

**AIBS Fellowship Report, 2018**  
**Migrant Ethics and Ethical Strangers: Bangladeshi Migrants in Nordic Countries**  
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I am grateful for the funding I received from AIBS because it enabled me to make significant progress on my research and provided me with the opportunity to network with different scholars and community workers focused on immigration in Nordic countries. All of the Bangladeshis in my project were writers, publishers, bloggers, and artists at risk because their work and words were condemned by radical Islamists in Bangladesh. All of the Bangladeshis I interviewed were threatened; two survived attacks; most had close friends who were brutally killed. All of their asylum cases were approved with the assistance of International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN), an organization with headquarters in Stavanger, Norway, and PEN International. To this date, I have interviewed almost all the Bangladeshi ICORN guest writers and artists.

Because of the current instability in Bangladesh, the AIBS grant allowed me to research about Bangladeshi topics in locations outside of Bangladesh. Given that I wanted to focus on exiled secular Bangladeshis, the timing was perfect. The political instability, violence, and insecurity in Bangladesh are central to my project, albeit I examine these issues through the lens of those living in exile in Nordic countries.

In a multi-sited qualitative project, I interviewed and spent time with exiled Bangladeshis in their homes, offices, libraries, coffee houses, and at conferences. I interviewed several at length and over time and observed many in different contexts. I continue to follow them and interact with them on social media. I went with exiled Bangladeshis to the ICORN Assembly Meeting, centered on the theme “Safe but Not Silent,” in Malmö, Sweden, and the Oslo Freedom Forum, held in Oslo. At these programs, I listened not only to Bangladeshis, but also to other writers and artists exiled from home countries that did not safeguard freedom of expression. Increasingly, I found myself in a position of advocate for the exiled Bangladeshis, and I spoke with local politicians, directors of libraries (which are centers for ICORN writers in Norway), coordinators who work with ICORN guest writers and the immigration offices, and members of English PEN and Norwegian PEN.