



BRAC
Health
programme

Throughout the past year, BRAC's health programme has continued to provide the same preventive, curative, and rehabilitative grassroots health services that have proved effective in the past. It has strengthened partnership programmes with Government in recognition that improvement in the health status of the population ultimately requires concerted state support. Building on the experience of past successes, the health programme has also responded to emerging national health problems and scaled up former pilot projects, including HIV/AIDS prevention and micro-health insurance. BRAC is currently serving more than 31 million people through its comprehensive and multi-dimensional health programme.

Essential Health Care (EHC)

The Essential Health Care (EHC) programme is a time-tested BRAC method of promoting preventative health habits, reproductive services, health education, and mobilization throughout Bangladesh. EHC also includes collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh to help implement national programmes, such as the tuberculosis, immunization, and sanitation programmes. EHC has been supported by DFID, EC, CIDA, NOVIB, WFP and BRAC.

Package components of EHC are delivered primarily through the efforts of a Shastho Shebika (SS), or female community health volunteer. She works directly with a community through door-to-door visits to provide information about water and sanitation, family planning, immunization, pregnancy related care, basic curative care, health and nutrition education, and tuberculosis control. Each Shebika is chosen from a Village Organisation and given 18 days of basic training, plus three days each for malaria and TB control. In addition to basic training, Shebikas receive a one-day refresher course each month to address problems, questions, and introduce new topics.

A Shebika is assigned to on average 300 households and usually visits about 15 homes per day, during which time she provides health education, sells essential health commodities, treats basic ailments, collects basic health information, and refers patients to health centers when necessary. Although Shebikas are not paid a salary, they do receive Tk. 500 to participate in a revolving fund that allows them to sell essential health products and earn a small income. The Shastho Shebikas also liaise with government workers to mobilize and organize satellite clinics and EPI centers, and to distribute vitamin A capsules.

Shastho Karmis (SK) are more comprehensively trained community health female paramedics that supervise the work of ten Shebikas, in addition to monitoring targeted households and providing pregnancy-related care. She also conducts four health education meetings in the community every month, and maintains coordination with government health and family planning workers at the community level.

• *Water and Sanitation*

BRAC emphasizes awareness of water and sanitation issues, and promotes community capacity development. The Shebika is instrumental in bringing these issues to a community's attention through flip charts, popular theatre, and workshops, and coordinating initiatives with the Government and other supporting agencies. The

programme provides Taka 10,000-15,000 (US\$ 170-255) in interest free loans to local entrepreneurs to manufacture slab latrines. In 2003 BRAC helped establish 100 slab ring production centers, with 180,275 slab latrines being installed. In BRAC areas, 76% of households are currently using safe water for day-to-day purposes.

BRAC is working closely with other NGOs and the government to achieve the goal of 100% national sanitation by 2010. BRAC is a member of the government's National Task Force on Sanitation, and a member of the City Corporation, Divisional, District, Sub-district, and Union WATSAN Committees.

• *Family Planning*

During household visits, Shebikas and Karmis promote the correct use of modern contraceptives, and distribute pills and condoms. They also refer clients to government union and upazila health facilities if other temporary or permanent methods of birth control are desired. Shebikas are always available for referral and consultation in case of side effects. In 2003, the contraceptive coverage rate in EHC programme areas was 56%.

• *Immunization*

BRAC has discovered that widespread immunization of infants and pregnant women is one of the most effective means of raising health standards and saving lives. At the grassroots level, Shebikas and Karmis disseminate immunization and vaccination centre information, mobilize community support, and offer counseling for any side effects. They also mobilize the community during National Immunization Days for polio eradication, and distribute Vitamin A capsules to children.

• *Pregnancy Related Care*

BRAC provides reproductive health services through community based antenatal and postnatal care. Shebikas identify all pregnant women and register them with the local Shastho Karmi. The Karmi then tracks the pregnancy, provides iron and folic acid tablets, and promotes breast-feeding. The mother is also advised to use a trained birth attendant during delivery, or refer to a hospital if complications arise. A referral linkage has been established to provide Emergency Obstetric Care (EOC) at local health centres. BRAC currently provides 54% of all pregnant women with antenatal care.

• **Basic Curative Services**

Since 60-70% of all common diseases can be treated at the community level through basic curative services, the Shastho Shebikas have been trained to successfully diagnose and treat basic health ailments found in the general population. Shebikas are able to refer individuals with more complicated conditions to the local public and private health facilities. The Shebikas' efforts ensure affordable and timely curative services, which are critical to avoiding financial catastrophe amongst the poor and vulnerable.

• **Tuberculosis**

The tuberculosis treatment programme has expanded since its introduction in 1984, and now covers 283 upazilas (sub-districts) in 42 districts, including the Chittagong Hill Tracts and five city corporations. The Shastho Shebika implements the programme through information dissemination, identification of suspect cases, administration of Directly Observed Treatment Short course (DOTS), patient follow-up, and referral. Treatment success of new patients in 2002 was 89.3%.

• **Essential Health Care for Specially Targeted Ultra-Poor**

BRAC has initiated health programmes in seven districts that are specifically designed to address the challenges of improving health outcomes among the poorest of the poor. Services include a health awareness campaign, provision of financial assistance for needed clinical care, and a health survey among ultra-poor households to determine the severe diseases that are afflicting these individuals. In addition to the normal Essential Health Care services, ultra-poor families receive regular visits by Programme Organizers, and access to free services and products. In the past two years, 10,000 ultra-poor households have been included in this programme. In 2003 in collaboration with Sight Savers, BRAC treated sight disabilities in the ultra poor areas of Nilphamari district. BRAC has completed 123 successful cataract operations.



Facility-Based Services

• **Shushasthos (BRAC Health Centre)**

Static health centers, or Shushasthos were opened in 1995 to serve as a back up to community-based health interventions. The Shushasthos aim to develop a financially and programmatically sustainable model in order to provide clinical services for complicated cases identified in the community. Additionally, the Shushasthos play a role in improving maternal health status by aiding deliveries in high-risk birthing situations. Shushasthos are equipped with outpatient and in-patient services, laboratory facilities, essential drugs, and behavior change communications materials and equipment. One upgraded center in each district handles more complex clinical scenarios and emergency obstetric care. There are currently 55 Shushasthos of which 7 are upgraded facilities in 14 districts of Bangladesh. Shushasthos are financed through BRAC funding.

In 2003, 366,571 patients received care from the Shushasthos. Out of this patient pool, 45% were Village Organisation members, 14% were other NGO members, and 41% were non Village Organisation members. Cost recovery of Shushasthos is approximately 60%.

• **BRAC Limb and Brace Center**

BRAC Limb and Brace Fitting Center (BLBC) was established in 2000 to provide support to the physically disabled. The Center offers prosthetic and orthotic services, and a physiotherapy service was introduced in 2001. To operationalize and develop this project, BRAC has been working in cooperation with SDMH, a specialized pro-poor health services institution in Jaipur, India. Since 2001, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been providing artificial limbs and braces, as well as technical support and machinery. There are two satellite Limb and

Brace Fitting Centers in Chittagong and Rangpur. In 2003, 651 individuals used the services of BLBC, and 536 were provided with appliances. BLBC is financed by Joypur Limb Centre, UK.

Government and BRAC Partnership Programmes

• National Nutrition Programme

The National Nutrition Project (NNP) is a partnership between the Government and NGOs to reduce malnourishment, particularly among women and children. BRAC's primary role is to implement Area Based Community Nutrition (ABCN) activities in 53 of the 105 NNP sub-districts covering a population of 12 million. At the village level, the nutrition activities are being implemented through the community nutrition centres (CNCs), which are organized and supervised by the Community Nutrition Promoter (CNP). One Community Nutrition Organizer (CNO) works at the union level and supervises the activities of ten CNPs. A CNP has at a minimum an eighth grade education, is between 18 and 30 years old, and does not have more than two children. A CNP, with the assistance of a CNO and women's groups, monitors the nutritional status of children under two and pregnant and lactating women. She provides them with supplementary feeding, provides nutrition education to mothers, and promotes social mobilization around nutrition, health and social issues. Adolescent girls are targeted with nutrition monitoring, counseling, micronutrient supplementation and deworming. Newly weds are provided with nutrition monitoring and counseling. NNP is supported by GoB and WB.

The ABCN activities also consider household food security for the target population, which is maintained through the Nutrition Gardening (NG) and Poultry for Nutrition (PFN) programmes. Services are targeted specifically to poor women of reproductive age having land size up to 0.5 hectre. To implement NG programme, in each CNC area 12 target women known as nutrition garden women (NGW) are given Taka 125 (US\$ 2.1) to establish their own nutrition garden. A nursery is set up for four CNCs where a village nursery owner (VNO) receives a credit of Taka 15,000 (US\$ 258) to establish it. In PFN programme, selected target women receive poultry production cadre training, and a credit of Taka 1200-1500 (US\$ 20-25) to participate in poultry production. They are assisted by a village woman trained in poultry vaccination, health care and hygiene to work as a poultry health supervisor (PHS), one for two to three villages. It is expected that the whole approach of ABCN activities will

bring positive changes in nutritional behavior as well as the nutritional status of the population, particularly the poor.

• Tuberculosis Control Programme

BRAC's TB programme began in 1984 as a pilot programme in one upazila (Manikganj) covering 220,000 individuals. In 1994, BRAC joined in the implementation of the Government of Bangladesh's National TB Control Programme using the Directly Observed Treatment Short-Course (DOTS) strategy. The programme has expanded since its introduction, and now covers 283 upazilas in 42 districts, including Chittagong Hill Tracts and 5 city corporations. This programme has been supported by DFID, CIDA, NOVIB, WFP and BRAC.

Shastho Shebikas play a critical role in the implementation of BRAC's TB programme. During her household visits the Shastho Shebika disseminates information regarding TB and identifies suspected patients who have had a cough for more than three weeks. These individuals are referred for sputum examination.

Treatment is given according to the national guidelines. Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) drugs are being used for treatment of TB. Those individuals with confirmed TB by sputum microscopy are given DOTS by the Shastho Shebikas, under the guidance of BRAC field level staff and a government or BRAC medical officer. Patients come to the Shebikas' homes every day or alternate day (depending upon national guidelines) to take the TB medications for the entire course of treatment.

An innovative component of BRAC's DOTS programme is that patients are requested to give a deposit of Taka 200 (US\$ 3.50) at the start of treatment and to sign a bond with two witnesses as a guarantee of treatment completion. If a patient is unable to pay, in some cases other members of the community will help to pay, in other cases the sick individual will be given an exemption from the bond money. When treatment is completed, Taka 125 (US\$ 2) is given to the Shebika for her service, and Taka 75 (US\$ 1.2) is refunded to the patient.

In 2003, 167,420 suspected cases tested their sputum in 126 upazilas and Dhaka urban. 21,940 TB patients were diagnosed in 2003. Of them 17,255 were new sputum positive, 663 were sputum positive relapse, 3258 were sputum negative, and 764 were extra-pulmonary TB patients. Treatment success rate of new sputum positive patients diagnosed in 2002 (January-September) was 89.3%.

Pilot Programmes and Other Health Initiatives

• *Public Private Partnership Programme*

The Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme is an experimental programme within the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that seeks to improve access to quality essential health services. The programme seeks to combine healthcare provided through Community Health Schemes (CHS) with resources available from the public health sector and from the traditional and modern health sectors to create an integrated health scheme. BRAC has been working to develop an NGO approach in PPP, and concentrates its activities in health scheme development, community capacity building, utilization of its extensive health network, and ensuring better utilization of facilities. In 2003 16,549 individuals received ESP services, of which 960 were extremely poor. This programme is supported by the British Council.

• *HIV/AIDS Programme*

BRAC's HIV/AIDS programme promotes mass awareness of the disease, provides condoms to high-risk groups, and performs syndromic management of STIs and RTIs in high-risk groups to reduce the risk of HIV infection. Programme

Organizers, Shastho Shebikas, and Extension Workers (EW) are trained to offer information about HIV/AIDS to women and couples. Popular theatre is also used to raise awareness of the disease within a community. Adolescent boys and girls are targeted in BRAC's awareness campaign, both during secondary school and through the medium of BRAC Education Programme's community and adolescent libraries. BRAC offers information and distributes condoms to brothel-based sex workers, as well as transport workers and industrial laborers. Micro finance loans are also available to commercial sex workers to ensure financial stability and security, and empower them to demand condom usage. This programme is being implemented with BRAC funds.

• *Malaria Control Programme*

BRAC's malaria programme works primarily in the Chittagong Hill Tracts through an education and information campaign, and early diagnosis and prompt treatment (EDPT). Shastho Shebikas and Shastho Kamis disseminate information during their household visits and community forums. Patients receiving treatment pay a contribution fee to the Shebikas who ensure drug intake. To ensure proper testing and treatment, four malaria outreach centers have been established in each sub-district. In 2003,



24,351 uncomplicated malaria cases and 1,792 treatment failure cases were treated, and 21 cases were referred. This program is funded by BRAC.

- **Community-Based Arsenic Mitigation Project**

BRAC's arsenic mitigation project seeks to raise community awareness, test tube well water for arsenic contamination, and implement safe water strategies. BRAC has developed five options to ensure safe drinking water. These include renovated dug wells, rain water harvesters, pond sand filters, deep hand tub wells, and rural pipe water supply systems. 1,567 safe water options have been distributed in four upazilas. This is a UNICEF supported programme.

- **Saving Newborn Lives**

This programme works to improve neonatal health and survival in three rural sub-districts by promoting use of home based clean delivery practices, increasing referrals to health facilities for complicated pregnancies, increasing the number

- **Early Childhood Development**

The Early Childhood Development programme employs advocacy, research, family empowerment, and networking to increase awareness of important aspects of child development at all levels of society. Behavior Change Communication materials are used to improve workers' communication skills. A child-to-child intervention programme is operating in Sherpur and Bogra districts to teach adolescents the skills to handle young children. In 2003, 6,593 community leaders and 400 adolescents participated in union advocacy workshops and in the child-to-child approach training. In addition, 3,577 BRAC staff were informed about Early Childhood Development activities. UNICEF is supporting this programme.

- **Micro-Health Insurance**

This programme increases the poor's access to affordable and quality health services, and empowers women as the entry point for their family's access to health care. This ILO



of newborns with complications who receive care at a health facility, and increasing the number of women receiving antenatal care (ANC) services. BRAC is using Behavior Change Communication in one sub-district, while direct service delivery is being used in the other two sub-districts to determine which approach performs better. In 2003 forty-two Essential Newborn Care Facilitators were trained on newborn care, and these individuals in turn trained the Shastho Shebikas, Shastho Karmis, and Traditional Birth Attendants. Save the Children is supporting the programme.

funded programme offers voluntary enrollment to Village Organisations as well as non-VO members, with VO membership determining level of co-payment. Three packages are offered – a general package, pre-paid pregnancy related care package, and an equity package with free enrollment for the ultra-poor. At the conclusion of 2003, 2,685 families were enrolled in the micro-health insurance programme. Of these, 1,698 families were under the General Health package, 891 families were in the prepaid pregnancy related care package, and 96 were in the equity package.



BRAC
Education
programme

Since its inception in 1985, BRAC Education Programme (BEP) has expanded far beyond its original boundaries. The Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) project is continuing to grow and increase effectiveness. A host of new initiatives have also been introduced, and gradually moulded into full-fledged dynamic programmes such as the Adolescent Development Programme, Primary Initiatives in Mainstreaming Education (PRIME), Pre-primary Education, Community Schools, Continuing Education, and Post Primary Basic Education.

Consistent with last year, BEP activities continue to be divided into four key programmes: Non Formal Primary Education, Adolescent Development Programme (ADP), the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) Partnership Unit (GPU), and Post Primary Basic and Continuing Education (PACE). Within each programme there are a host of smaller projects. BEP has been supported by CIDA/AKF, DFID, EC, NOVIB, DGIS, UNICEF, NORAD and BRAC.

Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE)

BRAC's NFPE programme was initially designed to progress children aged 8 to 10 years old through Grades I –III. The programme has now been extended to teach the curriculum of Bangladesh's standard five-year primary education within four years. BRAC has also been improving and extending education facilities for ethnic minorities and children with disabilities.

98% of NFPE teachers are locally recruited and married women, with 73.50% of them having passed the Secondary School Examination and above. All teachers receive 114 days of training from BEP, which includes 15-day basic teacher training, monthly refreshers, and subject based training. From Grades I to III, NFPE schools follow BRAC curriculum on the basis of NCTB competencies along with supplementary materials and teachers' guides. In Grades IV and V, the Government curriculum is followed in addition to BEP-developed supplementary materials and teachers' guides.

BEP has an Education Development Unit that develops all BRAC curriculum and teaching materials. It collects continuous feedback from teachers, students, parents, and trainers to ensure that all revisions are comprehensible and effective. Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS) are the key personnel of pedagogical management in the field. They assist in the development of new teacher training materials and books, and disseminate these to staff and teachers. BEP has been developing its own teachers' guides and student workbooks in all subjects covering all GOB competencies. BRAC has also developed and field-tested subject-based training modules for field staff and teachers. In addition, BRAC has instituted a new monitoring system, ensuring that NFPE schools remain child and teacher friendly, interesting, gender sensitive, and activity based.

The NFPE programme has seen some considerable developments this year. Previously, BRAC students were not permitted to participate in scholarship exams, as this provision was strictly confined to the formal primary students at the end of Grade V. This year the Government of Bangladesh approved regulations allowing BRAC Grade V students to compete with formal primary school students in scholarship exams.

Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC)

BEOC (or Kishor Kishori – KK) schools were established in 1987 to cater towards children 11-14 years old who previously had no access to education. There is a special

emphasis on female education. The BEOC school design is similar to the NFPE, and from 2004 it also plans to offer grades I-V equivalent education in just four years of schooling. BEP is in the process of identifying additional areas of Bangladesh with low literacy rates that could benefit from BEOC schools.

Education for Indigenous Children (EIC)

BRAC's Education for Indigenous Children Unit has been working to provide culturally appropriate and innovative non-formal primary education to the indigenous communities of Bangladesh since 1999. In August and September 2003, with CIDA funding, BRAC opened 700 new schools for indigenous children in 14 BRAC regions in 55 upazilas. Since then, another 218 schools have been opened for indigenous children with funding from the BEP donor consortium. These schools have adapted the NFPE model to suit the needs of ethnic minorities. A specialist in linguistics is helping BRAC to introduce instruction and curriculum materials in indigenous languages in these schools. As in all BRAC schools, the aim is to mainstream indigenous students into the government system. However, at this stage BRAC is investing much effort into determining indigenous students' needs and how best to address them. In recent years, BRAC has recruited and hired many new indigenous staff, including two core staff at the head office, six indigenous resource staff to gather information and create supplementary materials, 200 school supervisors, and 14,003 indigenous teachers. There are 18,802 (56.4% female) indigenous children studying in 700 schools. There are 928 NFPE Schools that also have indigenous children along with the Bengali children.

Education Support Programme (ESP) Schools

The ESP was started in 1991 to expand NFPE coverage through partnership with small NGOs. BRAC provides technical and financial support to a number of small NGOs who, in turn, replicate the NFPE model in remote areas of the country where BRAC is less represented. ESP schools follow the BRAC approach, including materials and textbooks, and offer 3 years of education to the poorest children of the rural community. In 2003 the programme expanded with NORAD funding. BRAC is currently supporting 5,475 schools through 514 NGOs of which 1500 schools are NORAD funded. BRAC is also using ESP's partnership capabilities to find and foster relationships with NGOs that have experience working with the communities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, so that they may be supported in a more effective manner.

Adolescent Development Programme (ADP)

The Adolescent Development Programme arose out of BRAC's BEOC school model. Originally, many of the adolescent girls who finished the three – year basic education programme in BEOC schools did not continue their schooling. In an effort to help them retain literacy, numeric, and life skills, BEP instituted Reading Centres, or Kishori Kendros. These centres contain reading materials, and are also a safe place for the girls to socialize. Recognizing that education and capacity development among males creates a safer environment for girls, the Adolescent Development Programme also focuses many of its activities on adolescent boys.

APON

Following the success of the Kishori Kendros as an informal meeting place and continuing education opportunity, BEP decided to initiate a tailor-made course called APON (Adolescent Peer Organised Network) which is five months long. This course is followed by a 13-month series of discussion sessions in which girls are encouraged to have discussions on experiences and queries on topics raised in the course. The programme facilitates peer-to-peer education and support on a number of issues ranging from reproductive health to social matters like early marriage, gender, acid attacks/dowry, inheritance law, sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), etc. There has been a concentrated effort to include the more marginalized groups: ethnic minorities, adolescents with disabilities, out-of-school adolescents and married adolescents. A project on empowerment and protection of the rural women supervising BRAC Reading Centres, called Kishori Abhijan, was completed in December 2003.

With the success of APON for girls, BEP felt that it was important that boys also be given life skills courses to sensitise them to health and social issues. APON for boys uses the same peer education structure and concept as APON for girls, and deals with many of the same issues. The



target group for this course is boys in grades IX and X. It has been decided that the course should be taught at the local high school, not at the Kishori Kendros.

APON is currently undergoing revision based on research evaluation results and input from the adolescent girls and boys. From August 2003, the programme has also initiated parental discussion sessions on a pilot basis, since it was discovered that adult involvement is crucial in promoting adolescent responsibility and community socialization. Based on the results of this pilot initiative, parental involvement will be mainstreamed into the Adolescent Development Programme.

Economic Life Skills Project (ELSP)

A new course on basic economic life-skills has been introduced this year as an evolution of the Adolescent Development Programme's livelihood component. The course has been field tested in 4 regions. It aims to provide knowledge and skills of basic business to adolescent girls so that they are more confident and capable of entering the job market or starting their own small-scale business. Even if some girls decide not to seek an outside job, their increased knowledge and business acumen will raise their family status.

The GoB Partnership Unit (GPU)

The Government of Bangladesh Partnership Unit (GPU) of BRAC Education Programme was established in July 2001 to regularize BRAC's collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in the context of primary education.

Primary Initiatives in Mainstreaming Education (PRIME):

PRIME strives to improve the quality of primary education by establishing collaborative relationships with all stakeholders of the formal education system. The initiative operates from the central level down to the grassroots. PRIME activities focus especially on social mobilisation at the grassroots level, building relationships with local and central

Government authorities, working with School Management Committees (SMCs) of Government Primary Schools (GPSs), and operating pre-primary schools, some of them on Government Primary School campuses. This year PRIME has placed an added emphasis on community and family involvement through the organisation of parents' meetings, mothers' forums, SMC meetings, etc. Keeping with BRAC's multifaceted approach to development, PRIME has tested tube wells in all of its intervention areas for arsenic, planted trees, and conducted training workshops for teachers and SMCs.

Pre-primary Schools

The pre-primary programme began in 1997 as a pilot project with 40 schools aiming to preparing 5-6 year-olds to enter Grade I of the formal system by sparking their interest in learning, and by developing their social, cognitive, language and motor skills. The school cycle is one-year in duration, with each class consisting of 25-30 learners (at least 60% girls), who attend two-hour classes, six days per week.

The curriculum teaches students how to read and write the Bengali alphabet and numbers. They also learn to read and write a few easy words, and participate in about 40 small group games that involve counting and other basic skills. In addition, they are taught about cleanliness, healthy and unhealthy environments, fresh air, and safe drinking water. Physical exercise is part of the daily routine.

Pre-primary school employs and trains two adolescent girls or young (completed at least Grade VIII) women from the village as teachers. The pre-primary school is supervised by an adolescent supervisor who is HSC qualified. One supervisor is responsible for supervising 10 pre-primary schools. These young girls earn an honorarium that helps cover some of their own continued education expenses. By November 2003, 22,647 children had graduated from 814 pre-primary schools and entered Government Primary Schools (GPS). In addition, another 216,667 children were currently enrolled in 7,500 pre-primary schools.

After the completion of the course the graduates will get admitted in the Government Primary Schools (GPS). In order to cover as many potential entrants to GPS as possible, the pre-primary schools located near GPS have two pre-primary classes, able to cover up to 60 students in the GPS catchment area. The government at both the centralised and decentralised levels has been very receptive to the expansion of BRAC Pre-Primary Schools. Through the pre-primary programme BRAC has been able to increase school

readiness, ensure smooth entry into primary school, and open discussions with GPS teachers and school management committees to ensure that more of BEP's target group excel and persist in GPS.

Community Schools

Community schools were established by the GoB under the General Education Project in rural areas where the population density was very high, literacy rates were very low, and geographic conditions made it difficult for many children, especially girls, to attend school.

After realizing that many of its community schools had become dysfunctional, the GoB decided to hand them over to selected NGOs. Using their own funds, the NGOs improved community school performance. In return, the GoB agreed to provide free textbooks and pay teachers' salaries for two years.

BRAC currently operates 44 community schools with classes from pre-primary to Class V. The curricula and textbooks are from the GoB, and supplemented by BRAC materials. 6,687 students attend BRAC-run community schools, with a male-female ratio of 51:49.

Formal Schools

BRAC opened formal schools to illustrate how the success of the non-formal strategy can work in a formal school setting. Through formal schools, BRAC will also pursue innovative ideas for supplementary materials and teaching methods.

The formal schools follow the government academic year and curriculum, and use BRAC textbooks and supplementary materials. Currently, 2474 children attend pre-primary through Class V. 66 teachers (100% female) work in these schools. This programme is fully funded by BRAC.

Other Interventions

Eliminating Child Labour from Bidi Works

BEP is working with Special Projects in the Bidi industry of Haragachha Pouroshava to rehabilitate children employed in cigarette-making factories. This is an ILO funded project.

BRAC's Intervention in Sudan

In cooperation with UNICEF, BEP has been sending its senior staff to Southern Sudan to adapt BRAC's school

model in three provinces. Under the agreement, BRAC sends staff for 5-6 months and a curriculum expert for 2-3 weeks to assist the Sudanese team with operation and curriculum development. BEP has been supporting this project for the last two years.

Post-Primary Basic and Continuing Education (PACE)

The Post-Primary Basic and Continuing Education (PACE) programme of BRAC's Education Program strives to provide quality education opportunities to rural Bangladesh's adult and secondary school population. PACE concentrates its efforts on community-based multipurpose learning centres, called Gonokendros, and on capacity development of rural non-government secondary schools. Within these two core activities, there are a host of smaller initiatives and government linkages to ensure that PACE clients have access to a variety of educational tools and professionally trained instructors.

A. Post-Primary Basic Education (PBE)

In an effort to address the present lack of quality in secondary education in Bangladesh, BRAC initiated the Post-Primary Basic Education (PBE) program. The program aims to supplement the Government's efforts to improve secondary education opportunities, with an emphasis on the professional capacity development of secondary teachers.

Based on the positive findings of a pilot project, BRAC has permission from the Ministry of Education (MOE) to conduct workshops/training for head teachers, subject teachers, and members of the School Management Committee (SMC) of secondary schools. Meanwhile, BRAC introduced the issue of teacher training to the donor consortium of BRAC Education Program. CIDA offered its support in introducing the PBE activities to secondary schools, with a special focus on capacity building in ethnic areas.

BRAC's current interventions reach 325 schools. Of this total, 175 are located in ethnic minority areas.

1. Material Development: In order to develop the most appropriate learning materials, BRAC has consulted a wide array of experts and formed a core group to concentrate on material development and training. Materials covering 33 topics in Mathematics, 28 topics in English, 20 topics in Science, and 5 topics in value education have been prepared. These materials were reviewed and strengthened by national and international consultants.

2. Teachers' Teaching: When the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) introduced a new curriculum in 1997, BRAC learned that most of the rural teachers were finding it difficult to comprehensively present the new topics to the students. This has encouraged BRAC to organize residential subject based training for English, Mathematics and Science teachers. Pre and post-test result analysis indicates a significant change in their capacity to understand and deliver new topics. BRAC monitors classroom teaching of subject teachers and performance education managers following their training. This enables BRAC to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the training materials and the existing system of these institutes, and to identify appropriate modifications.

3. Management Workshops and Training: BRAC believes that for a good teaching and learning environment, management must assume a comprehensive role within the school. As of December 2003, 302 head teachers, 340 assistant head teachers, and 520 SMC chairs and vice chairs attended BRAC workshops. A six-day management-training course has been introduced. This will be followed by further short duration courses.

4. Value Education and Citizenship Building Through Co-Curricular Activities: BRAC has piloted a mentoring project that strives to instill in secondary school students a sense of their personal identity and concomitant responsibility as a student of the school, and a member of the family, community, and country. Given this objective, BRAC has trained 289 teachers on value education. Debating, preparing wall magazines, creative writing, mentoring and sports are all included in the present course. BRAC also plans to implement Maths, Science and English brigades to create interest among the students in these subjects.

5. Community-Based Workshop: Since the community runs 98% of secondary schools, the development of a given community's involvement and capacity is crucial. BRAC therefore organizes community workshops attended by parents, teachers, local political and community leaders, local elite, and other stakeholders. In 2003, BRAC organized 24 such workshops.

Cooperation with the Government and Relevant Agencies

One of the biggest changes in PBE during 2003 was the improvement in cooperation with the Government and relevant agencies. BRAC maintains a strong liaison with the

Government in an effort to maximize utilization of resources, and to minimize or avoid duplication of initiatives. BRAC organized workshops and held meetings with upazila and district level Government education officials to share experiences, offer updates on new activities, and coordinate training at the secondary education level. BRAC also conducted a meeting with the GOB, particularly the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE). The meeting was attended by 23 participants including the Director General of DSHE, senior officers, including Directors of major projects (i.e. PROMOTE, SESIP, ELTIP), and senior staff of BRAC.

B. Continuing Education (CE)

Although Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in universalizing primary education, a nation of primary-schooled adults is not a sufficient precursor to human development and economic prosperity. Cognizant of this remaining obstacle, BRAC has established 802 community-based multipurpose learning centres, or Gonokendros, to provide post literacy services and to promote reading habits among the semi and neo-literates in rural areas. Gonokendros are mostly located on the premises of secondary schools or at the center of a union, and are operated by locally recruited and trained women. At present, 94.74% of the librarians are women.

When a new Gonokendro is desired, BRAC requires that a community demonstrate its commitment to the project by mobilizing subscribers, raising money, providing a room, and forming an activity committee. BRAC then creates an interest accruing fund with a matching amount of money, and also provides furniture and reading materials. Within two years, the Gonokendro is transformed into a registered autonomous trust, which continues to mobilize resources for future sustainability. As of December 2003, 620 Gonokendros (76.43%) have been registered as trusts.

In addition to their primary function as libraries, Gonokendros also promote a variety of educational, socio-cultural, and sports activities in an effort to build community cohesion.

Children's Corner: Found in 93% of BRAC Gonokendros, the children's corners provide reading materials, indoor games, and a black board. Story telling sessions and cultural activities are also occasionally arranged.

Targeting Students: In 2003, 392 Gonokendros hosted regular teacher-guided library periods for secondary school

students. In 2003, Gonokendros also lent textbooks to 13,131 poor, mostly female students for an entire academic year.

Mobile Library: As of December 2003, there are 123 mobile libraries that offer reading opportunities to adults who are unable to take direct advantage of the library services of Gonokendros. A part-time assistant librarian (usually a woman) transports books to the doorsteps of rural households once/twice a week. 46,924 books were issued to 4,640 members in different villages. Of this number, 3,170 are women.

IT in Gonokendros: Recognizing the growing digital divide between the rural and urban population, and in response to community demand, BRAC introduced computers to its Gonokendros in late 1999. Currently, 70 Gonokendros have been equipped with computers and 1 Gonokendro is connected to the Internet. Gonokendro IT services also provide Bangla language resources, relevant curriculum for a variety of users, and multimedia CD libraries. To date, 1,824 Gonokendro members (680 female) have received training on basic computer skills.

Skill Development Training: BRAC, in cooperation with the Directorate of Youth and Sports, has organized livelihood enhancement skill development training courses for adolescent/youth Gonokendro members since 1998. To date, 15,663 Gonokendro youths have received practical training in industries such as livestock, poultry, fisheries, tailoring, agriculture, electrical and electronics, refrigeration, nursery, handicrafts, etc. 6,898 of the trainees were female.

Socio-Cultural Activities: Gonokendros host a variety of socio-cultural and sports activities in an effort to solidify community consciousness. These include the celebration of important national events, social service functions, publishing wall magazines, and hosting cultural and literary events. Many of these cultural programs are financed by community donations. Throughout 2003, 663 Gonokendros collected 876,513 Taka (cash and crops).



Support
programmes

BRAC Training Division

In an effort to enhance the capacities of the poor as well as to promote staff development, BRAC has incorporated training as an integral part of all programmes. BRAC Training Division (BTD) has played a significant role in quality assurance in 2003 by developing new need-based training curriculum/modules for BRAC main programmes. The Division also upgraded existing modules and materials.

Diversified internal training initiatives such as micro finance management, BRAC Bank staff development, managing educational programmes, building the capacity of the para-professionals and staff of human rights and legal aid services, BRAC school teachers' capacity building, secondary school teachers capacity building, and communication skills development were arranged for BRAC staff. In this way, BTD has been instrumental in creating a work force that believes in the vision and values of BRAC. In addition, the Training Division organized and facilitated a number of external training courses and exposure visits to develop the capacity of Government Of Bangladesh (GoB) staff members and other national development organisations.

BRAC training courses are grouped into two broad categories: Human Development and Management, and Occupational Skills Development. Respective programmes conduct their own occupational skills development courses.

The BTD is continuing the Gender Quality Action Learning (GQAL) programme to improve gender relations among BRAC staff and group members, and to ensure the quality of BRAC programmes by facilitating recruitment and retention of female personnel. Some collaborative programmes have been undertaken with the Government and with non-government organisations. A training course on "Personal Social Education for married adolescent girls" was held for 181 community health workers. The training programme was funded by UNFPA and sponsored by Directorate of Youth, Government of Bangladesh. Another training programme on "The role of community leaders in empowering adolescent girls: Gender perspectives" was funded by UNICEF. 1700 current and ex UP chairman, members, religious leaders, schoolteachers, and community leaders participated.

BRAC Training Division emphasizes its own capacity development through courses on "Behavioral Modification through Leadership Development" for senior trainers. It also organizes regular forums to improve English proficiency among Training Division staff. BTD continues to facilitate

BRAC Local Representative (BLR) workshops that ensure all field administrators remain up-to-date on BRAC activities and policies.

In 2003, 89,717 people were trained (46,508 male and 43,209 female) by BRAC Training Division.

Global Partnership

The Global Partnership (GP) for NGO Studies, Education and Training is a consortium of three educational centres that offers a comprehensive diploma and masters degree programme focusing on the realities faced by NGO leaders from the grassroots to the global level. The three participating institutions include BRAC in Bangladesh, Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) in Zimbabwe, and School for International Training (SIT) in the United States.

Under the partnership, BRAC offers a postgraduate diploma in NGO Leadership and Management leading to a master's degree. ORAP Zenzele College is the venue for the Diploma in Grassroots Development and NGO Management leading to a bachelor's degree, while SIT in Vermont, USA offers both a bachelor's and a master's degree.

Research and Evaluation Division

The Research and Evaluation Division (RED) was established in 1975 to provide research support to BRAC programmes. RED conducts multidisciplinary studies on various development issues and subjects of national and global importance. These include poverty alleviation, socioeconomic development, agriculture, nutrition, health, population, education, environment, gender, and related fields. Although RED concentrates its activities on BRAC programmes, it also maintains strong linkages with the government organizations, UN bodies, and a number of academic and research institutions at home and abroad. In 2003, RED undertook 37 collaborative research projects with organizations like Aberdeen University (UK), British Council (Bangladesh), Campaign for Popular Education (Bangladesh), European Commission (UK), Government of Bangladesh, The Hospital for Sick Children (Canada), ICDDR,B: Centre for Health and Population Research (Bangladesh), Imperial College (UK), Institute of Development Studies (UK), International Rice Research Institute (Philippines), Karolinska Institute (Sweden), Micronutrient Initiative (Canada), Population Council (USA), Save the Children (USA), UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank, and the World Health Organisation.

A major focus in socioeconomic research during 2003 was on a new BRAC programme for the ultra poor called CFPR-TUP that started in January 2002. This included detailed baseline surveys and process documentation of different programme activities. Research on food system transition, trends in food consumption, rice biotechnology, and rice intensification system were some of the other areas of socioeconomic research in 2003.

A nationwide survey is being conducted every year since 1998 to examine the state of primary education in Bangladesh and to bring qualitative improvement in primary education. The theme of the last survey was literacy in Bangladesh. The current survey aims to get a deeper understanding of the quality of primary education in Bangladesh. Several other studies were also conducted on various aspects of BRAC Education Programme.

RED's major work on health concentrated on gender barriers in TB control programme, deworming, national low birth weight and anaemia survey, micronutrient supplementation, home fortification of weaning foods with micronutrient sprinkles, effects of exposure to arsenic on birth outcome, and primary health care for elderly people.

RED emphasizes the importance of effectively sharing research findings with its stakeholders, such as BRAC management, donors, field managers, and also policy makers and researchers at home and abroad. Research findings are disseminated through reports, monographs, annual reports, books and book chapters, journal articles, vernacular research compendium, and short articles in newspapers and newsletters. The research findings are also disseminated through presentations in national and international conferences, seminars, and workshops. Summaries of major findings and important activities are also posted on display boards placed at all the training venues of BRAC.

As of December 2003, RED has produced 940 research reports and papers that are available in bound volumes in Ayesha Abed Library at BRAC University. Forty-seven studies were completed in 2003. The abstracts of completed studies are available in the RED annual report and at the BRAC website. Twenty-two original research papers were published in national and international journals during the year. Some of the international journals that published the research findings of BRAC are Health Policy and Planning, Bulletin of the WHO, Scandinavian Journal of Nutrition, Journal of Nutrition, Public Health, Journal of Perinatology, Current Science, World Development, IDS Bulletin,

Economic and Political Weekly, International Review of Education, and the Journal of Scholarly Publishing. BRAC researchers also contributed four book chapters and have produced four books during the year.

As of December 2003, RED has 28 researchers, 17 support staff, and 58 project staff, 45% being female. Besides, 11 researchers were on study and long leave. In 2003, RED spent Taka 42.4 million (US\$ 0.72 million), 33% of which came from BRAC's core funds and the remaining raised from external collaborative research, consultancy, and commissioned research projects.

BRAC Human Rights and Advocacy Unit

BRAC Human Rights and Advocacy Unit (HRAU) seeks to promote behavior change among individuals, groups, communities, organisations, and Government officials. The Human Rights and Advocacy Unit's most substantial project involves the scientific development of communication materials for BRAC's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction-Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR-TUP) initiative. Through workshops, lobbying, and media exposure, the HRAU seeks to change perceptions and policies that affect ultra poor individuals in Bangladesh. The HRAU also cooperates with BRAC Research and Evaluation Division to conduct research on ultra poor behavior and poverty alleviation in cooperation with local level players. HRAU has been supported by DFID, EC, CIDA, NOVIB, WFP and BRAC.

The Human Rights and Advocacy Unit's CFPR-TUP related communication work involves social communication initiatives geared towards mobilizing society at all levels to create a pro-poor environment. To ensure that inter-action, the Human Rights and Advocacy Unit executes field visits by social leaders and process-based communication activities. The HRAU's most effective work has been in developing a three-stage theatre based community action initiative, supported by audio, video, and other communication material based activities. HRAU has also developed a two-tiered workshop model designed to generate support and link access managers with civil society. National and local publications, meetings with relevant stakeholders, fact sheet publications, and organization of media events are also included. Human Rights and Advocacy Unit created an awareness video that is being broadcast at the field level, and an audiocassette that serves as a link between the ultra poor and local elites. Human Rights and Advocacy Unit is also conducting workshops, popular theatre, and follow-up

community meetings to create a network between the primary and secondary stakeholders of the CFPR-TUP project. To increase its audience and impact, HRAU is also implementing an outreach program involving local NGOs in the program area.

In addition to work on CFPR-TUP, BRAC Human Rights and Advocacy Unit is pushing social communication for Rights. These include urban rights in general, rights of slum dwellers, and rights of distressed women in adverse health conditions. It has also initiated a process of inter-action to empower the urban poor, the most neglected population segment.

Human Rights and Advocacy Unit also conducts workshops to promote gender awareness among all levels of BRAC personnel. It develops strategies to end discriminatory attitudes towards women, and is creating a BRAC-wide policy on sexual harassment.

Special Projects

BRAC Community Road Safety (BCRS) Programme

High incidences of traffic fatality have made road safety an important national and organisational issue in Bangladesh. BRAC workers and programme participants who travel primarily by motorcycle, bicycle, and on foot are disproportionately affected. In response, BRAC initiated its road safety programme in March 2001. Activities of the programme include road safety training of field staff, education through textbooks to BRAC non-formal primary schools, and introduction of community road safety education. The programme also utilizes flip charts, posters, Popular Theatre, and an animated film to disseminate road safety messages.

BRAC's road safety programme has created a network of local NGOs who receive training on road safety and are committed to raising awareness about the issue. BRAC has partnered with Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), UK through the support of DFID to produce a set of guidelines for community road safety education to be replicated in developing countries. As a founding member of the World



Road Safety Network (WRSN) accredited by the UN, BRAC will contribute to the development and dissemination of guidelines for traffic enforcement and education, and advise the UN about road safety issues. In recognition of BRAC's efforts to address road safety problems, the Government of Bangladesh has made BRAC a member of the National Road Safety Council.

Vocational Training

BRAC Special Projects has launched a five-month vocational training course from October 2003 in an effort to eliminate child laborers from hazardous occupations. 1,221 thirteen to seventeen year old child laborers currently working in bidi making factories are taking courses in tailoring, embroidery, stitching, bicycle and rickshaw van repairing, and candle and wax showpiece making. There are 53 courses, each with 25 participants. The trainers have a background in skills training, or are part of an allied business. They also underwent Operational Training of the Trainers (TOT) prior to commencement of the vocational courses. The children who receive training are registered under various partner NGOs of the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labor Project, which is funded by the US Department of Labor in Haragachha, Rangpur.

Related Institutions

BRAC has been involved in a number of commercial ventures that provide socially useful services and are consistent with BRAC's twin goals of poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor. Many of these organizations began as BRAC projects and ideas, and later evolved into independent companies with BRAC as a shareholder.

Associate organisations include BRAC Industries Ltd. (Cold Storage), BRAC BD Mail Network Ltd., BRAC Services Ltd. (Hospitality), BRAC Concord Lands Ltd., Delta BRAC Housing Finance Corp., BRAC Tea Companies and Documenta TM Ltd..

Aarong

Aarong was established in 1978 as a marketing arm of BRAC with the aim of providing a stable and gainful source of employment for underprivileged rural artisans. Aarong means a village fair, and symbolizes Aarong's commitment to promoting fairness in the global village. Aarong connects rural artisans to the end user through services such as design, quality control, warehousing, marketing and retailing. In order to encourage craftsmanship and empower the poor,

Aarong offers artisans spot payment, skill development training, fair trade, working capital loans and various other benefits. Currently, Aarong provides services to more than 35,000 artisans, 85% of whom are women. Traditional and non-traditional crafts are made by rural women in Ayesha Abed Foundation training and production centres in Manikganj, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Jessore, Kushtia, Baniachang and Pabna areas, and then sold in Aarong outlets. Many independent cooperative groups or traditional family based artisans such as potters, brass workers, jewelers, jute workers, basket weavers, handloom weavers, and silk weavers also market their crafts through Aarong. In 2003, Aarong introduced a sub-brand under its umbrella called "Taaga" which is an east-west fusion fashion line geared towards young and urban women. There are two other product lines introduced by Aarong under its own name. These are "short Kurtas" for men and an "exclusive Salwar Kameez" collection for women. Product development, innovation in design, and improvements in quality and customer service are an ongoing process at Aarong.

Over the last 26 years, Aarong has become a brand that signifies quality, excellence and fair value. Aarong has strong export ties with the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Switzerland, Netherlands, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States, Japan and Malaysia.

BRAC Dairy and Food Project

Bangladesh produces milk for only 13.58% of the total demand. The country has to import milk, which costs about 300 crore taka each year. To meet the increasing demand, BRAC's Rural Development Programme started a livestock programme in 1984. This programme soon observed that even though the programme increased milk production, the livestock rearers were not getting a fair price. Therefore, to ensure a fair price of milk for rural producers, BRAC established a dairy plant in 1998. Under this project seventeen chilling plants were set up in different milk pockets of the country. 34,000 litres of milk are produced and distributed through the milk plant every day.

BRAC Bank

BRAC Bank, inaugurated on July 4, 2001, functions as a full-fledged commercial bank. It strives to promote broad-based participation in the Bangladesh economy by increasing access to economic opportunities for all individuals and businesses. There is a special focus on providing financial services to Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) who



otherwise have no access to institutional credit. BRAC Bank works under the assumption that the pursuit of profit and development can be mutually reinforcing goals. Up to December 2003, BRAC Bank has been operating through nine branches in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, and 157 Unit Offices all over Bangladesh.

BRAC University

BRAC University (BU) is another addition (April 2001) to the family of BRAC initiatives. Its mission is not only to impart knowledge, but also to act as a center of excellence in knowledge creation through research that connects with practice. This is fundamental to creating professionals with the vision and ethics needed to foster national development that is inclusive, pro-poor and just. The goal of BU is to provide high quality broad-based education for students to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary for taking on the challenges of development, both in Bangladesh and beyond.



At present more than 1,500 students are studying at BU to receive a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Science (BS) in Computer Science, Bachelor of Social Science (BSS) in Economics, Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English, Bachelor of Architecture (B. Arch), Bachelor of Law, and Bachelor of Development Studies. Under Postgraduate Programs, BU is offering three courses: Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Development Studies (MDS) and Diploma in Computer Science. Thirteen student clubs and forums are on offer, including Adolescent Empowerment Forum, Cultural Club, Drama & Theatre forum, Debating Club, Enterprise Development Forum, and Global Studies Forum. BRAC University is also in the process of launching the Institute of Education and Development, and the James P. Grant School of Public Health.





BRAC

Afghanistan

BRAC Afghanistan, registered in May 2002, is assisting the war affected Afghan people to rebuild their country through programmes in education, health, micro finance, enterprise development, capacity development, and the national solidarity programme.

Background

More than two decades of fighting and conflict in Afghanistan has resulted in a severely damaged infrastructure, degraded natural resources, weakened public institutions and fragmented political authority. A severe drought lasting from 1999 until 2002 has exacerbated the situation, and it is estimated that over a quarter of the population are critically poor.

BRAC believes it has a responsibility to the people of Afghanistan as citizens of the world, development practitioners, and members of an organisation committed to the eradication of poverty around the world. Based on its previous experience in Bangladesh after the liberation war of 1971, it believes that with its proven track record of rebuilding a war-ravaged country, it can contribute significantly in assisting the Afghan people to rebuild their country and subsequently improve their economic condition and quality of life. This programme has been supported by OXFAM, SIDA, MISFA, MRRD-Afghanistan, UNICEF, DFID and BRAC.

BRAC Afghanistan was registered in May 2002 as a Foreign NGO and began working in the country with support from the concerned Ministries and a number of donor organisations. The mission of BRAC Afghanistan is to work towards a just, enlightened, healthy and democratic Afghanistan free from hunger, poverty, environmental degradation and all forms of exploitation based on age, sex and ethnicity. The program aims to assist the war affected Afghan people to rebuild their country through programs in education, health, micro finance, enterprise development, capacity development, and the national solidarity program. BRAC Afghanistan operates to varying degrees of scope and intensity in 55 districts in 12 provinces.

Education Programme

The social unrest and conflict in Afghanistan has had a long-term impact on the education system. The present literacy rate in Afghanistan is low, and the country falls short of a large number of teachers, since many were misplaced during the war and many more migrated to neighbouring countries.

The objective of BRAC Afghanistan education programme is to increase enrollment of girls and to promote the retention of female teachers in the primary education sector. BRAC aims to strengthen linkages with the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Afghanistan, to increase collaboration in education related

to teacher training, schools for female children, social mobilisation, the exchange of ideas and experiences in primary education, and to enhance the pedagogic efficiency of teachers.

BRAC Afghanistan programme found that (1) a good number of small children cannot attend formal schools since they are situated too far away from their residence or cannot be reached easily due to topography, and (2) a significant number of young girls between the age of 11 – 16 years are out of reach of the formal education system because parents are frequently unwilling to send their daughters to distantly located schools alone. Therefore, it is important to give both children and young adults an opportunity to complete their basic education through an equivalency programme or a transitional programme, to catch up with their age group, and be mainstreamed into formal schools as much as possible. To fulfil this objective, the education programme is operating three types of one teacher, one-room schools in the communities.

The three-year course of NFPE (Non Formal Primary Education) schools is targeted to children 10-15 years old who have never been enrolled in any school or have dropped out of formal school. The Feeder Schools target young children between 8-10 years old to prepare them for entrance into the formal school system following completion of their BRAC course. Feeder schools cover a two-year primary education curriculum in one year. The BEOC (Basic Education for Older Children) schools are for young adults of 11-16 years. The students are expected to enroll in grade IV of formal school after completing 3 years of primary curriculum in 2 years at BEOC schools.

The education programme is currently operating 83 schools, 24 of which are non-formal primary schools, 16 are BEOC schools, and 43 are feeder schools. The total enrollment in these schools is 2,753 students (only 84 are boy students). The Afghanistan national school curriculum, which is supported by the transitional government, is being taught in all BRAC operated schools in Afghanistan.

In addition to the mainstream education programme, BRAC is participating in the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) in association with UNICEF Afghanistan. BRAC opened 1,311 classes with 45,885 students (37,174 female, and 8,711 male) in five provinces under the winter school programme, and will open another 790 classes in three provinces under the summer school programme. Last year BRAC participated in the Winter Season Accelerated Education Programme in 13 Districts of Kabul City. 15,024

children were covered (10,718 female, and 4,306 male) in 126 winter classes.

Health Programme

In Afghanistan people have very limited access to health care facilities. The rural Afghans have little knowledge of basic health issues, use of safe water for domestic sanitation and personal hygiene, and use of medicine. In an effort to improve the health, nutrition and reproductive health condition of the rural Afghan, the health programme provides an essential package of health services through (1) community based care, and (2) facility based care in collaboration with the public sector and other agencies in Afghanistan. The community-based care initiative provides services to people's doorsteps through health volunteers. The static/mobile clinics provide facility based care to the patients referred by the community health volunteers, local field workers and staff of other agencies.

Female community health volunteers (CHV) implement health programme activities at the grassroots level. Each CHV is responsible for 150 to 200 households in her catchment area. A CHV visits 15-20 households daily. During these visits she provides basic curative care for common diseases, promotes and provides contraceptives, identifies

pregnant women and provides support for pregnancy related care, mobilises children for immunization and ensures Directly Observed Therapy (DOTS) for tuberculosis patients in TB affected areas. She also provides health education to the family members, and increases awareness of family health issues. She is responsible for compiling records on births, deaths and migratory movement of people. Community health workers (CHW) are developed to support and supervise the health volunteers. Each CHW supervises the work of 10 health volunteers and visits 15 households a day.

BRAC is currently running 10 fixed clinics and 98 mobile clinics in 10 districts under 3 provinces in Afghanistan. Both of the health centres are equipped with a medical doctor, nurse, pharmacist, vaccinator and register. This year, 143,073 patients were treated, and 7,553 children and 6,907 women were immunised. Antenatal and postnatal services were made available through 12,186 visits. 11,252 couples received family planning methods. In addition to these services, 529 behaviour change communication (BCC) forums were conducted at the village level with 11,990 participants. Flip charts and posters are used in the forums to identify community problems, explain the importance of health services, promote immunisation and family planning, and teach prevention of water borne diseases.



Micro-finance Programme

In Afghanistan, there are many women-headed families because a large number of men were killed during the wars or are working away from home. An opportunity to start an income generating activity or a chance to get a job gives these women strength to survive and helps them maintain their families. They are able to buy food, clothing, send their children to school, and even save some amount for emergency purposes. Afghanistan requires a large amount of funding in order to be rebuilt. The micro-finance programme offered by BRAC is an option to Afghan women who have the desire and ambition to start their own income generating activities. Micro-finance services offered by BRAC serve as seed capital, allowing the poor women to begin and expand businesses. The programme also offers a saving facility as part of the micro-finance programme.

The goal of BRAC micro-finance programme in Afghanistan is to extend support to alleviate poverty in the underdeveloped areas of Afghanistan that have no access to micro-finance services. These small loans have a remarkable impact on the lives of individual Afghan women at the grassroots level since their resultant income generating capacity offers hope and opportunity for a better future. The program follows the same criteria as BRAC Development Program, but adapted to the Afghan context.

With support from Micro-finance Investment & Support Facility, Afghanistan (MISFA), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), and World Bank, BRAC is implementing a micro-finance programme in 33 branches (33 districts) in 8 provinces, and has plans to extend its services to 75 branches (75 districts) in 14 provinces in 2004.

The micro-finance programme has organised 24,458 VO members in 1,008 VOs. It has disbursed US\$ 1,551,331 to 15,710 borrowers. The VO members have deposited US\$ 122,654 in savings. The average savings per member is US\$ 0.20 a week, and per member net savings is about US\$ 4.96. The following graph shows a sharp increase in disbursement, reflecting high demand for micro finance services since an effective banking system is absent.

Small Enterprise Programme (SEP)

The SEP loan aims to provide financial support to the 'missing middles' which belong neither to the target group of the standard micro finance programme, nor meet the necessary criteria to access support through formal financial

institutions. The SEP loans support such small businesses as bakeries, grocery stores, weaving businesses, stationary stores, cloth/clothing businesses, pharmacies, home appliance delivery stores and shoe making factories.

BRAC started providing small enterprise loans in July 2002. The loans vary from US\$ 300 to US\$ 750, but may go as high as US\$ 1,000. The loan procedures remain the same as those of the micro finance programme. As of December 2003, there are 208 SEP borrowers to whom US\$ 124,581 has been disbursed.

Agriculture Programme

The Afghan economy remains overwhelmingly rural and agricultural - 80–85% of the people depend upon natural resources for their livelihood. Recognizing this dependence, BRAC started an agriculture programme in October 2003 in an effort to ensure the existence of economically viable activities from the agriculture sector and sustainable use of natural resources.

The programme has already developed 36 para-veterinarians, provided training on integrated pest management (IPM) to 40 farmers, and established 4 livestock clinics. It has plans to establish livestock clinics and demonstration plots for IPM, and provide training on broiler chicken farming and maize cultivation.

National Solidarity Programme

BRAC has been working with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) of Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan since August 2003 as one of 21 International Facilitating Partners to run the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in three provinces- Jalalabad, Helmand and Paktika. The NSP assists Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own reconstruction and community development projects. Strategies include the establishment of Community Development Councils (CDC), instituting a system of direct block grant transfers to support the rehabilitation/development activities of CDCs, capacity development activities to enhance the competence of communities for financial assistance, and evaluating the programme outputs to evaluate the institution building process. BRAC has so far established 431 Community Development Councils through community participatory elections.

Capacity Building

In June 2003 BRAC established a residential training centre with 50 residential facilities in Kabul City. The goal is to improve management competencies and fulfil the capacity development needs of BRAC programme professionals and other development practitioners, and to enhance the human and operational skills of the Afghan programme participants.

BRAC Afghanistan's training courses are of the highest quality. They integrate concept and practice, ensure a participatory approach to learning, and adapt new training technology. The centre conducts both residential and field based trainings. In 2003 the centre conducted training courses for 662 BRAC participants and 837 external participants from different agencies of the Afghan government and local NGOs. Course offerings include needs assessment, NGO management, development management, gender awareness and analysis, a workshop on training needs assessment of Afghan NGOs, communication and community mobilization, a workshop on NSP orientation, micro finance management, NGO management, basic accounting, and a workshop on winter school supervision.

At the invitation of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, a review mission from BRAC assessed the capacity development needs of MRRD in August 2002 and developed a Five Year Strategic Plan for the Ministry.

Demobilization and Reintegration Project

One of the most common practices in the 23-year Afghanistan armed conflict is the participation of child

soldiers. To facilitate the transition back to civilian life of 900 child soldiers, BRAC follows a process of identification, community sensitization, documentation, medical screening, training, and job placement. The project, supported by UNICEF, operates in 5 districts in Bamyan province.

Women Training and Production Centre

The "Women's Training and Production Centre (WTPC)" project is supported by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, UNICEF, and the World Food Programme (WFP). It aims to increase Afghan women's involvement in livelihood projects through provision of capacity building initiatives and direct access to income generation activities. BRAC established 3 centres in Kabul City and selected 220 women based on the criteria of vulnerability, aged 25-45, widowed, and without a family income source. The women will be trained on sewing and tailoring for three months, and will be producing 100,000 multipurpose bags in three centres. UNICEF will purchase these bags from the centre for back to school projects. WFP is providing assistance to the project and supplying food (wheat, pulse and vegetable oil) to the women. 100 women have been trained in sewing and tailoring, and have produced 35,000 bags in 2003. BRAC received 11.20 MT of rice, 0.450 MT of pulse and 0.444 MT of vegetable oil in December 2003. These have been distributed to 220 women, with each receiving 50 kg of rice, 2 kg of pulse and 2 litres of vegetable oil every month.



G O V E R N A N C E

Governing Body

The Governing Body consists of nine members. Apart from the Chief Executive Officer, who is the Founder of BRAC, all other members of the Governing Body are non-executive. Distinguished individuals with high reputation in business and the professions with pro-poor mindset have been elected to the Governing Body to bring their diverse skills and wise counsel in the governance of BRAC.

- Chairperson

Fazle Hasan Abed, Chief Executive Officer

- Members

Syed Humayun Kabir, Chairman, Renata Limited

Taherunnessa Abdullah, Social Scientist, Gender Specialist

Kazi Aminul Huque, Partner, R R H & Co., Chartered Accountant

Debapriya Bhattachariya, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue

Rokia Afzal Rahman, Industrialist

Latifur Rahman, Industrialist

Ainun Nishat, Engineer

Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, (ex-officio), Executive Director, BRAC

Four meetings of the Governing Body and two special meetings of the General Body were held in 2003.

Audit Committee

- Chair

S. K. Sarkar, Director, Monitoring and Internal Audit

- Members

Dr. Golam Samdani Fakir, Director Training Division

Ahmed Nazmul Hussain, Director Administration & Special Projects

Meeting and Attendance

Four meetings of the Audit Committee were held in 2003. All members attended.

Delegation of Authority

Clear-cut policy regarding authority of each level of staff has been laid down. The staff are empowered to take decisions at Area, Regional and Programme level. Procedure manuals and policy documents contain organisational policies and procedures, which are open to all.

Internal Control

Internal Audit, Inventory Monitoring and Financial Monitoring Section are working in this regard.

Internal Audit Department consists of 97 Audit Staff including 15 Audit Assistants. 100% audits are conducted where irregularities are detected in course of normal internal audit, which is on a sample basis. The frequency of audit in each of the Area Offices, Head Office and Commercial Projects is conducted at least once a year but two or more audits are conducted in a year at locations and programmes that warrant a close watch. Risk based audit introduced in commercial projects during this year. Gradually it will be introduced in other programmes. In 2003, internal audit was conducted in 2,554 locations and 32 review meetings were held where audit findings and responses to audit reports were discussed on the basis of which decisions for corrective measures were undertaken. A quarterly report was prepared on unsettled irregularities of the review meeting decisions and submitted to audit committee.

Inventory & Internal Financial Monitoring Section consists of 14 staff, periodically monitoring on inventory and internal financial control in BRAC projects as well as Head office.

Accountability and Transparency

Audit reports for all projects, along with FD-4 certified by the Auditor, were submitted to the NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office.

BRAC has a Donors' Consortium for the Non-Formal Primary Education Programme and Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction. The Consortium met twice in the year 2003 and discussed programme activities and outcomes along with financial and audit reports. The Consortium donors are the European Commission, Department for International Development (U.K), DGIS (the Netherlands), CIDA (Canada), UNICEF, NOVIB (the Netherlands), The Aga Khan Foundation-Canada and World Food Programme (WFP).

Contribution of BRAC to Government Exchequer

| Income Year | 2002 Taka | 2003 Taka |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Income Tax deduction at source by third parties | 7,134,967 | 10,091,431 |
| Tax deduction at source from third parties | 14,532,569 | 15,567,321 |
| Income Tax deduction at source from staff salary | 3,900,000 | 3,199,118 |
| VAT collection from customers | 29,438,408 | 29,570,835 |
| Import Duty paid | 27,020,447 | 16,025,053 |
| Total | 82,026,391 | 74,453,758 |

Fazle Hasan Abed, *Chief Executive Officer*

Faruq A. Choudhury, *Adviser*

Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, *Executive Director*

Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, *Deputy Executive Director*

Aminul Alam, *Deputy Executive Director*

Dr. AMR Chowdhury, *Deputy Executive Director*

Muazzem Hasan, *Director BRAC Printers*

Sukhendra K. Sarkar, *Director Monitoring and Internal Audit*

Dr. Golam Samdani Fakir, *Director Training Division*

Syed Rezaul Karim, *Director BRAC Dairy and Food Project*

Ahmed Najmul Hussain, *Director Administration & Special Projects*

Faruque Ahmed, *Director Nutrition & Health Programme*

Syeda Sarwat Abed, *Director Aarong*

Dr. Monzoor Ahmed, *Project Director, Institute of Education and Development*

Afsan Chowdhury, *Director Human Rights and Advocacy*

Saieed Bakth Mozumder, *Director Tea Estates*

Taheerah Haq, *Director Public Affairs and Communications*

Dr. Imran Matin, *Director Research and Evaluation Division*

Mehtabuddin Ahmed, *Head of Security and Estate*

Shabbir Ahmed Chowdhury, *Programme Head, Microfinance*

Erum Mariam, *Programme Head, BRAC Education Programme*

Dr. Safiqul Islam, *Programme Head, Post Primary Basic and Continuing Education*

S. N. Kairy, *Head of Finance and Accounts*

Sheepa Hafiza, *Programme Head, Human Rights and Gender*

B R A C Organogram

