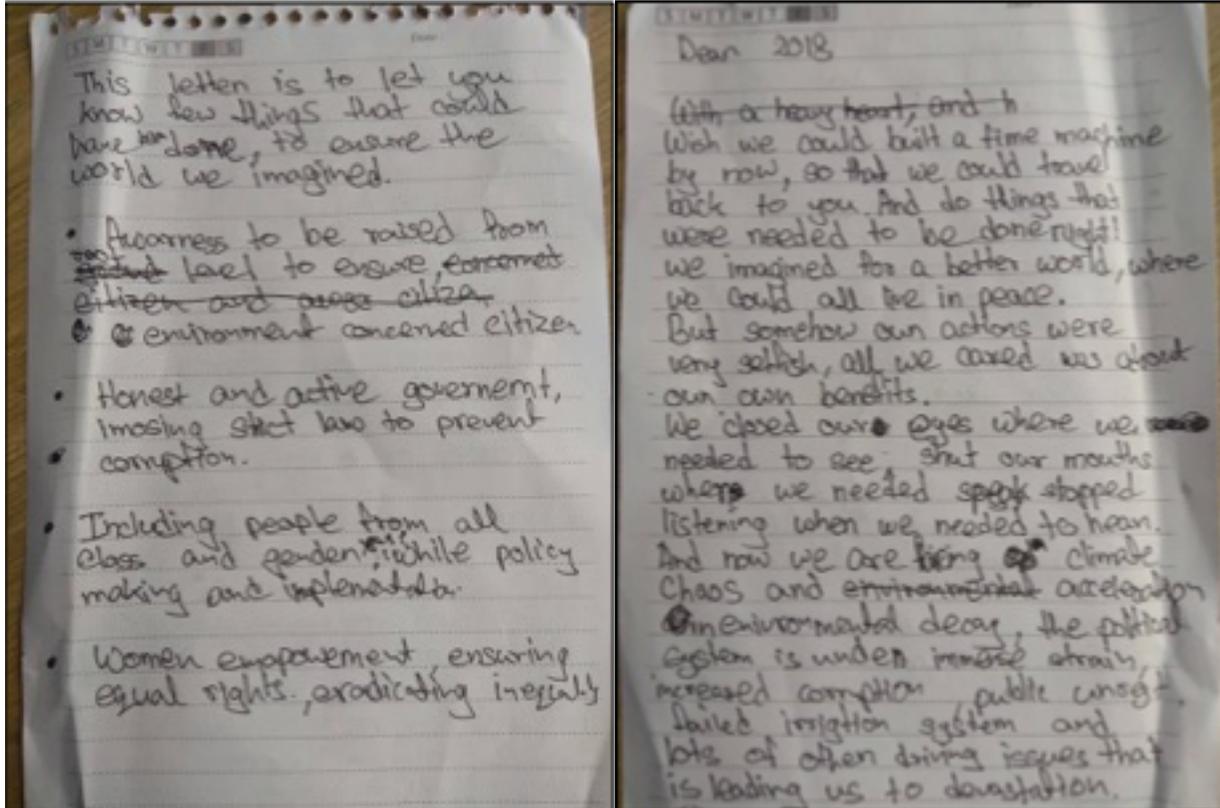
Oh..and the best part? We got television, gadgets, electricity. Sohel does not keep complaining about how hot it is anymore. The supplies are all renewable, I know you loved nature, you would be so proud of this exact moment. We have various modern ways of plantations.

We live in better houses now. I wish the changes taking place right now, happened a long time ago. I wish the sustainable discoveries were made earlier, the inclusivity of education, society, the training, the economic advances. Because if we had everything we have right now, you would still be here in my arms.

Yours,

The Man Who Never Gave Up

The Rocky Road: A Much More Fragile Society



Discussion / Key Points

After all scenarios were presented in their different forms, the participants had a discussion about each of the scenarios. The majority of participants felt that the Green Road scenario was a “fantasy” and the most realistic. One person thought it was feasible, however, only if a new generation took charge and pushed society in a different trajectory than it seems to be heading.

Most people felt that the Rocky Road scenario was the most likely with a few participants exclaiming that the present day scenario was in fact the Rocky Road scenario. However, again one person disagreed, suggesting at least there was general awareness about the problems Bangladesh is facing and this meant that there was at least the chance for the present situation in the country to improve. Nonetheless, the mood was fairly cynical about the direction of the future (especially in terms of renewable energy given the heavy investment the country was taking in terms of fossil fuels). While the Divided Road scenario looked positive from the outside, several participants commented that it was actually very volatile.

Some participants pointed out how food security was unlikely in any of the scenarios; and the one scenario where participants felt it could happen - the Green Road — it would only be through the use of GMOs. They noted that the exercise showed the group was cynical about whether the country could actually achieve food security by 2041, particularly in terms of meeting nutrition needs.

When posed what would need to be done to ensure a world more like the Green Road scenario, the participants started discussing the need for bottom-up movements in terms of changing both behavior and the overall system. One participant commented that likely everyone in the room had household help: she suggested that if every family who had household help could ensure food security for not only their household help but their families as well, then the country would come much closer to assuring a solution. The general consensus was that a bottom-up approach would be required to change the current trajectory to ensure a more democratic, renewable energy based, food secure future.