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NFPE

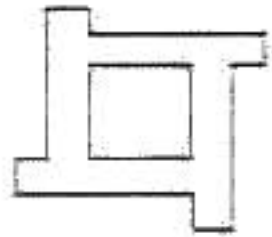
REPORT TO

DONORS ON PHASE - 1

(*January 1993 - March 1996*)

NFPE

**Report to Donors on Phase I
(January 1993 - March 1996)**



IBRAC

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first Phase of the Non-Formal Primary Education Programme, which ran from January 1993 to March 1996, achieved its main intentions:

- expansion of schools from 11,108 at the end of 1992 to 34,175 by March 1996
- recruitment and training of 34,305 teachers
- maintaining attendance rate of 95%
- transfer of learners to government schools. 377,918 learners graduated during Phase-I
- improving the quality of materials and methods in the class room

Although originally designed as a 36 month Programme, Phase I was, with the agreement of Donors, extended to 39 months, due to several factors discussed in this Report, notably a surplus of funds in December 1995. The main challenges faced by the Programme, including deviations from anticipated achievements, arose from:

- disruption caused by fundamentalists for a short time (December 1993 to early 1994) which was linked to a nationwide political problem
- additional time and effort was need for community mobilization in non RDP areas
- transitional problems faced due to decentralizing the management structure
- general adjustment of the management structure due to expansion

In addition, special mention should be made of:

- the effectiveness of the one school- room in creating access
- the success of short teacher training and effectiveness of para teachers
- the overall effectiveness of Non Formal Education system in providing basic education and main streaming learners to the formal system
- the establishment of the Donor Consortium during the first half of NFPE I

Particular lessons to be drawn from Phase I, which have been reflected in the design and implementation of Phase II, include:

- the acceptance by GOB of the BRAC model and their willingness to share BRAC's expertise and experience
- the use of local human resources in the management structure
- benefiting from the second cycle teachers in improving quality by creating the new post of Resource Teachers

BRAC expresses its appreciation of AKF, DGIS, NOVIB, ODA, UNICEF, KfW, and the SIDA. Their support made possible the Programme which, in turn, enabled some disadvantaged Bangladeshi children to receive basic education that they would not otherwise have had, thereby significantly contributing to both their fulfillment and to the well-being of the community.

NFPE: Report to Donors on Phase I (January 1993 - March 1996)

1. Introduction

This report presents an overview of the Non Formal Primary Education (NFPE) Programme during its first phase. It is hoped that it will prove of interest and value to the donors, as the programme proceeds with the second phase.

2. Programme Purpose and Objectives

Phase I refers to the period from January 1993 to March 1996, during which 39 months a massive expansion of the Non-Formal Primary Education Programme took place. The objectives, as set out in the Programme proposal were to :

- reduce mass illiteracy and contribute to the basic education of a significant proportion of the country's children , especially those from the poorest families;
- ensure enhanced participation of women in education;
- involve communities in their own socio-economic development;
- contribute towards a strengthening of the Government's Universal Primary Education (UPE) Programme;
- build a strong foundation for ethical values conducive to the intellectual and material integrity of society and to the general productivity of labour and management;
- enhance the multi-sectoral potential of education in other areas such as population planning public hygiene and health.

These BRAC objectives fully fit the Government's *Education For All* goals by focusing on rural and poor children, expanding the participation of girls, and servicing 8 per cent of the age cohort.

2.1 Adjustment of Programme Goals

In the original NFPE Phase I Proposal, BRAC proposed that 35,000 schools would be opened between January 1993 and December 1995 operating with a budget of Tk 2,000.6 million (approximately US\$50.6 million). However, due to Donor financial constraints, this proposal and budget had to be revised in mid 1994 and BRAC and its Donors (NOVIB, NETHERLANDS EMBASSY, ODA, SIDA, UNICEF and KfW) agreed to a new proposal/target to open 19,000 schools with a budget of US\$38.4 million.

In December 1995, RDP Phase III had 15,000 NFPE schools in operation. Due to a surplus of US\$8 million at the end of the proposed project period in December 1995, BRAC and the Donors agreed that, from January 1996, these 15,000 schools should be included and funded under the NFPE Programme and the period of the phase was extended to March 1996 in order to utilise the surplus. The total number of schools operating under NFPE thus became 34,000 (19,000 schools under NFPE Phase I inclusive of 2,000 ESP schools, and 15,000 from RDP III). Hence all schools would be fully funded and accounted for under the "free standing" programme and all BRAC schools came under one programme (in terms of fund distribution).

2.2 Modifications

Several modifications and additions have been made in facilitating the process of expansion, in meeting the needs of the students and the community, and at the same time maintaining a level of quality in the classrooms and also reaching out for higher levels in quality through innovations and modifications. Consequently, several sections of this Report are devoted to a descriptive overview of the Phase - in terms of numbers, need based changes and qualitative issues - as it eventuated.

3. Financial Support and Expenditure

3.1 Phase I Budgeted and Actual expenditure

The table depicts the planned and actual expenditure over the 39-month Phase I period:

Category	Planned (Tk. million)	Actual (Tk. million)
Teachers Costs	453.73	446.38
Student Books and Supplies	614.85	621.83
Field Operations and costs	273.40	240.93
HO Management and Support Services	127.33	127.96
Research and Monitoring	9.27	8.84
Innovative Methods	28.01	28.13
Development and AV	6.00	5.94
ESP	64.63	70.5
Total	1,577.22	1,550.48

As can be seen from the above table, the actual expenditure was close to the planned expenditure.

3.2 Donor Funding

The table depicts funds received from Donors over the 39-month Phase I Programme period:

Donor Agency	Tk. (million)
UNICEF	302.3
SIDA	49.36
NOVIB	3.10
ODA	285.36
KfW	522.47
NETHERLANDS EMBASSY	389.09
LOCAL DONORS	0.19
BANK INTEREST	0.52
TOTAL	1,552

3.2.1 Fund Balance

The surplus fund balance at end-March 1996 was taka 1,895,287 (approximately US\$47,000)

3.2.2 Cost Reduction Measures

The surplus of approximately US\$ 47,000 million at the end of the project period resulted from measures undertaken by BRAC to reduce NFPE costs, plus under-utilisation of funds allocated to the Innovative Methods Trials and Development Programme and the Audio Visual Programme (consisting of experimenting with and piloting programmes such as Interactive Radio Instruction, Libraries and Videos for Teacher Training). In particular:

- More PAs were appointed instead of POs for the supervision of schools;
- In the original/revised proposal each Regional Office was to supervise 10 Area Offices, each Area Office 3 Thana Offices, each Thana Office 3 Area Team Offices and each Area Team Office 80 schools. BRAC removed one single level of supervision (the Thana Office level) and its function of the Thana Office was taken over by the Area Offices.

3.3 1993-5 Surplus and the January-March 1996 Expenditure

BRAC proposed that the operating costs for all NFPE and former RDP schools would be funded from the surplus of US\$8 million for a period of three months. The Donors, (apart from KfW who agreed only to fund 19,000 NFPE Phase I schools), agreed to this proposal and entered into a no cost extension for three months (to end-March 1996). The Donors and BRAC also agreed that part of the surplus funds could be used for workshops, publishing, printing, recording, and relevant training, all related to the experimental piloting of the Innovative Methods, Trials and Development and the Audio Visual Programmes.

3.3.1 Expenditure of Surplus Funds

During the 3 months 'no extra cost extension' period, the following were funded from the surplus funds:

- The operating costs for 15,000 ex-RDP III schools, along with the operating costs for the 19,000 existing NFPE Phase I schools;
- Bulk purchase of books to equip the various types of libraries;
- Publishing and printing of workbooks, stories books, flash cards, flip charts, story cards and training manuals;
- Writing Workshops, Overseas ELT Training in the UK and an exposure trip to Thailand on Continuing Education; and
- 2 International Consultants for IRI and 1 International Consultant for Teacher Training.

3.3.2 The KfW Balance of Tk. 1,895,287

In March 1996 there was a balance of approximately US\$47,000 which was a result of under utilisation of KfW ear-marked funds (they had agreed to fund only the 19,000 NFPE Phase I schools). This fund will be transferred to Phase II as the opening balance fund of KfW.

4. Overall Implementation

Phase I has been marked by rapid expansion and replication of schools and, looking at the figures from 1985, where there were 22 schools, to 1995, where there are more than 30,000 schools, it is clear that the NFPE Programme has grown rapidly and that most of the expansion took place during Phase I, i.e. from 1993 to December 1995 (slowing down somewhat during 1996). The main factors that have facilitated this rapid growth are:

■ **BRAC's experience:** almost 20 years' involvement in running rural development programmes, in more than 2,500 villages with more than 5,000 village organization, when the NFPE Programme was started. Hence, BRAC was already in place at several rural development centres from which field staff members could fan out to work in villages. Most of the schools were located in areas where BRAC was already present and that has helped facilitate growth. Moreover, BRAC's experience with community participation, its knowledge of the values and behavior of village people and its programme implementation experience have been essential ingredients for the success of its non-formal primary schools.

■ **Support systems:** equally important has been the availability to the school programme of all the essential support systems that BRAC has built up over the years - a Personnel Office to recruit and maintain records of BRAC employees; an accounting department to handle the payroll and field expenses, account for donor money and help with budgets; a logistics office to handle materials distribution, transportation and purchasing; training centres with expert trainers to provide know-how and facilities for teacher and field staff training; a word processing centre for the preparation of proposals and other documents; a materials development unit to assist with developing school books and teacher aids; BRAC's own printing company to facilitate printing of school materials; and the research and evaluation division (RED) to observe and provide feedback. Moreover, as the NFPE Programme grew, the NFPE offices at the local level themselves became a strong base for fieldwork, and for maintaining a good link between the head office and the community. Hence, as BRAC's organisation expanded, it reaped various economies of scale, in terms of staff, administration and infrastructure, and the NFPE Programme as a whole has benefited.

■ **The operational mode of BRAC:** trying something, enlarging on what works, replicating what is effective, changing what does not work, improving what needs improvement. Over the years, BRAC has learnt to listen to rural people and has tried to help them achieve what they want; one of the things that they want is free schools, where their children can attend and succeed, and thus the need for expansion was created.

■ Fourthly, it may be noted that yet another implicit reason for BRAC's success in replication is in fact the level of **homogeneity** across the nation, in terms of landscape, culture, and development. Hence, the BRAC model required little or no modification from one region to another as it spread.

Looking back at Phase I, it is clear that BRAC has been able to achieve its general targets. The Evaluation carried out in 1996 by Boeren *et al* states that

"BRAC has managed to achieve the numerical targets in terms of the new schools that have been opened, recruitment of teachers and field staff, training, as well as the provision of materials and other inputs. It has done this in a very effective and efficient way."

5. An Overview of NFPE

In 1985, the *Non Formal Primary Education (NFPE)* model was started as a three year programme for children between the ages of 8 and 10 who had never enrolled in any school or who had dropped out during class I from the formal schools.

However, there was also an increasing need for education for older children who had never attended school. In 1988 the *Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC)*, previously known as *PEOC* and also *Kishor-Kishori School*) model was created. These schools are also for three years but cover five academic years of curriculum. This is possible since the students are older and are better able to grasp the material.

Special BEOC schools, known as *Kishori Schools*, (Kishori meaning adolescent girls) were opened where the Health and Population Program (HPP) is operating. These schools cater to the educational needs of 11-14 year old girls only. The schools focus on the special needs of this group, particularly with regard to health issues. These girls are prepared for health cadres so that they can aid and advise people who are in need. Health textbooks have been introduced from class II, and health related activities are performed by the students in and outside the school.

The schools have no fees and all learning materials for the students are provided by BRAC. These schools enable the children to continue their education and prepare them for entrance into formal schools. These matters are considered further in the section on the Educational Support Programme (section 13 below).

5.1 Creating the Schools

In order to ensure that the BRAC schools can educate as many children as possible, an extensive geographical selection process is conducted. Every year BRAC sets goals for the number of new schools to be opened, usually in the rural areas. Locating and creating each school is a lengthy process, commencing with a visit to a prospective village to find the number of eligible students. Availability of qualified teachers in the same area is another important factor and surveys are conducted in different areas to assess parental demand for schools. Finally, the proximity of the new schools or the feasibility of forming a cluster of schools is considered.

An area under survey comprises at least 60 villages and BRAC will then only enter if it can establish schools in a cluster of at least 40 villages within a short distance of a Team Office. This is done mainly to accommodate the teachers so that they do not have to travel long distances to attend the monthly refresher courses.

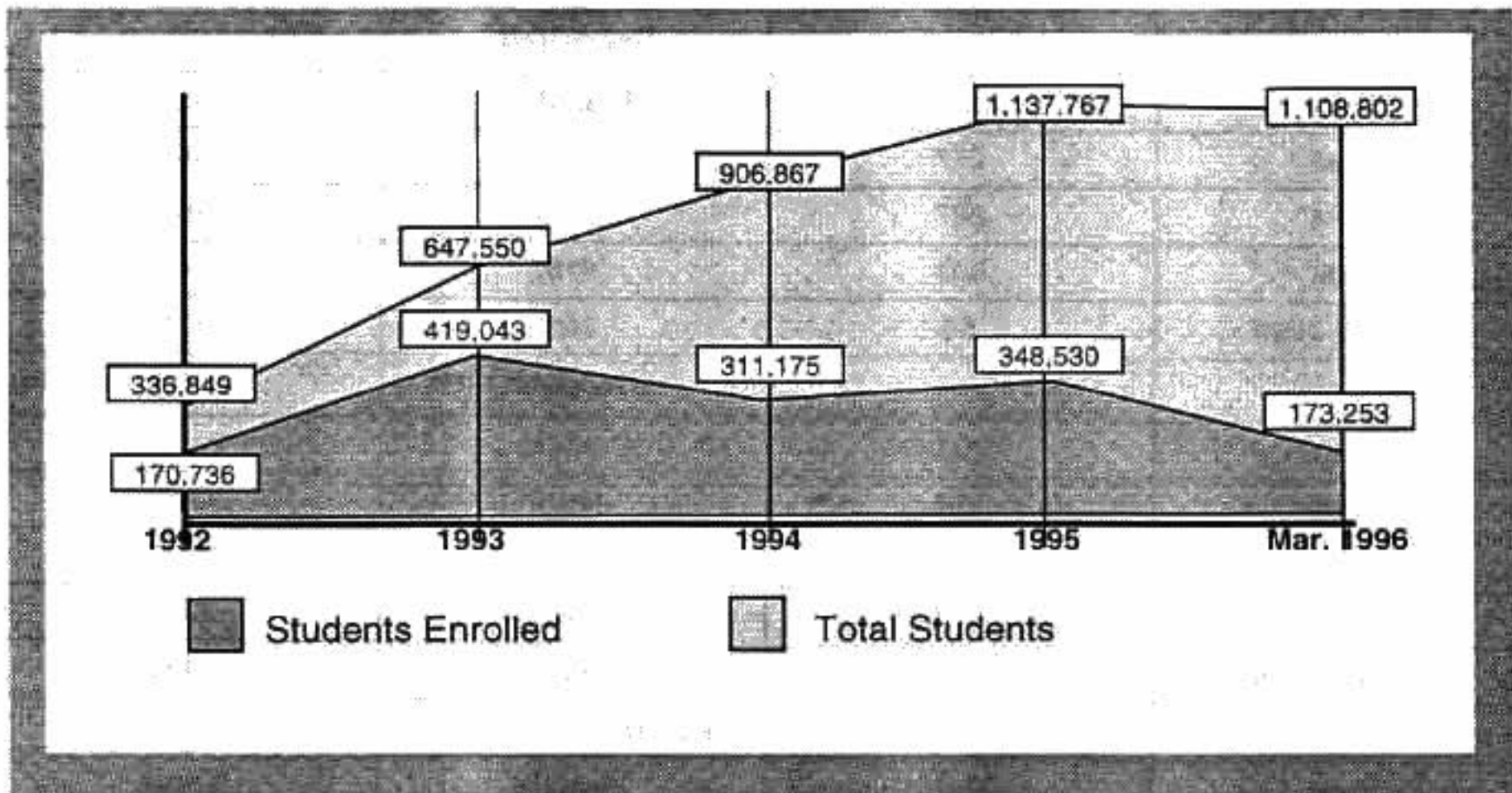
Once a demand for schools in a certain area exists, a list of prospective students and teachers is created. The list of the students is checked with the other local government schools to make sure that no student is already enrolled in these schools and to ascertain that the children have indeed dropped out. This ensures that the BRAC schools are complementing the government's education programme rather than competing with it. After the student list is finalized and the teachers identified, one school is opened in a village for every 33 students. The selection process is complete when the community and the local landowners help to choose a school site and build the classroom.

The school is a one room school, and temporary in nature: this allows cost-effectiveness, rather than spending too much on the infrastructure. The students of BRAC schools are the children of the poor and the landless. They are the "unreachable" who have been denied education because of gender and poverty. Emphasis is placed on creating an environment which would gradually lead to equal educational opportunities for both boys and girls reinforcing BRAC's efforts towards gender parity.

5.2 Students

The students of BRAC schools comprise children of poor families, and 70% of the learners are girls. After completing the three year cycle they normally transfer to the formal schools.

Number of students enrolled & total students from 1992 to March 1996



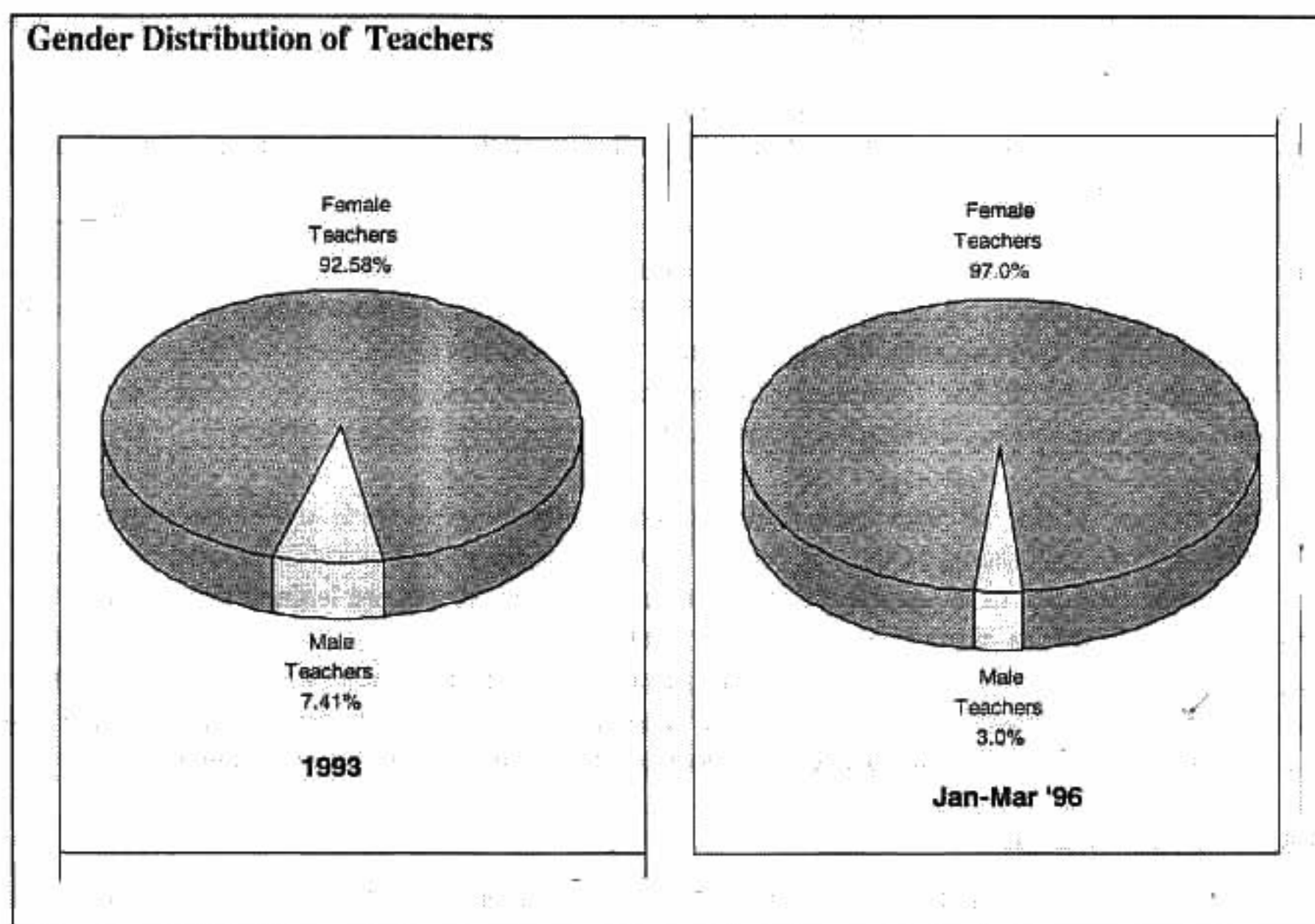
5.3 Teachers

More than 90% are women, married and locally resident. They are usually graduates of class 9 and are given an initial fifteen day training at one of BRAC's training centres (TARC), followed by periodical training at the beginning of each year. Regular monthly one day refresher courses are provided, regardless of the school year the teacher is in. In all BRAC schools, the same teacher teaches the same batch of 33 students through the entire three year school cycle. On average the teaching time in a typical BRAC school is 675 hours in Year 1 and 810 hours in the following two years, making a total of 2,295 hours of contact time between teacher and student in the three calendar years.

Teachers recruited and dropped out from 1993 to March 1996

	Recruited		
Year	Male	Female	Total
1993	277	11151	11426
1994	297	9372	9669
1995	304	9187	9491
March 1996	59	3658	3717
	Dropout		
Year	Male	Female	Total
1993	284	1138	1422
1994	395	1501	1896
1995	371	2002	2373
March 1996	39	391	430
	Existing Teachers		
Year	Male	Female	Total
1993	1440	17990	19430
1994	1328	25703	27031
1995	1239	32285	33524
March 1996	994	32131	33125

As shown by the graph below the proportion of female teachers has increased from 92% to 97%.



5.4 Parents and the Community

Parental and community participation play a critical part in programme design and form an important feature of all BRAC schools. Each school has a School Management Committee (made up of three parents, a community leader and the teacher) who together are responsible for the smooth running of the school and which meets whenever necessary. The SMC and the other parents help maintain the school, set school time and vacations, and ensure the children's regular attendance.

Parent meetings are held once a month in each school so as to encourage the guardians to play an important part in the education process. On average, 80% of the parents (mostly mothers) attend the meetings. Here, parents and teacher discuss the children's progress, attendance, cleanliness and hygiene, the responsibility of parents towards their children, and any school problems requiring parental attention. The supervision by the Programme Organizer facilitates the proceedings of the meeting.

5.5 Curriculum and Teaching Methods

The NFPE Programme has streamlined the broad-based formal curricula and tailored it to the essential needs of children living in a rural environment. Since a majority of the BRAC school graduates continue education in the government primary schools, the curriculum incorporates objectives that are addressed in formal schools and covers the essential contents of the formal primary education curriculum.

Currently, the NFPE curricula consists of lessons in Bangla, Mathematics, and Social Studies. English is taught from the second year of school and Religious Education is taught in the third year. In addition to these five subjects, the curriculum of the BEOC model includes health education and science during the fourth and fifth phases of the school. The school curriculum, except for English, has been developed by the NFPE programme itself.

A major strength of the BRAC school is the fact that its teaching methods and classroom practices are increasingly becoming more learner-centred and participatory. The curriculum integrates several child-to-child activities in its different subject areas as well. Concepts are learned through activities which are designed to promote independent thinking and problem solving. Physical exercise, singing, dancing, drawing, crafts, group work, games, and story book reading are used to help the creative thinking process of the students. The curriculum is continually developed, modified and revised, enabling teachers to encourage active learning based on meaningful understanding.

5.6 Urban Schools

Ten urban schools were opened on a pilot basis in 1992. The opening of these schools required a lot more effort than that required in rural areas, mainly because of a some suspicion amongst the parents.

Urban schools follow the NFPE curriculum and methodology, though certain modifications had to be made to accommodate the programme in the urban environment. Several urban related issues such as kidnapping, begging, cleanliness, skin diseases were added to the existing social studies curriculum. These topics are given in activity form, to allow room for discussion and to create a scope for developing skills in problem solving. In addition, year end formal examination had to be introduced due to parental demand.

The schools in Dhaka are run by 5 team offices in Narayanganj, Moghbazar, Mirpur, Jatrabari and Kamrangichar. In Dhaka Urban 100% of the teachers are females. Since many students do not continue in the government schools after finishing their course in BRAC schools, some fourth year schools are also being run by the programme. It is further hoped that these students can eventually join the UCEP vocational schools and arrangements are being made for this.

Given the success of the urban schools in Dhaka, similar schools were also opened in several other urban areas as tabulated :

Urban NFPE schools opening schedule from 1993 to March 1996

Urban Area	1993	1994	1995	March 1996	Total
Dhaka	32	148	238	27	445
Chittagong		49	48		97
Rajshahi		50	30		80
Khulna		60	50		110
Sylhet			21	11	32
Comilla			31	21	52
Mymensingh			10		10
Gazipur			20		20
Jamalpur			10		10
Rangpur			20		20
Dinajpur			10		10
Bogra (Naruli)			10		10
Total	32	307	498	59	896

5.7 Schools for Ex-Garment Workers

BRAC is collaborating with UNICEF, ILO, and BGMEA to provide schooling to ex-garment workers under the age of 14. Kishor-Kishori model schools were specially opened in 1995, for the child labourers in Dhaka and Narayanganj and about 2,200 are studying in these 'Garment Schools' run by BRAC. These students receive Tk 300 as stipend.

6. Gender Issues

These are a vital part of NFPE: gender biases at home, direct (out of pocket) costs, opportunity costs, irrelevant curriculum, and distance of schools are some of the factors that parents consider before sending their daughters to school. Hence both attendance and retention levels depend on how successfully schools fulfill the learning needs of students, and how relevant the curriculum is to their lives. These concerns are reflected in several Programme strategies and outcomes:

■ **Curriculum:** the curriculum is gender sensitive, and promotes equity in sex roles. The illustrations present women doing both work at home and outside and, similarly, men are helping in the household chores. The curriculum also encourages skills in decision making, negotiations, and communication.

■ **Consciousness Changes amongst Women Staff:** the very fact that women are riding cycles (PAs), and motor bikes (POs) in the villages where women are supposed to stay at home and do

housework is remarkable. While it has not been easy, these women have managed to both break the norms and, be accepted in doing so.

■ **Women as Teachers:** the married women teachers of BRAC are also making social changes in their own right. They report being easily recognized in their community and having people talk to them eagerly, and with respect. Moreover, earning their own income also gives them a sense of empowerment and independence.

■ **Consciousness Changes amongst Parents:** interacting with the BRAC staff, especially the women staff, has helped the parents of BRAC students acquire a broader outlook even towards their own daughters. Seeing their daughters gain from BRAC education has also helped them see their daughters in a different light (though many still want to get them married as soon as possible).

■ **Changes in Learners:** the BRAC curriculum helps the young learners gain a new perspective of themselves in their society and hence play new roles in the future. Girls learn to break the norms, and increasing numbers are continuing studying in formal schools after graduating from the BRAC schools.

7. The NFPE Management Structure

Any education programme needs to have a sound excellent supervisory process and an efficient management system in order to be effective. For the NFPE Programme, the overall responsibility lies with BRAC's Executive Director. Direct management and supervision are accomplished through a structure which includes the central office of the Director of NFPE and staff. To facilitate its multifaceted work, the programme has formed five support units namely Training, Monitoring, Field Operations, Material Development and Logistic Units.

The Director is responsible for developing programme policies, managing the programme, and liaising with the other BRAC programmes and to external donors, as well as with the evaluation and appraisal teams.

7.1 Field Operations

The unit of Field Operations comes under the jurisdiction of Regional Managers (RMs). Their duties include supervising the programme, planning new school openings, developing the Area Managers and other staff members, monitoring the schools, and overseeing finances and all local purchases. Some are stationed at the head office, others in the field.

The Area Managers (AMs) report directly to the RMs and are stationed in the field. They have several years of experience in BRAC and are all university graduates with master's degrees. Their job is to plan all the schools within their area, oversee and develop the Team-In Charge, evaluate personnel performance in their areas, and manage logistics.

The Team-in-Charge also comes from the ranks of BRAC field workers with at least two years experience in the NFPE programme. From 1994, in addition to their role in charge of the office, they also supervise 15 schools entrusted (50% of the TICs at present are in charge of 2 Team offices). The TIC's team consists of 4-5 Programme Organisers/Programme Assistants who together conduct refreshers courses.

Programme Organisers (PO) are trained to become first line supervisors of the teachers and of the schools. PO's must be university graduates with a bachelor's/master's degree. However, previous experience in development work is not mandatory. Programme Assistants (PA) are local recruits with a higher Secondary Certificate degree (12) years of education; some are also former NFPE teachers. PO/PAs mainly supervise and assist the teachers. They visit all the schools in their areas at least twice weekly. For each item on their supervision checklist, the PO/PA's have guidelines on what to look for and how to make suggestions.

The table below shows the staff strength of NFPE during Phase I

Staff strength of NFPE from 1993 to March 1996

Type of Staff	1993			1994		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Regular	1138	422	1560	1026	248	1274
Project	298	7	305	1197	12	1209
Service	371	0	371	434	0	434
Total	1807	429	2236	2657	260	2917
Type of Staff	1995			March 1996		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Regular	983	394	1377	950	373	1323
Project	2129	159	2288	2059	144	2203
Service	415	1	416	417	0	417
Total	3527	554	4081	3426	517	3943

7.2 Logistics

The NFPE's internal logistics unit periodically draws up a plan which shows the type and number of teaching materials needed in a particular area and submits a requisition to BRAC's Logistics Department. Where printing is required, a requisition is made to BRAC Printers. For importable items the requisition is usually given on a six monthly basis. BRAC's Logistics Department delivers all school related materials to specific areas, usually to the NFPE Area Manager office.

8. Quality and the Curriculum

The NFPE programme has been investigating its own perception of "quality" inside the class room and has identified a range of Indicators of Quality. Apart from these above mentioned efforts, the Programme already has its own range of qualitative indicators, such as:

- 60% of the lesson time is child centred
- 95% learners attend school regularly
- the number of children replaced/dropping out does not exceed 6%
- 90% learners attend school on time for the entire school day
- 70% of the parents attend monthly parents meeting regularly
- School space is rented from members of the community (only from RDP group members in RDP areas)

Moreover, the level of self esteem and confidence is one important outcome of the programme, and can be seen as an indicator of quality.

Phase I has seen several changes in both classroom behavior, and the curriculum, which have been directed towards improving the quality of learning in the class room. Today after more than a decade, the question of quality has taken a new turn: field reports have shown that, despite the effort to move away from the rote method of learning, there is a tendency for teachers still to rely upon it. As a result, several new methods are being introduced to break out away from rote memory in each subject, and to allow more individual active learning to take place in the classroom. This has called for further curricular changes, in terms of content, presentation, and teaching methods.

8.1 Methodology and Materials Development

A major change in 1993 focused on the methodology of teaching, and learning materials. These changes allowed the curriculum to be more interesting and participatory, helped increase the retention level of students and it allowed for more creative thinking and activity. Group reading, story books, cards, role plays, field trips and group discussions were some of the changes made in language, social studies and mathematics.

The Material Development Unit (MDU) methodology for preparing the materials and curriculum is based on analysing needs, consulting with books and educational experts, field testing, receiving feed back at various levels, editing and finalizing the materials. This process allows for inputs both at field level and at the level of experts. It further allows modification of new ideas to suit local needs and environment. Following these steps several changes have been made in the curriculum.

8.1.1 Materials Development Unit

The MDU is working with several consultants and with the trainers themselves to create and modify the curriculum and learning materials that are used in the schools. In this process, interacting with field staff and teachers provide an important basis for information and feedback. In order to bring new and innovative ideas of teaching to the schools, material developers also attend training sessions and workshops in Bangladesh and abroad. National and international consultants are hired to assist in developing the materials and in teacher training. Some members of the MDU are also involved in the training of field staff on the new curriculum once it is developed.

8.1.2 Writing Skills

Monitoring reports showed that BRAC students needed to improve their writing skills. As a result, the *wall newspaper* was introduced in NFPE classrooms in 1993. This is not edited by the teacher, and the learners can be as imaginative as they want with total freedom. This idea proved effective and improved the imagination and creativity of the children.

8.1.3 Reading Skills

The group method of reading story books was introduced in 1993 in order to improve reading skills. These supplementary reading packages not only help in breaking the monotony of a prescribed curriculum, but also in improving the atmosphere of teaching and learning. Children now enjoy nineteen story books during the course of the year, rather than only ten. Moreover, with four copies of each, the children can read and discuss stories in small groups.

8.1.4 Mathematics

Testing the students on their mathematics skills revealed that they were very limited in the use of their numbers, and could not use them out of the framework given in the classroom. Teachers were found to be teaching it in a monotonous and structured manner, although the Leeds University consultant reported that the "level of arithmetical competency in the BRAC schools was very high". The Mathematics team developed new work books and manuals, in collaboration with the consultant, which allowed more practice of the concepts, and also provided the teacher with more guidelines and ideas about each chapter. Pair work, group work, games and pictures also helped to make the subject more enjoyable.

Mathematics work-books for class 1 were written and field tested in 1994 and disseminated in the schools in 1995, while the book for class 2 was written and field tested in 1995 and disseminated in 1996. Initial feedback from the schools shows that the learners seem to enjoy these books, and teachers find the manual useful.

8.1.5 Social Studies

Since 1993, the material developers have been working, with a consultant from the USA on the new social studies curriculum which aims at making learning more active and at promoting more child centred learning. The activities will require various skills, such as researching, communicating, sharing information, analyzing, problem solving, sequencing, categorizing, decision making, and drawing conclusions. The materials also include several of the Meena episodes that UNICEF has brought out to promote the girl child. In 1994, a number of activities were introduced in social studies for grades two and three, focusing on child centred activity based learning. Special activities for urban schools were designed in order to make the curriculum more relevant to the non-rural scenario.

In 1995, the first draft of "Family House" and "Neighbours" were completed for all three years, field tested and re-written. In early 1996, the focus was on the training aspects of social studies. The Social Studies book I and teacher's manual will be published by November 1996.

8.1.6 Bangla

During 1993, language activities were experimented with and, from 1994, a number of activities were incorporated to improve the reading and creative writing skills of learners. *My favourite word*, a spelling exercise, was introduced and in *journal writing* children write a few sentences each of which they exchange in pairs and read aloud to others. *Paired reading* has been introduced from grade one, enabling children to help each other with their reading. During 1994/95 the language team worked closely with a consultant from New Zealand and experimented with the teaching techniques of the New Zealand language scheme in order to promote more reading, writing, listening and speaking in the classroom.

In the first half of 1994, *Experience Writing* was experimented with in a few schools in Dhaka Urban areas and in Chandina, Comilla in order to enhance the creative writing and sequencing skills of children and build on new vocabulary. *Reading stories* to children everyday was introduced immediately afterwards as a means to create an environment for children to listen more. *Shared reading* enables children to bring meaning to text and introduces them to new vocabulary. A few story writing workshops have been organized during the same year and about 5 to 6 titles have been written and printed as part of a scheme to have a good quantity of story books in the classroom.

In 1995, *Morning Talk*, a new daily activity for language development was introduced in the language curriculum. This basically allows the children to talk on a topic or share experiences every day before a lesson begins. This exercise aims to promote self confidence, encourages children to speak before an audience and creates an opportunity to share ideas with others. From February 1996, *concentrated language encounter (CLE)*, which is a Thai adaptation of an Australian language scheme, was introduced in the NFPE schools. 10 schools were initially identified in December 1995 for the CLE pilot. In February 1996 the selected teachers went through a two day training course to orient them on this new method of teaching language. Books for shared reading were developed and the teachers manual was finalised during January to March 1996.

8.1.7 English

BRAC graduates entering formal schools are expected to have English language skills at least up to a level of class IV. Although the government English curriculum is introduced in BRAC schools from the middle of class II (after 18 months in school) most BRAC teachers are insufficiently equipped to facilitate English language learning beyond the very preliminary stage of alphabet recognition; hence there is a tendency to revert to rote methods. Given the background of BRAC teachers, the English through Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) is seen as a possible solution. The IRI method uses the radio to impart effective education and emphasizes active learning and meaningful interaction between the radio, the teacher and the students.

The work of the IRI project began in November 1993 with the visit of a consultant from Learn Tech, USA. The programme will consist of 240 lessons to be completed in 20 months: from the 14th month for NFPE schools and 12th month for the KK schools. With the help of Consultants, and making use of short overseas training visits by NFPE staff, a lot of audio and written material has been developed and piloted. The writing of lesson 240 will be completed by December 12th 1996, and the copying of all the lessons will be completed and handed over by October 1997.

8.1.8 Religious Studies

In 1994, Religious Education was introduced in all class III schools. The reason for its introduction was that parents were interested in having their children learn about religion; government schools teach religion in their classes. Currently the government religious education books are being used.

8.2 Audio Visual Materials

Since 1994, the Audio Visual unit has assisted the NFPE programme in developing a set of training videos to increase the standards of teachers and trainers. Already in use in the teacher training sessions, the videos are an aide to trainers and help them demonstrate teaching-learning processes and how to facilitate a class. By using the video taped lessons, new teachers can see a classroom situation, and how a particular activity can be done. They also discuss the learning situation. This is particularly helpful in Social Studies where there are games and health activities that need special facilitation skills in the classroom. Audio tapes are also being used to assist NFPE to record English Radio programmes, selected songs used in the schools and stories, for the children.

9. Training and Development

Along with relevant curricula, a good education programme requires motivated teachers to effectively teach the material. The Training Unit is responsible for training the teachers and the NFPE staff. An Education Specialist plans all training and develops the training calendar, training modalities and training materials, advises on matters related to pedagogy, as well as teacher and staff development.

9.1 NFPE Staff Training

All PAs receive 19 days of pre-service training, 12 day in-service training, and a 6 day training of trainers course.

All POs receive 3 days of pre-service training, 12 days of teachers basic training within one and half months of service, a 12 day Operation Management Course within four months of service, and a 12 day training of trainers course after six months of service.

All TICs receive a 12 day Development Management Course.

All TICs and senior POs also attend a 6-day Gender Awareness and Analysis course which addresses a wide range of issues essential to the programme.

9.2 Teacher Training

The teacher training component is very thorough and comprehensive, resting on the principle of "distributed training" throughout the school term rather than a lengthy training course at the beginning of the teacher's career. Hence, BRAC NFPE teacher training is composed of many training sessions throughout the teaching cycle.

Newly recruited teachers receive a 12-15 day basic training course and a 3 day orientation course before the start of year 1.

All practicing teachers receive a 2 day refresher course at the end of the 2nd and 3rd months of the first school year and a 4 day refresher course at the end of the first year. A 3 day refresher course at the end of the second year; a 12 day refresher course at the end of the third year; and a 1 day monthly refresher course when teachers are not receiving any of the above.

The training activities are informal and participatory, yet structured; they introduce basic skills, new content and activities. The refresher courses address day to day teaching and learning issues and review teaching methodologies to prepare the teacher for the coming year or month of school. The general purpose is to equip the teacher to be able better to facilitate her class.

9.3 Institutional Strengthening

The exposure of BRAC staff to new ideas is promoted by long and short term courses abroad, and by way of interaction with various consultants. Such exchanges have been useful in developing the staff and also in improving aspects of the programme such as the development of training materials, relevant learning skills, and teaching methodology. Several NFPE staff both from head office and the field have also been trained abroad in the past three years, as tabulated:

Head Office	Field Staff	Total	Name of Course	Name of Institution	Year
1	-	1	Masters in Education	Institute of Education, University of London, United Kingdom	1992 - 1993
1	-	1	Masters in Communication	London School of Economics, United Kingdom	1994 - 1995
-	1	1	Masters in Education	University of Bristol, United Kingdom	1994 - 1995
1	-	1	Masters in Education	University of Manchester, United Kingdom	1994 - 1995
-	1	1	Masters in Education	University of Reading, United Kingdom	1995 - 1996
1	-	1	Masters in Social Planning and Policy in Developing Countries	London School of Economics, United Kingdom	1995 - 1996
1	-	1	Teaching English to Young Learners	Brunel University, United Kingdom	1994 (12 Days)
1	-	1	Fundamentals of Media Instruction	George Mason University, United States of America	1994 (1 Month)
1	-	1	Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE)	University of Leeds, United Kingdom	1995 (4 Months)
2	-	2	Concentrated Language Encounter	Srinakaronwirot University, Bangkok	1995 (15 Days)
6	-	6	English as a Foreign Language	CIEM, United Kingdom	1996 (6 Weeks)
2	4	6	NFPE and Materials Development	University of Leeds, United Kingdom	1996 (4 Months)
-	2	2	Management	King Alfred's College of Higher Education United Kingdom	1996 (4 Months)
17	8	25			

10 Continuing Education

10.1 School Libraries (Pathaghars)

The opening of the school libraries is an illustrative example of how the programme has incorporated need based demands of the students into the programme as identified by the field staff.

In 1993, the library programme was formalized at head office and was called the 'Kishori Pathaghars'. Kishori Pathaghars open once a week for one and half to two hours in a BRAC school, when the school is closed. Initially, Tk 2 was taken from the students as a subscription to buy materials and games for the library. However, since some students found it difficult to pay the subscription, this 2 taka was collected as their savings each month. All facilities, such as books, games are now provided by BRAC. The teacher is paid a basic stipend to maintain the library. The library is also to be used for cultural activities.

In 1993, sewing training skills was introduced; in 1994 poultry farming training; in 1995 book binding skills was introduced. Home gardening was also introduced in 1995, and in 1996 students used their savings to buy the seeds to do home gardening. The cost for these training sessions is shared with the students. The library is also used for cultural activities. The teacher is paid a basic stipend to maintain this library.

The libraries have also proved to be a good place for girls to come and socialise at an informal level. The magazine produced by BRAC called 'Gonokendra' helps them to keep in touch with BRAC news and read the various articles.

**Expansion of Kishori Pathagars
from 1993 to March 1996**

Total Items	1993	1994	1995	Mar. 1996
Pathagars	1025	1858	2026	2481
Members	20946	42824	75563	84898
Savings (TK)	124066	584896	1743096	2130835
Books Provided	23036	73410	170904	175844

The average membership is usually 33 students and the success of this programme has led to expansion during the phase:

10.2 Reading Circle (Path Kendra)

The Reading Circle is yet another need based addition to the programme. The need arose when it was found that Kishori Pathagars could not be opened where BRAC schools were not reopened, and also when adequate number of members is not found. As a result small reading groups were formed with a contact person chosen from the group. This person is held responsible for the books and magazines provided to him/her for reading in his/her group in his/her house. This addition was made in 1995 and 1,165 study groups with 7,573 girls are mostly those continuing their education in the formal schools and also those who are not studying anymore. The minimum number of members in each group is 5. Each circle is given 7 books for a month, as supplied by a Programme Organiser.

10.3 Union Libraries (Gono Kendra)

In order to foster a learning environment in the villages, BRAC has opened village libraries, known as 'gono kendras'. In December 1995, there were 30 such libraries with an average membership of 189 each. Each library is equipped with about a thousand books, two dailies and journals. The libraries are usually housed in a 500-600 sq. feet room provided by the community and are kept open for 6 hours a day Saturday to Thursday. A locally recruited part time librarian runs the library and receives a monthly honorarium of Taka 650. Library users pay a small subscription fee depending on their occupation and economic position. A committee is formed from among the subscribers to provide guidelines and conduct routine affairs of the library. During Jan-March 1996, six such union libraries were opened with 2,419 members (including 39% women) and preparations for another 6

union libraries (with 3,558 subscribers) were completed and the average membership per union library under operation increased to 305 in March 1996.

Totals	Dec. 1995	Mar. 1996
Libraries	30	36
Members	5811 (32% women)	10976 36% women)
Average Member per Library	194	302

10.4 Scholarship Programme

Since monetary factors prevent many rural girls from continuing in the formal system, BRAC's Scholarship Programme was formed in 1994 to enable these students to continue in the secondary schools. Initially the programme was undertaken through the Catherine Lovell Memorial Fund and Peter Thompson Memorial Fund. The candidates interested in receiving the awards should have the potential for successful completion of mid secondary school level (i.e. class VIII).

Under this programme the students received TK 60 per month, paid on a quarterly basis, for one year. It was then renewed every year for a total of three years if conditions for renewal were fulfilled.

The initial target was to bring 250 students under this programme and by December 1993, a total of 135 graduates (all girl's) had been identified and thus far a total of 150 students have received the scholarship. However, this programme had to be discontinued since the government started a scholarship programme to enable rural girls to go to school, so that there was no longer any need for BRAC to continue with this programme.

10.5 Nutrition Program

BRAC students are encouraged to use their knowledge of health and nutrition at home. In April 1994, BRAC introduced a home gardening project in NFPE and BEOC schools to inform children about healthy food which encourages the planting of such food and the consumption of these foods at home. Seeds of a variety of vegetables were distributed to children in class III of the NFPE and the BEOC schools. The first planting was done in April 1994 involving 243,527 children from BRAC schools. Based on lessons from the first season, the second planting began in October 1994, with seeds given to 55,570 students with more guidance from an agronomist and his team. The Programme Assistants were given a six day training in home gardening. The total production of vegetables from the second planting was 1,053,005 kg is much better than the first harvest.

However, it was difficult to sustain this programme due to unpredictable weather and, hence, uncertainty in the production of these vegetables. Therefore the programme was discontinued and seeds are now being provided through the kishori pathagurs.

10.6 Adult Literacy Centers

To achieve Education for All by the year 2000, NFPE decided to address the adults who are not literate. Three adult literacy centres were opened on a pilot basis in three villages in Manikgonj in December 1995. During the same month another 12 centres were opened, making a total of 15 centres

These centres have 25 learners each and a teacher. All three teachers have had the experience of running one cycle of a BEOC school. The adult learners come in for two hours a day, six days a week. They have a ten month long course with a total of 450 contact hours which includes two major curriculum area, namely, Bangla and Math.

There seems to be an immense and growing demand in the community for such adult centres. NFPE plans not only to provide basic literacy and numeracy but also to complement the course with a two month long post literacy follow up in health, nutrition, legal and social issues. These initiatives are intended to help them retain literacy skills. During Jan-Mar 1996, 36 more centres were opened, making the total 51. All these centres have been opened in RDP areas and more than 50% of adult learners are RDP members. The materials, strategy and training needs are to be further explored and experimented with. The future expansion of these centres depends on the willingness of the adults to attain literacy and the programme's future plans.

	December 1995	March 1996
Total centres	15	51
Total Learners	375	1275
Male	97	191
Female	278	1084

10.7 NFPE Graduates Complete Secondary Schooling

In 1994, NFPE, graduates from the very first schools of 1985 completed their S.S.C. (secondary school certificate) examination. Thus far nineteen former NFPE students have completed their secondary education by taking the matriculation examination. One of the students, Rashidul Islam Ratan, who secured a first, obtained letter marks. This would not have been possible of these children without the help of the BRAC school that came to their village more than ten years ago.

11. NFPE-RDP Synergy

The NFPE programme demonstrates a perfect fit with the Rural Development Programme's overall philosophy. NFPE believes that better educated children become better educated parents, who in turn seek better educated children. BRAC sees its education intervention as a programme, perfectly integrated and reinforcing all other programmes through its curricula, through the employment and training of local women, through eliciting partnerships and the participation of local individuals, families and communities in the schooling of children. As a direct intervention to eradicate illiteracy among the adults of tomorrow, NFPE is active in most RDP catchment areas and, throughout Phase I, formed one of RDP's major programme component. Given RDP's relatively wider geographical coverage, most NFPE programmes automatically reside within the RDP areas.

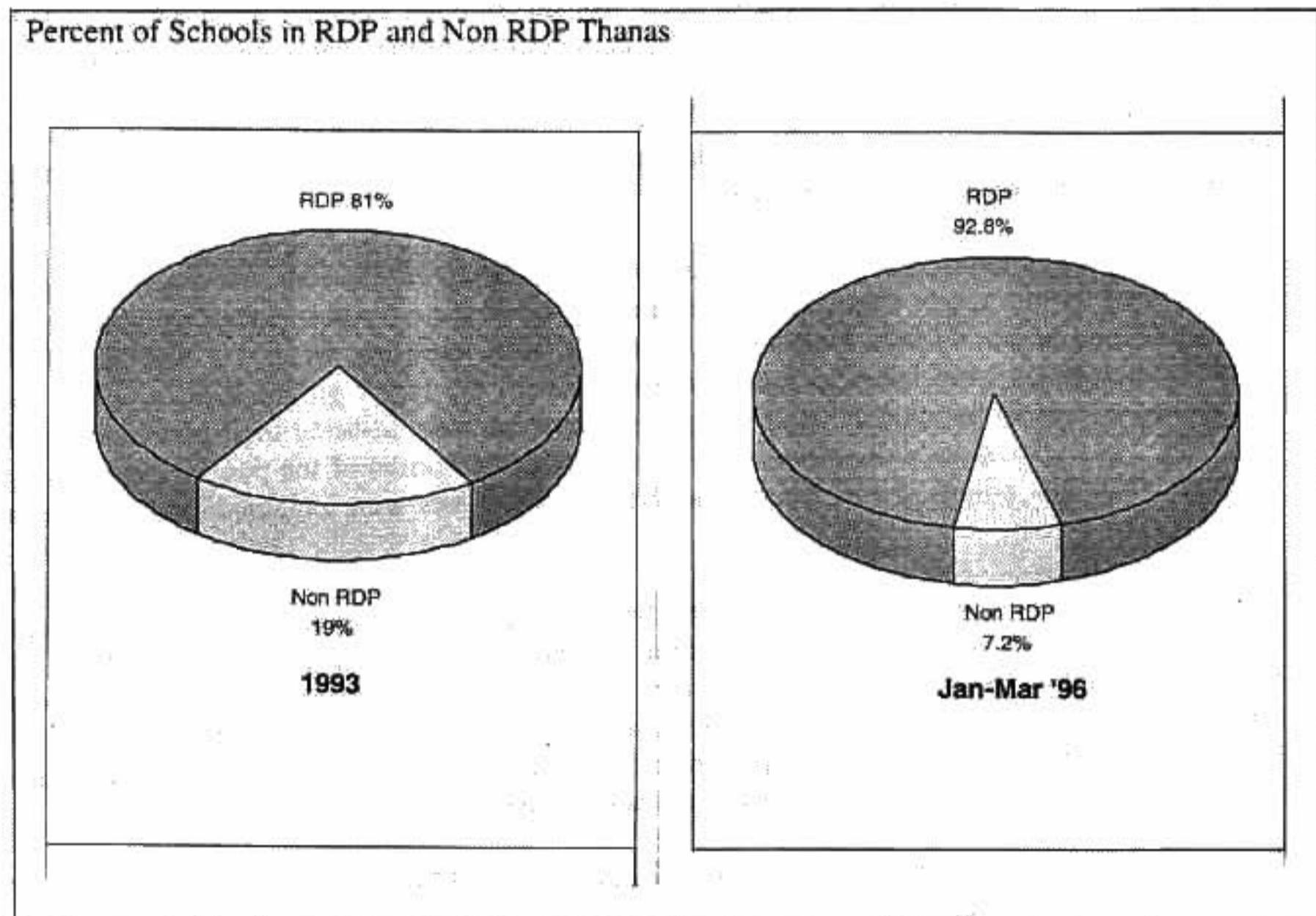
The target group of BRAC programmes is the poorest of the poor. However, many school houses were offered by non target members and the acceptance of these houses tended to increase the number of non target students from better economic status families. Once this was identified, some strict policies were taken to maintain the focus on the target group. In RDP areas, the school houses had to be obtained from the group members, thus ensuring their participation. In non RDP areas also, strict policies were enforced to take the houses of the poorest people only. As a result of this policy, it was found that 89% of the houses were obtained from the target group.

At the field level there are several areas where the two programmes interact. In doing the survey, the two Programmes come together to select the learners. Preference is given to the children of village organisation (VO) members, and the members also help in locating and building the one-room classroom, thus getting a sense of ownership. Moreover, many VO members of the RDP programme invite the NFPE staff to open the schools which gives them a sense of leadership, and the VO members participate in its operation and maintenance.

The RDP programme reinforces the issues discussed in NFPE, such as the importance of education for girls, health issues, and child marriages. In the same way RDP issues are reinforced in the parent teacher meetings. During crisis periods (such as the fundamentalist problem in December 1994), the united action of the different programmes in the field, such as RDP, NFPE, and HPP, combined to help overcome the problems.

The programmes also interact at district level, working with government heads in solving district or thana problems. Finally, apart from informal meetings, there are also formal meetings in the Head Office between the staff of the two programmes, in discussing issues, and in solving problems. Use of RDP offices by the NFPE staff also helps to bring the staff of the two programme together.

Because of NFPE's integration within other BRAC programmes, especially RDP, it may appear to be administratively and programmatically fragmented (NFPE alone; NFPE within RDP; NFPE within HPP). This impression is created largely by the separate proposals and funding arrangements for the separate programmes; in the field there are no divisions. However, from 1996 onwards, this artificial separation will no longer exist as all schools will be brought under the Non Formal Primary Education programme proposed for NFPE Phase II.



12. Features that Make the Schools Successful

The following features of the BRAC approach are considered to be particularly associated with the success of the Programme:

- **The focus on girls:** many countries around the world have unequal opportunities in education for girls and boys, with boys receiving most of the attention in education. The BRAC programme policy places special emphasis on the enrollment of girls. The recruitment of women teachers helps to retain more girls.

■ **Reasonable class sizes:** the relatively small class size of 33 students to one teacher helps to forge a special bond between the teachers and students. Students are taught by the same teacher throughout the three year course which also contributes to creating a friendly relationship between the teacher and the student.

■ **Active parent and community involvement:** studies have shown that while the right to schooling goes first to the students, the decision and resources belong to parents. Hence, the perception of parents is a key factor. For example, in their computations, the costs of educating girls are higher than that of educating sons. Keeping the perception of parents in view, the NFPE schools are designed to fit the limitations of rural girls and their parents. It is not possible to attain an education without the support of parents and guardians. An essential feature of BRAC schools is the involvement of the community through regular parent teacher meetings and through the activities of the school management committee.

■ **Flexible school timing:** a common reason for formal school student dropout is the rigidity of school time. Most children are needed for work at home or in the fields during the harvest season which makes regular attendance a problem. To ensure that every child can attend school, BRAC school hours are flexible based on agreements between the teacher and the parents. Classes are held for three hours each day, six days a week, 270 days a year. This enables the students to attend school during the time of the day when it is most convenient and does not hamper family obligations. The flexibility BRAC schools can partially account for the high attendance rate.

■ **Easy accessibility:** many parents are reluctant to send their children, especially girls, far from their home for schooling. However, since BRAC schools are located near the homes of students and teachers, parents, children, and teachers develop a sense of security since the schools are located in their own neighborhood. This also enables the children to receive individual attention from teachers after class hours if necessary.

■ **The One Room School house:** a typical BRAC school is a bamboo or mud walled room with thatch or tin roofs and a minimum floor space of 336 square feet. The schoolhouse is usually rented by BRAC for a nominal sum and, in most cases, the landowner volunteers to construct the schoolhouse, often with the advance rent paid by BRAC. Schools generally do not have their own latrines and tube wells but the schools are located near these facilities wherever possible.

■ **Participatory and life related curriculum:** it has been shown that students learn best through active and meaningful education. Thus, the design of the NFPE programme encourages a learner-centred and a participatory approach within a constructive learning environment. The curriculum is designed to be relevant to rural life and to suit the special needs of rural children.

■ **Learning through co-curricular activities:** there are more ways to learn than by just reading a text book. In BRAC schools, time is spent everyday on games and fun activities like singing, dancing, story telling and role playing, many of which are related to exercising articulation, observation skills, coordination of the different parts of the body, and clarity of speech.

■ **Very little or no homework:** since most students have some other obligations besides school to attend to, usually no homework is assigned to the students. If assigned, it is very little, and can be done independently by the students themselves, requiring no assistance from parents who are mostly illiterate. This also saves the parents from the pressure of appointing a tutor.

■ **Female Teachers:** the teachers in BRAC schools are mostly women, largely because parents prefer to send their children to schools where the teachers are females.

13. The Educational Support Programme

To mobilize partnership for Non Formal Primary Education for the eradication of illiteracy from Bangladesh, BRAC began the Education Support Programme (ESP) in September 1991 (before then, attempts had been made by some NGOs to replicate the NFPE model, but with very little success). By end-March 1996, ESP had extended technical support to 327 non government organizations for 4,643 NFPE schools and 278 NGOs received both technical and financial support for 2,400 schools. ESP itself comprises one Programme Manager and 29 Programme Organisers, each having two to six years of working experience in NFPE and/or ESP.

The Programme Manager of ESP is entrusted with the responsibilities of the projects within the present administrative structure of BRAC. With ESP's financial support, 272 partner NGOs are now administering 2,037 schools in 58 districts of Bangladesh.

13.1 ESP Goal and Objectives

The goal of ESP is "to form partnerships for non formal primary education with organizations working in Bangladesh and to develop their technical, conceptual, and human skills to replicate BRAC's NFPE model successfully." The main objectives of ESP are to :

- form partnership for non formal primary education;
- develop partner organizations' skills to replicate BRAC's NFPE model;
- ensure women's participation in the implementation and management of the primary education programme;
- minimise wastage of time, money, and human lives in primary educational enterprises in Bangladesh;
- promote girls' education; and
- support the national efforts towards basic education for all.

13.2 Criteria for Selecting Partner NGOs

NGOs seeking to participate in the NFPE programme are selected under the following criteria:

- the NGO must be registered under the Social welfare Department or Society Registration Act or with the Women's Affairs Bureau of the Peoples of Bangladesh;
- the ESP partner NGO should be small and local, working in a union, a thana or a district;
- it should have little or no access to the donor agencies for funds;
- the NGO must be motivated to accept the whole NFPE model;
- the NGO must be secular and follow a secular approach to development;
- the NGO must have some experience in development activities;
- preference is given to women-led NGOs;
- The NFPE area proposed by the NGO should not be Dhaka city; and
- The NGO should accept the financial arrangements.

13.3 Criteria For Selecting NFPE location/village

It is the responsibility of the partner NGOs to select their own NFPE locations. The criteria that the partner NGOs usually follow are:

- Availability of potential teachers;
- Availability of school accommodation;
- Availability of eligible children;
- Easy accessibility from the project office;
- Intra and inter-village communication;
- Necessity felt by the villagers;
- Closeness of the village to other feasible villages; and
- Existence of other programme(s) in the area.

13.4 ESP Implementation

A two day orientation programme on NFPE is organized by ESP for the partner NGO heads before starting operations at the field level. For the implementation and management of the NFPE programme, each of the partner organizations has its own Programme Organisers who are responsible for all field level activities. Before starting operational activities, the POs of partner organizations are also provided with a 4-day training on school organization. The selection of NFPE village, children selection, teacher selection, arrangement of school accommodation, organisation of parents, organisation and facilitation of teacher refresher courses, school supervision and other activities are performed by the POs of partner NGOs. ESP provides financial supports the partner NGOs in goods, services and cash.

ESP schools :

	1993	1994	1995	March 1996
No. of Schools	374	1150	2041	2037
No. of Learners	11220	34500	61230	61110
No. of Teachers	374	1150	2041	2037
No. of NGOs	47	137	277	272

14. Beyond Bangladesh

Just as the ESP programme provides technical and conceptual support - in addition to human skills - to other NGOs so that they may replicate BRAC's NFPE model successfully within Bangladesh, the continual and growing exposure of other countries to BRAC's NFPE model has international consequences (and, at the same time, BRAC learns about educational innovations and developments elsewhere) .

The BRAC schools received many foreign visitors in Phase One. Senior Government officials visited from Britain, Japan, Vietnam, Canada, India, France, Pakistan, the United States of America (including U.S. First Lady, Hilary Clinton), the Netherlands, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, Iraq and China .

While comparative education experience does not necessarily transplant successfully from one cultural environment to another, visits to the programme by delegates from different countries have often crystallized into adapted version of BRAC's Programme in other countries. NFPE is now being replicated by many African countries. Oxfam America has experimented with the BRAC NFPE Model in two states in India. Two pilot projects were undertaken, one each in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh and Chittoor District in Andhra Pradesh. In Zambia, ninety free primary schools, designed along the BRAC model, have already been set up under the Zambian Open Community school programme. Save the Children, USA has decided to adopt the BRAC approach for a new model school in Mali called "The Village School". UNICEF, under its Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office in Nairobi, has invited BRAC to facilitate countries in Eastern and Southern Africa in their efforts to improve children's access to basic education, particularly girls. Pakistan has shown keen interest in the NFPE model especially as it focuses on girl child's education. Egypt has opened a number of community schools adapting the BRAC model, again sponsored by UNICEF.

Not all countries have the same conditions and challenges, hence some have benefited from learning about the NFPE Programme while not implementing it. China is such an example: its interest in BRAC's NFPE was that of its 'replicability' and, given its huge population (two-thirds illiteracy means hundreds of millions of people), their officials feel that their exposure to BRAC model would help them in designing their own model to reach the out-reach community.

15. Monitoring

As a programme expands, continual assessment and monitoring of quality is necessary. Especially in an education programme where new curriculum is being introduced, where innovative ideas are being tried out, and where long term planning is necessary, monitoring is extremely important. The NFPE Programme has its own monitoring unit that consists of five members selected from the ranks of field officers. They carry out random inspections to look into student/teacher attendance, school infrastructure, classroom discipline, academic achievement of learners, students' participation, and evaluation of the teacher. The Director, Regional Managers, and individual field offices concerned are informed of the findings, after which necessary adjustments to the programme are made.

The NFPE Monitoring Unit is also responsible for monitoring the effect of any changes that are introduced, whether in curriculum or in another aspect of school activities. Monitors are able to observe up to 40 schools every month. Their task is guided by specific objectives set for them in advance by the Director in consultation with the Education Specialist and the monitors themselves.

Qualitative dimensions of the NFPE Programme are also evaluated by BRAC's Monitoring Department. Data are collected by field monitors who are usually former NFPE programme staff and know the programme in depth. During Phase I, BRAC's Monitoring Unit surveyed the following topics:

- Parents' meetings;
- Newly-built BRAC schools;
- New school structure;
- Material supplied to the BRAC schools;
- Graduates of BRAC schools;
- Knowledge retention of BRAC students;
- Homework of BRAC students; and
- Background of BRAC urban students.

An interesting finding from the last topic was that, of the urban families surveyed, 50% of their income came from pulling rickshaws or working in a garment factory. However, when the BRAC students were asked what they wanted to do after school, none of the boys wanted to be a rickshaw puller and none of the girls wanted to be a garment worker, suggesting that these children are hoping for a better life for themselves than that of their parents.

16. Research and Evaluation

In Phase I, BRAC's Research and Evaluation Division (RED) independently carried out several research studies for the NFPE programme, as tabulated:

1993	Assessment of Basic Competencies of Children in Bangladesh
1993	Enrollment status and literacy of former NFPE students in formal schools
1993	Identifying the reasons for dropout of former NFPE students in formal schools
1993	Education for freedom : the children of BRAC's urban schools
1993	Option of parents on what life skills their children should possess/learn
1993	Factors associated with basic competencies
1994	Identifying possible ways for utilization of the education of NFPE graduates : some proposition
1994	Progress of basic competencies of NFPE graduates over time
1994	Linking the school, family and community participation in BRAC schools
1994	Preliminary findings about NFPE programme at Mirzapur Sadar area
1994	Basic training course for the teachers of BRAC's non formal primary education programme: view of the trainee teachers on some selection issues
1994	An inside look at two BRAC schools in Matfah thana
1995	Effects of socio economic and cultural aspect on from out of children of NFPE
1995	Why students dropout in the first six months of enrollment : a comprehensive study on BRAC education programme
1995	Development of standardised test for BRAC NFPE schools (3rd grade)
1995	Comparative achievement test in different subjects of NFPE learners
1995	Basic line survey of interactive radio instruction programme
1995	Socio economic cultural reasons for dropout of NFPE urban children (an exploratory study)
1995	Enrollment pattern of NFPE graduates studied in secondary schools
1995	NFPE urban teachers : their socio economic characteristics and teaching performances - a case of six schools, October 1995
1996	A feasibility study on reusing text books in NFPE schools of BRAC

Ongoing studies (as of March 1996) included :

A probe into the status of the Adult Literacy Centre
The Gonokendra Pathagar
Mainstreaming of NFPE Graduates (joint study in collaboration with University of Manchester)
Participatory development and BRAC : Improving basic literacy for disadvantaged children (a World Bank R.S.McNamara Research project, 1995 - 1996)

17. Assessment of Basic Competencies

ABC has been carried out at several levels in BRAC schools and the methodology has evolved through intense discussion with experts in education, social science and survey techniques and, during Phase I, substantial field and pilot testing. In September 1991, BRAC developed an initial concept paper and a draft instrument to measure basic education. After review, a pilot test was undertaken in four upazilas (one from each division) and two urban areas.

The most recent study aimed to assess the level and pattern of basic competency of the children who graduated from the BRAC schools in 1995 and to identify the socio economic determinants of this achievement. 1,259 graduates were interviewed for this study and it was found that, on average, 73.8% of the graduates satisfied all four criteria of basic competency. Among the graduates of the three year school category, those of BEOC in RDP areas performed best (76.4%) followed by the NFPE under ESP (75.2%) and NFPE in RDP areas (73.1%); the differences, however, were not statistically significant. Although girls of all three types of schools performed better than boys, this also was not statistically significant. On average, 74.4% of the girls and 72.6% of the boys had 'basic competency'.

It was further found that respondents of socio-economically better off households were more likely to have basic competency than those of poor households. Five socio-economic factors which emerged as the significant determinants of basic competency of the graduates of BRAC schools are:

- age
- the current enrollment status of the graduates;
- fathers' education;
- cultivable land owned by households; and
- the graduates' exposure to television.

Graduates currently in schools, whose fathers have some schooling, whose households have more than 50 decimals of land, and with access to television, were more likely to have basic competency than other groups.

17.1 The NFPE Achievement Test

How far the children in NFPE and KK schools achieve knowledge in different subjects was studied by a standardized achievement test NAT (NFPE Achievement Test). The test battery was developed in four subjects (Bangla, Social Studies, Mathematics and English) based on NFPE curricula and textbooks. The validity and reliability of the test battery was duly determined and a norm was developed on a sample of about 500 NFPE students. Subsequently, the test was administered to a group of 4,039 NFPE and 1,232 KK students within a month of their three year course ending. The sampled students were selected from all over the country by using a stratified random technique. The result of the achievement test is given in the following table :

Average Achievement of Knowledge in NFPE and KK Students (combined) in Different Subjects

Subject	Max. Score	Boys	Girls	All	Median
Bangla	30	15.45	15.38	15.40	15
Social Studies	30	15.02	15.08	15.07	15
Maths	30	19.23	18.44	18.67	20
English	25	12.00	12.04	12.03	12
All Subjects	115	61.07	60.95	61.17	62

It may be seen that around half of the children scored more than 50% in Bangla, Social Studies and English, while similar number of students obtained more than 66% in Mathematics. The tests will now be administered regularly to BRAC students as their school cycles conclude.

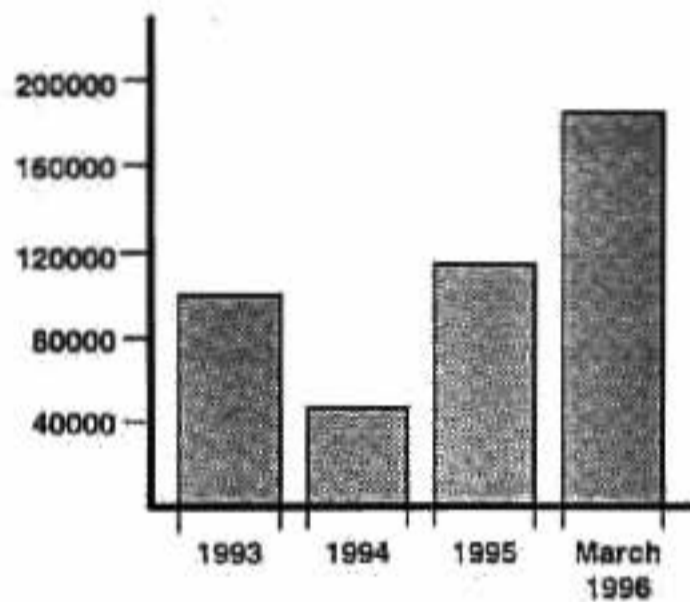
18. Consequences of the Programme

Programme monitoring and research strongly suggest that the Programme has significant practical consequences of the following nature:

■ **Delayed Marriage:** the three years spent in BRAC schools helped most of the girls delay their marriage and thus avoid child marriage. This may be due to the fact that schools "hold" them for a longer time, and/or because parents realize the importance of education, and/or because the girls have learnt to negotiate with her parents.

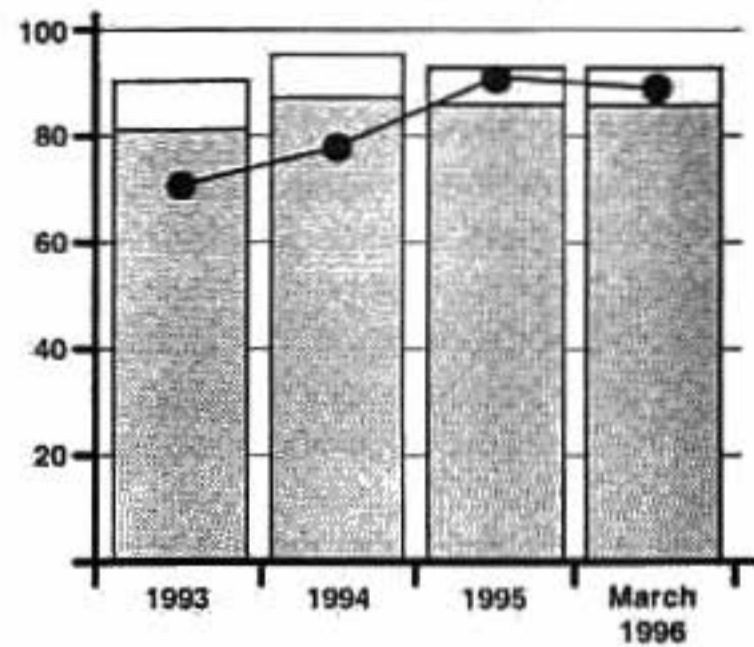
■ **Continuation of Higher Education:** several of the BRAC graduates enter the formal schools and many are now in the process of completing their high school. This is important, because before they were recruited in the BRAC schools, they were not at school at all. After graduating from BRAC schools, it seemed more like a natural progression to continue their education in the government schools. Hence, although they still have to pay 'out of pocket' fees, it seems that their parents are now willing to do this, having appreciated the importance of education.

Number of BRAC graduates from 1993 to March 1996



■ No. Of Graduates

Number of BRAC graduates from 1993 to March 1996



■ Rate of Course Completion
 ● % of Graduates Entering Govt. Schools
 □ Rate of Dropout for BRAC schools

■ **'Multiplier effects' on the family:** the topics learnt in BRAC schools (such as cleanliness, good habits, nutrition and health care) are related to everyday life. These, when taken home, can have a multiplier effect on the whole family. The young girls also learnt to visualize themselves as active members of society. Moreover, the community members appear to feel that BRAC students are well mannered and can be trusted.

There are very strong indications, therefore, that NFPE has not only taught the children to read and write, but has also opened the path to further studies. And, apart from the skills they learned, they have gained a sense of self esteem, and thus are able to face the rigors of every day challenges more

positively. The issue of quality in the BRAC classrooms, and such positive consequences as those cited, will be further researched.

The Research and Evaluation Division is being assisted by researchers from the University of Manchester in developing a **framework for NFPE research** so that future Reports may document with more detail and greater confidence the longer-term consequences of the BRAC educational activities.

19. Lessons Learned In Phase One

Some important lessons were learnt in Phase One, which will help to direct future plans. These are:

- That an important focus of the programme is **quality** at all levels.
- That **supervision** requires some teaching experience, and familiarity with the NFPE classroom situation. Hence, teachers who have finished a cycle are now eligible to become Resource Teachers, and thus supervise a cluster of schools near their homes. This allows both an opportunity for career development for the teacher, and a new perspective in the supervisory system within the programme. The Resource Teachers can also provide valuable input to trainers, and are important agents for contributing to and disseminating new items in the curriculum.
- It is also realized that **refresher training** is a suitable way of improving the skills of teachers and helping them in acquiring new skills which they themselves can generate through discussion and by learning from each other. Continuous refresher training is a key factor in the success of the schools.
- It is felt that **trainers** need to spend some time in the classrooms as well. Though most of the trainers have field experience, the contact with the schools is still quite important in order to keep in touch with the realities of the class room, and time needs to be created for this.
- Moreover, training needs to be more **participatory**.
- Teachers' **Basic Training** needs to be extended from 12 days to 15 days.
- New teachers will find it helpful to **observe** some schools before they participate in Basic Training.
- High attendance of children can be maintained if the child can be kept **interested** in the learning that takes place inside the class room.
- **Parents** are willing to send their children, especially girls, to school and they are willing to get involved in school affairs. 80% of the parents regularly attend parent-teacher meetings.

■ Some **testing** is necessary in the system to allow for comparison with students in the formal system, and to assess the basic competencies of the BRAC learners-- (ABC and NAT are such tests.) Moreover, the parents of the urban school learners have demanded formal testing and, as a result, this has been introduced in the urban schools.

■ More **reading materials** such as story books encourage and reinforce learning.

■ From research, it became clear that BEOC graduates who had completed 2 years of schools stood risked of forgetting how to read and write unless their new literacy skills could be supported. BRAC decided, therefore, to open **rural libraries** for female BEOC graduates as well as to extend their schooling by 12 months.

■ It has been found that, given the **gender-neutral curriculum**, girls have learned to get a new perspective to seeing their position in society. In additions, boys in the class also learn to respect this equal position of girls. Hence the curriculum does play an important role in improving the gender atmosphere.

■ It has also been found that **teachers**, who otherwise would have been housewives, have benefited a lot from working as teachers, both monetarily and socially. They are now more empowered in that they have some income and a meaningful role of their own, and also are more respected in the society.

■ An important lesson learnt during the past two years has been that the **extension** of another calendar year to the on-going schools affects the attendance and completion rates **negatively** mainly because parents were not prepared for such an extension at the beginning of the course.

■ Relatively higher **dropouts** were evident in the two year BEOC schools to which an extra year was added from 1993. Most parents were ready to marry off their daughters by the end of school in two years time. This trial has not yet been done in NFPE schools. However, based on this experience, parents of all the 1,000 NFPE schools (of 1994) being extended to four years have been informed of this extension early in the school term.

■ During 1994, it became obvious that most parents regarded the inclusion of **religious education** in the schools as essential. NFPE decided to add this subject in the third year of selected schools in 1994. From 1995, all children received a text book on religious education corresponding to the student's religious faith.

■ Most **slums** are non permanent, and those living there are under constant threat of eviction from land owners or by law. Incidents such as fires, toll collection by local muscle groups or unnotified evictions are not uncommon. BRAC schools operating in slums have not been exceptions to the rule. Schoolrooms have been used after school hours by local boys for unsocial gambling, drinking and have even been vandalized as a consequence of local brawling between rival political youth clubs. Under these circumstances, BRAC feels that shifting the schools to the

relative "safety" of rented premises on the slum fringes is necessary so that they can be operated undisturbed by such interference.

■ It has also been realized that during times of crisis, such as the **fundamentalist** problem during 1993, the concerted efforts of the programme - along with community support - was important in overcoming the difficulties. During this time, the religious leaders themselves collaborated with the BRAC staff in solving the problems.

■ In the case of **GO-NGO collaboration**, it has been found that BRAC complements the government in its efforts towards EFA and UPE.

20. NFPE Evaluation and BRAC's Responses

An evaluation of NFPE was done in October 1995 (by a team comprising Nelly Stromquist, Adrian Boeren and Abu Hamid Latif) to assess the performance and potential of the NFPE programme as a whole. Some concerns were raised which were consistent with NFPE's own findings and experience, and recommendations made in those areas for qualitative improvement of NFPE.

20.1 On Monitoring

The team appreciated NFPE's monitoring procedures as they enabled the programme to detect its shortcomings and problems quickly and to respond to them immediately. "The Programme has been very efficient in monitoring the quantitative indicators and should emphasize on the qualitative aspects of the school programme and address pedagogical needs of the teachers." The team also felt that there should be regular independent external monitoring.

20.2 On Gender

"Regarding Programme functioning per se, NFPE was found to be doing exceedingly well in terms of serving young girls and fostering social changes in young and adult women. The increasing ability by women to have access to education and to play occupational and professional roles with greater status in society are by no means to be minimized in the context of cultural and religious norms that impose values that are strongly asymmetrical along gender lines."

"The married women teachers of BRAC are also making social changes in their own right. They report being easily recognized in their community and having people talk to them eagerly. While they earn little, they report satisfaction along several lines: being involved in the process of teaching others, leaving the house and getting an independent income, being able to visit the town once a month for the refresher course but also having an opportunity then to do some shopping. Several of the teachers interviewed reported to have control over their income. They often share it with their husbands and family but feel free also to expend it for their own wishes. In a few cases, they are saving it for greater investments in the future."

Although the programme policy is to enrol at least 70% girls, in areas where a second or third cycle of school has already been completed and there are still adequate total number of interested learners, this policy may be modified to accommodate more boys. NFPE has already responded on this need based issue, in addition to the teams' comment on the flexibility of learner ratio in a classroom.

20.3 On Quality

"The curriculum programme of NFPE offers appealing elements in terms of the learning environment and pedagogical content. The classes have diverse activities, a good mix of passive and active work, and the children have access to textbooks that carry pleasant illustrations and stories with substantial messages about equity, productivity and respect for others."

Since the quality of education will be a prime focus of NFPE in the phase II, the programme has already picked up the issue in terms of monitoring, supervision the teaching learning process, classroom management and organization. Resource teachers will be facilitating the monthly teachers' refreshers with the school supervisors and will be responsible for a cluster of school nearby to their home. These teachers will work alongside the new teachers in co-teaching some of the subject areas taught in the schools, with lesson planning, advice on classroom management and organization, and monitoring. The appointment of the resource teacher focuses on teacher development as well as bringing forth qualitative improvement to the programme.

Responding to the team's suggestion on hiring local consultants to accelerate the development process, NFPE points out that, from time to time, the programme has been hiring local illustrators, story writers and audio-video producers (with particular reference to the Interactive Radio Project). Researchers have also been engaged during 1995 to improve cost, quality and the time efficiency of tasks.

In relation to student drop-out, a child may be replaced by other unserved children from the neighborhood during the first three months of schooling. The initial two months of school is the preparatory phase where a child is introduced to school norms and exposed to pre-writing, pre-reading activities and exercises as well as pre-numeracy skills. Any child remaining absent from school after the third month is categorized as a 'dropout' and NFPE then prepares a final list of students.

20.4 On Expansion

"The project has been well managed with regard to the implementation of the school expansion programme. BRAC has managed to achieve the numerical targets in terms of new schools that have been opened, recruitment of teachers and field staff, training, as well as the provision of materials and other inputs. It has done this in a very effective and way. The programme is doing exceedingly well in terms of serving young girls and fostering important social changes in young and adult women. The increasing ability by women to have access to education and to play occupational and

professional roles with greater status in society are by no means to be minimized in the context of cultural and religious norms that impose values that are strongly asymmetrical along gender lines.”

20.5 On Financial Issues

“The Budget and Accounts Department should improve the transparency in calculating unit cost and the presentation of expenditures. It is possible to create a more visible relationship between unit cost and expenditures.”

BRAC responds: “Calculating the total programme expenditure in terms of individual school unit cost may not be quite a practical and feasible task. The learners and supplies are procured, printed and stocked in advance. There are other programme costs too which incur either in advance or at different points in time, for example, the teacher training, the deployment of the school supervisors, and the survey. Hence all these costs incur in an aggregate.”

The Budget and Accounts section is in the process of developing a form which will be sent randomly to selective areas and team offices. These forms are aimed at collecting actual school unit costs of a particular area. This will help see differences in school unit cost and be more of a control mechanism for expenditure.

Earlier in this Report, the overall NFPE unit costs issue was addressed.

20.6 On Research

“To make it possible for better quantitative and qualitative investigations to take place within BRAC, greater steps should be taken to promote the training of young researchers both in-country and abroad...”

BRAC has always encouraged researchers to avail themselves of training, both nationally and internationally. Recently, BRAC has particularly encouraged researchers to undertake study in the different areas of education. Moreover, the new action research project (CLIP) aims at involving the managers, the school supervisors, the trainers and others in collecting, collating and analyzing information and, with the help of RED researchers, carry out a base line survey. The process of establishing the Resource Centre in the process aims to build up the research capacity of NFPE personnel.

21. Implications for Phase II (April 1996-March 1999)

The NFPE programme has successfully achieved its target and completed phase I in March 1996 with a total of 34,175 schools including 19,000 schools operated from the NFPE expansion (phase I) fund, 15,000 schools operated from RDP funds and 175 schools from funds of the BRAC's Health and Population Division. The programme commenced its second phase from April 1996 this

will be completed on March 1999. During this phase II, only those schools which complete will reopen, thereby keeping the number of schools operating constantly at 34,000 each year.

The 15,000 schools funded by RDP in the earlier phase merged with the 19,000 schools operated under the NFPE expansion fund, taking the total number of schools to be operated under phase II to 34,000 from April 1996. The other 175 schools (for adolescent girls only) funded by the HPP programme in phase I will continue to be funded by the same programme in phase II.

Phase I has been primarily a period of expansion for NFPE and, in phase II, the programme intends to concentrate on qualitative improvement. Taking into account the experiences and the lessons learnt over the past 10 years, and given the scale of issues yet to be addressed, NFPE envisages a wider role for itself during April 1996-March 1999. Reflecting on its goal and purpose the programme plans to continue operating non formal schools to mainstream the children who have been left out of the system. In its second phase NFPE also intends to concentrate on improving the quality of education delivered through the BRAC schools by revising and improving its curriculum, teaching learning materials and teacher development.

BRAC also believes that strengthening its own capacity is crucial to bring about qualitative changes to the programme. From its past experience BRAC has learnt that continuing education is very important to sustain the newly found literacy skills of all learners, both children and adults. Hence, in the next phase, the NFPE programme plans to explore new ways to deliver continuing education as well to expand the existing components. In Phase II, NFPE proposes to operate 4,000 school libraries, 300 Union libraries and form 2,000 reading circles.

Finally, BRAC feels that more coordinated and collective effort of all providers of both formal and non-formal education is critical to bring about substantive changes and improvement in the area of basic education. Over the next 3 years, NFPE also aims to forge effective alliances with the government and other non government organizations to share the lessons learned for an improved level of understanding and coordination.