



BRAC Annual Report 2009

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BRAC is a development organisation dedicated to alleviating poverty by empowering the poor to bring about change in their own lives. We started out in Bangladesh in 1972, and over the course of our evolution, we have established ourselves as a pioneer in recognising and tackling the many different realities of poverty.

Our Vision

A world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential.

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Our interventions aim to achieve large scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enable women and men to realise their potential.

Our Values

Innovation
Integrity
Inclusiveness
Effectiveness



Several new ventures and partnerships in social justice interventions solidified the move towards intensifying our focus on this area.

In other parts of Asia, our programmes continued to expand. In Africa we achieved several milestones in 2009 – in a little over 3 years we reached 100,000 microfinance borrowers in Uganda and opened the 100th branch office in Tanzania.

For the past several years, we had been working to unify our global efforts, to present ourselves as one entity with a singular vision, image and voice – a message that had become diffused in the face of rapid expansion across greatly varied contexts. This process culminated in 2009 through the redevelopment of the BRAC brand. Many of the changes, especially visual ones such as the new logo, may seem radical – but this again is a reflection of the openness and courage of BRAC's employees to embrace every challenge and every change and make it their own.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of our work and urge you to rediscover BRAC and join us in reaffirming our commitment to the poor and the disadvantaged around the world.

(Sir) Fazle Hasan Abed, KCMG
Founder and Chairperson

Chairperson's Statement

The year 2009 brought with it many changes for BRAC and as many opportunities as there were challenges. The global financial crisis adversely affected the performance of some of our programmes and our ability to secure funding for the expansion of others.

In Bangladesh, the return to democracy with the election of a political government set the stage for policy changes in several key sectors – agriculture, education, energy and labour. This opened the doors for BRAC to engage with and support the government at different levels, including a landmark agreement of BDT 7.5 crore with the Central Bank of Bangladesh to fund the *Borga Chashi Unnoyon* project, aimed at providing credit to sharecroppers, who are traditionally unable to access the formal banking system.

Cyclone Aila also had significant impact on our work in the areas of agriculture, disaster mitigation and climate change.

Members of the BRAC Governing Body

Fazle Hasan Abed
Founder and Chairperson
BRAC

Ainun Nishat
IUCN Bangladesh

Debapriya Bhattacharya
Distinguished Fellow
Centre for Policy Dialogue

Faruq A. Choudhury
Chairman
Delta-BRAC Housing
Finance Corp.

Irene Z. Khan
Former Secretary General
Amnesty International

Kazi Aminul Huque
Chartered Accountant

Latifur Rahman
Industrialist

Luva Nahid Choudhury
Director General
Bengal Foundation

Rokia A. Rahman
Industrialist

Shabana Azmi
Actor and social activist (India)

Shafiq ul Hassan (Quais)
Businessman (UK)

Syed Humayun Kabir
Chairman
Renata Ltd.

Taherunnessa Abdullah
Social scientist and
gender specialist

Timothy Evans
Assistant Director-General
WHO (Canada)

Mahabub Hossain
(*ex-officio*)
Executive Director
BRAC

Muhammad A. (Rumee) Ali
(*ex-officio*)
Managing Director
BRAC Enterprises and
Investments

External Audit Groups

Baker Tilly Monterio Heng,
Malaysia

Ernst & Young,
Malaysia

ACNABIN

S. F. Ahmed & Co.

J. R. Chowdhury and Co.

S. K. Barua and Co.

Masih Muhit Haque & Co.

Ombudsperson

Mohammed Abu Hena

Audit Committee and External Auditors

Chair
Kazi Aminul Huque
Member
BRAC Governing Body

Members
Taherunnessa Abdullah
Member
BRAC Governing Body

S. K. Sarkar
Member
BRAC General Body



Under-privileged children in a BRAC school in Naogaon learn through entertainment and prepare for formal primary education.

Our Priorities

Focus on Women - We work with poor women, who are the worst affected by poverty. But if empowered with the right tools, they can play a crucial role in bringing about changes within their families and their communities. Over 98% of our membership is female; and more than 95% of our volunteer cadre - health volunteers, paralegal trainers, agriculture, livestock and poultry extension workers and school teachers - are women.

Organising the Poor - Organising the poor is at the heart of our work. Our Village Organisations (VOs) - each with 30-40 women - act as platforms for poor women to come together, access services such as microfinance, exchange information and raise awareness on social, legal and other issues concerning their daily lives. As a group, these women - who as individuals have little or no voice in decision-making within their homes or their communities - are able to speak out and influence change.

Unleashing Human Potential - We believe in unleashing human potential. BRAC acts as a catalyst presenting a multitude of opportunities - both economic and social - that allows poor families to transform their own lives and futures. Everything we do is in response to the needs of disadvantaged people who are marginalised, and excluded from mainstream development. BRAC is for such people - who are poor for a lack of opportunities, not potential.

Comprehensive Approach - We believe that there are many underlying causes of poverty, and these causes are interlinked. In order for the poor to come out of poverty, they must have the tools to fight it across all fronts. We have, therefore, developed support services in areas of human rights, legal aid, education, health care, social and economic empowerment, finance and enterprise development, agriculture, environmental sustainability and disaster preparedness.

Our Strengths

Thinking local, acting global - We were conceived in the aftermath of war in one of the poorest countries in the world that is frequently wracked by natural disasters. With our roots strongly placed at the heart of poverty, we have first-hand insight and experience necessary to understand its many faces, and develop effective and innovative tools to help tackle them. We live and work within households and communities, but operate our successful interventions at national levels to maximise their impact. We have developed a culture of knowledge-sharing, which has enabled us to extend proven techniques and best practices across geographical barriers. We currently work in 9 countries across Asia and Africa.

Increasingly self-reliant - Self reliance is a key theme at BRAC, both for those we support as well as ourselves. From our inception nearly four decades ago as a fully donor-funded relief project, we have come to be over 70% self-financed, which is no small feat considering our annual budget of nearly USD 535 million.

We have achieved this level of self-reliance not only through built-in measures to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness across all our programmes, but also by innovating the concept of social enterprises. Our social enterprises, ranging from agriculture to handicrafts, are strategically connected to our development programmes and form crucial chain linkages that increase the productivity of our members' assets and labour, and reduce the risks of their enterprises. The surplus generated from these enterprises are fed back into our development programmes that help to make us increasingly self-reliant.

Unprecedented Scale and Reach - "Small is beautiful, but big is necessary" - Fazle Hasan Abed, BRAC Founder and Chairperson. Working in countries where the poor number in the tens of millions, we cannot afford to be satisfied with small-scale projects. We are specialists in taking an idea, testing it, perfecting it and then expanding it rapidly to national scale cost-effectively and without compromise.

ing quality. Today, BRAC is the largest development organisation in the world in terms of its reach - its tuberculosis programme alone covers a population of over 80 million people in Bangladesh. We are also the largest in terms of staff size, employing more than 60,000 people, and organising and training an additional 60,000 self-employed health volunteers, agriculture and livestock extension agents and part-time teachers. Across the world, our staff and our volunteers together reach an estimated 110 million people.

Proven Track Record - We are a major contributor to the development success story of Bangladesh - a country on track to meet the majority of the millennium development goals and join the ranks of middle income countries. In a short span of time, we have also grown to become a leading development organisation in all the other countries in which we are working. We are the development partner of choice for most donor agencies and governments.

