



BANGLADESH RURAL  
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

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3, NEW CIRCULAR ROAD, MAGHBAZAR  
DACCA-17 BANGLADESH



JAMALPUR WOMEN'S PROGRAMME:  
A PROGRAMME DESIGNED BY, DIRECTED TOWARDS,  
AND TO BE IMPLEMENTED  
BY  
WOMEN

*Jamalpur Women's Programme;  
Programme designed by, directed  
towards, and to be implemented  
by women.*

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Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee  
3, New Circular Road, Maghbazar  
Dacca - 12 Bangladesh

GENESIS: Since 1972 the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), a non-profit private organisation, has operated an integrated rural development project in a rural population of 120,000 in Sulle, Sylhet. Started initially in response to the humanitarian needs of Bangladesh shortly after Independence, BRAC has gradually but purposefully evolved into a small, highly flexible organization capable of undertaking innovative approaches to rural development.

Over the past two years, for example, BRAC has been involved in eight major sectoral activities in the project area. These are: Cooperatives formation, Introduction of Agricultural Technology, Fisheries, Community centers at village level, Literacy and Functional Education Programs, Family Planning, Health and Youth Groups. Preliminary experiences indicate that some sectoral activities have progressed very well: for instance, the functional education program. BRAC's Headquarters staff is now engaged in the development of innovative materials and methodologies for functional education for nation-wide implementation.

These activities obviously have lessons of value to others within and outside Bangladesh. BRAC is being called upon more and more frequently to provide guidance and support to other groups. In June 1975, for example, BRAC was requested by UNICEF to provide functional education to a group of 840 destitute women in Jamalpur town (Mymensingh District). These women had been engaged in agricultural 'Food for Work' activities under a joint local-government and UNICEF scheme.

INTRODUCTION: Upon request from UNICEF, BRAC initiated a Functional Education programme in Jamalpur. BRAC selected and trained 15 teachers, supervised their activities, procured supplies, provided logistical support and financial management for the programme. This Functional Education programme was designed to run from June through November 1975; by December 1 it was envisioned the learners would return to the agricultural 'Food for Work' project and the teachers would seek other employment. But this was not to be the out-come.

Upon hearing that the Functional Education programme would end, the learners requested the Teachers to continue classes. The Teachers held discussions with the learners and found a general desire among the learners to continue attending classes even on a voluntary basis (earlier wheat-payments were used as an incentive for class-attendance). They decided jointly to approach BRAC with a proposal for the continuation of the Functional Education programme.

After conducting several discussions with learners and two work-shops with the Teachers, BRAC reconsidered its position and decided to seek financial support for and to maintain a less direct supervisory role in a continuing programme if the Teacher-team could design a concrete plan for the next phase. In late November the Teachers worked out a tentative plan of action to continue Functional Education classes and to expand into village-based women's development work in the learners' villages. It was agreed the Teachers would spend an initial trial month (December 1975) investigating the field area while continuing the Functional Education classes in Jamalpur town.

In early January 1976 the Teachers came to Dacca for a five-day intensive training in which the central problem, objectives, means, and monitoring of their programme were discussed. What evolved out of the training was a year's plan of action designed by, directed towards, and to be implemented by women.

#### PROPOSED PROGRAMME

OBJECTIVES: The target population of the Teachers' programme is poor rural women of productive age (13-40 years) in 28 villages of Jamalpur sub-division. The general aim of the Teachers' programme is to raise the economic status as well as the literacy, health, and consciousness of poor rural women. The more specific objectives as decided upon and rank-ordered by the Teachers are:

1. To make village women conscious of the root causes to their problems and to help them seek solutions.
2. To control population growth through Family Planning motivation and delivery services.
3. To encourage joint savings and cooperative economic activities by village women.
4. To educate village women on hygiene and nutrition.
5. To encourage horticulture and poultry raising by village women.
6. To encourage village women to utilize fallow land surrounding their respective villages.
7. To initiate women's organizations in the villages.
8. To educate village women.

STATEMENT OF WORK: The means proposed to reach these objectives are outlined in the Teachers' work-plan (listed by sectoral activities) below:

A. FAMILY PLANNING

The Teachers found a high demand for and acceptance of family - planning techniques among the learners of the Functional Education programme. During the course of that programme the Teachers received both an initial two-day training in Family Planning from a local thana-level Family Planning officer and later an additional five-day training in Family Planning from one of BRAC's doctors. The Teachers are well-prepared to provide Family Planning motivation and to deliver non-clinic contraceptive services to rural women. They propose:

1. To discuss family planning with 4,000 couples.
2. To motive 1,500 couples to adopt one or another technique of family planning.
  - a. 1,200 couples will use oral contraceptives or condoms.
  - b. remaining 300 will adopt coil, vasectomy, tubectomy, etc.
3. To provide necessary medical check-up(blood pressure, etc.) for each client before family planning technique is adopted.
4. To carefully and regularly monitor the follow-up rate of accepting couples.
5. To maintain adequate records of family planning.
6. To establish local women's societies in each village wherein discussion can generate further support for and adoption of family planning.
7. To create a volunteer core of interested and motivated women/girls who will create motivation and support for family planning.
8. To select out 56 of these volunteers (two from each village) to be provided with brief training.

B. FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION

The Teachers expect to complete the current cycle of Functional Education classes (still being conducted three days a week in Jamalpur town) by early April, 1976. The next cycle of classes will be village-based. The Teachers propose:

1. To set-up 14 functional education centers in different villages.
 

number of centers	14
numbers of students in each center	25-30
total number in 14 centers	@ 300
2. To teach 300 students functional education
3. To hold discussions using functional education materials with various women's groups.
4. To get 75 subscribers to BRAC's monthly development journal "Gono-kendra".

5. To arrange cultural functions from time to time for the women.

#### C. HORTICULTURE, UTILIZATION OF FALLOW LAND, POULTRY FARMING

The Bengali diet suffers from a nutritional imbalance due to the lack of sufficient quantities of calories, protein, and vitamins. The Teachers plan to intensify vegetable cultivation through a kitchen-garden programme. Already the Teachers have distributed packets of seeds donated by UNICEF together with pamphlets (providing instruction on growing practices) to the learners for the 1975-76 winter season. In addition the Teachers will receive and then impart training appropriate to seasonal horticultural activities and poultry farming. They propose:

1. To support general extension of horticulture activities through discussion with students and teachers in local schools, women's societies, etc.
2. To provide high-quality seeds to 3,000 families at cost-price:
  - a. To instruct recipients on the proper mode of cultivation
  - b. To contact the local agriculture officer to supply fertilizer, pesticides as required.
3. To start cooperative farming by poor women of at least 50% of the fallow land surrounding the 28 villages.
  - a. To teach the growers the nutritive value of vegetables like lettuce, brocolli, etc.
  - b. To help the growers market their fruits and vegetables.
4. To start cooperative poultry farming with 50 (fifty) poor women and to demonstrate improved methods of home-centered poultry raising:
  - a. To arrange to supply twice-yearly inoculations for the poultry with the help of the local veterinary hospital or poultry farm.
  - b. To encourage: (i) improved poultry housing- provisions for ventilation and a perch for roosting; (ii) improved strains - cock replacement.

#### D. WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES AND SOCIETIES

The Teachers plan to promote savings and cooperative societies as an important step towards cooperative economic activities. Initially savings would be held and managed by the Teachers; eventually a village-managed system for shares and loans will emerge. The Teacher will assist the village women in sharing skills and acquiring loans necessary for income-producing schemes. The Teachers propose:

1. To initiate women's cooperative societies in half the villages

Women's cooperative societies	14
Members in each society	20
Total number of members in 14 societies	280

2. To encourage savings through cooperatives - an expected Tk. will be raised from the deposit fund of these cooperatives.
3. To encourage collective economic activities - cottage industries, etc. as needs and interests indicate.

#### 4. MOTHER'S CLUBS AND WOMEN'S GROUPS

The Teachers plan to discuss health care, food value and other nutritional topics, sanitation, hygiene, etc. in Mother's Clubs. A paramedic trained by BRAC will assist and train the Teachers during the initial six months of the programme. The Teachers plan to find and nurture a core women's group (3-4) members in each village. The Teachers propose:

1. To initiate Mother's Clubs in all the villages
 

Mother's Clubs	28
Members in each club	15-20
Total membership	500
2. To attend and consult with the mothers regarding mother and child health, hygiene, etc. in fortnightly meetings.
3. To provide training for twenty untrained local midwives.

#### TRAINING:

The Teachers have outlined the skills and training required to engage in the above activities. The Women's Programme Cell, BRAC Headquarters, Dacca will arrange to provide the requisite training through training facilities and personnel available in Bangladesh.

#### REPORTING AND MONITORING:

In the course of their five-day training in Dacca, the Teachers designed a feed-back and monitoring system for their activities. The Teachers will maintain individual Weekly Activity Plans and Performance Reports to include: (a) name of workers; (b) name of villages; (c) expected activities in performance terms; (d) actual achievement; (e) performance discrepancy; (f) reasons; and (g) personal observations and notes. At a weekly planning and reporting session each Teacher will plan a, b, and c for the next week and record d, e, f, and g on the previous week. These weekly reports will be submitted to the Programme Supervisor who in turn will forward a consolidated yet detailed report weekly to the Women's Programme Cell at BRAC's Headquarters in Dacca.

The data collected in these reports will be analyzed by the Teachers Programme Supervisor, and Women's Programme Cell to see how the data can be incorporated into the routine administration of the project, how the data can be used in monitoring its progress, and whether any of the data is translatable into project implications for other women's programmes. The Teachers and Programme Supervisor will conduct bi-monthly self-evaluation assessing the progress and effectiveness of the project. A written report on the project will be prepared every six-month by the Women's Programme Cell, Dacca, after consultation with the programme staff and their reports.

**BUDGET:**

STAFF AND OFFICE SUPPORT:	Tk.
Teachers' Salaries 14 x Tk.300 x 12 months.	50,400
Teacher Supervisor 1 x Tk.350 x 12 months.	4,200
Programme Supervisor salary and Expenses 1 x Tk.1200 x 12 months	14,400
Rent and Utilities: Tk.450 x 12 months.	5,400
Travel and Transportation	12,000
Stationery and Misc. Expenses Tk.500 x 12 months.	6,000
Head Office support Tk.2,000 x 12 months.	24,000

**FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION:**

Education Materials 300 learners x 40 Tk. each	12,000
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**FAMILY PLANNING:**

Medicines	5,000
Equipment	1,000

**MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH:**

Paramedics' salaries and expenses 2 x Tk.700 x 6 months.	9,000
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**HORTICULTURE, POULTRY RAISING, ETC.**

Transport cost for supplies	2,000
Training costs	5,000

<b>TOTAL YEARLY COST OF PROGRAMME</b>	<b>Tk.150,400</b>
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