



BRAC STRATEGY

2002-2007

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1. Introduction

Over the past thirty years, since its founding in 1972 as a relief and rehabilitation organization, BRAC has grown and evolved into a large and effective non-governmental development organization. BRAC has all along been pursuing a holistic approach to poverty reduction, which is reflected in the breadth of its programmes

BRAC activities are carried out through different programmes, which are, development, education and health. Development program consists Rural and Urban development program which focuses on the socio-economic development of underprivileged women through access to credit, capacity development, savings mobilization, institution building and awareness creation.

BRAC's Education Programme provides a unique education for the children of poorer households, while the Health, Nutrition and Population Programme is designed to address the health and nutritional status of women and children at community level. There are some other activities which support the core programmes. The organization also operates some income earning for projects profit which in turn is used to cross subsidize BRAC programmes.

BRAC's development programme embodies the core interventions for poverty alleviation. It has covered 60,000 of Bangladesh's 84,000 villages and involves around 3.8 million women of poor households. Along with income and employment generation, it attempts to promote social development with focus on the poor women (and men), consciousness and awareness building, gender equity and human resource development through training and other ways. Nearly 70% of BRAC school attendees (1.1 million pupils) are girls who come from the poorer section of the community for whom the public sector schools are least accessible. The effectiveness of the BRAC schools in terms of cost, drop out, attendance and achievement is very high. BRAC's Health, Nutrition and Population Programme is primarily focused on its target participants, that is, members of the village organizations (VO). But some of the component are focused towards the community as a whole and operated in collaboration and partnership with the government.

2. Background

BRAC has moved forward through different stages and devised strategies at different times. In 1994, BRAC developed a strategic plan for five years taking into consideration the prevailing internal and external environment. In 1997, BRAC reviewed that plan and developed a ten-year strategic plan (1998-2007). Within three years from 1998, considerable changes were observed to have taken place in the country in particular and in the global arena in general. These changes made it imperative for BRAC to revisit the existing strategies and rethink about the future strategies for the organisation.

2.1 Strategic plan: The framework

The new strategic plan for the period 2002-2008 has been developed through a participatory approach involving different levels of staff of BRAC. Workshops, meetings, and reviews were organized in phases to develop and finalize this plan. The following methods were followed for developing the strategic plan.

- a. A two-day intensive workshop was held for primary organizational assessment. BRAC's senior management including the Executive Director and other staff members from different levels attended the workshop.
- b. In the planning process, a critical analysis of the internal and external environment was made in terms of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of and threats (SWOT) to the organization and a set of strategic issues were identified. The issues were categorized into four major areas. These are:
 - Organizational
 - Programmatic
 - Education and
 - Health
- c. Individual working groups worked further to validate the issues and identified the strategic directions.
- d. The strategic directions and major activities were then presented in a large group and finalized.

3. Situation analysis

3.1 Environmental analysis

- **Internal environment : Strengths and weaknesses**

In course of deliberations, the participants critically analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of BRAC. This included BRAC's multidimensional programmes which are designed to address the needs of the poor and have now reached all parts of the country. The deliberations also related to such issues as pro-women and appropriate policy for development of children, skilled staff, strong institutional base and financial management systems. These were identified as the vital strengths of BRAC as a pro-poor development organization. Credibility, capacity to expand and create results as a learning organization on the one hand, and its visionary leadership and financial self-sustainability on the other are considered as the strengths of BRAC.

Despite these significant strengths, some weaknesses became apparent from the organizational assessment of BRAC. Leadership development as required for the mid level managers to cope with the changing needs of the programmes does not appear to be adequate. Inadequate representation of women at different levels of the management,

weak orientation process for the new entrants, and lack of adequate knowledge of the field staff about the "big picture" of BRAC are also cited as major shortfalls. Participation of the hard-core poor in a limited scale and inadequate inter-programme coordination were also cited as serious weaknesses.

- **External environment : Opportunities and challenges**

BRAC realizes that over the past years it has successfully implemented action-based projects, which have promoted the acceptability of its services to its partners and the community at large. In recent times, the reasonable level of economic growth, increased literacy rate, particularly among the girls in the primary schools, positive attitude of the government and private sectors to work together with the NGOs have created a wider opportunity to serve the poor better. Improvement of IT sector, demand for quality education at every level, development of the service sector and organized effort of the poor to assert their socio-political and economic rights were also identified as the major changes in the external environment.

Opportunities for development activities have increased, yet some challenges still exist. Recurrent natural calamities, presence of arsenic and other pollutants in the ground and surface water, increased *mastanism*, rise of fundamentalism, unplanned urban settlement, politicization of NGOs and uneven competition between the rich and the poor resulting from the free market economy are some of the impediments challenging the efforts of BRAC in achieving its objectives.

3.2 Stakeholders analysis

At the initial stage BRAC served the war affected people as a relief organization. The organization soon began to evolve into a development organization. Since 1977, BRAC struggled with the definition of 'poorest' who were eligible to be a member of a BRAC village organization. In the beginning the definition was more general in nature - the landless, fishermen and women. This definition was reformulated as follows:

...those households who sell their manual labour to others for survival irrespective of occupation, provided they do not have political patron among the non-target people and provided they cannot still exercise status considerations.

The definition went into reformulation on several occasions and ultimately BRAC's target groups have been identified as:

...households that own less than 0.50 decimals of lands, own no implement of production, and in which the principal worker has had to sell at least 100 days of labour over the past year in order to subsist.

BRAC's strategy has increasingly given emphasis recognizing the fact that women face problems by reason of their gender as well as by reason of poverty. BRAC has been quite successful in recruiting members from the poor and near-poor households; but it has not

been equally successful in recruiting as many from the 'very poor' households. BRAC now intends to make a change in its strategy to specifically address the needs of the poorest households as well and bring them in the mainstream of development.

BRAC Development Programme (BDP) seeks to 'push down' by specific targeting on the ultra poor who have suffered relative neglect in most interventions so far. It seeks to 'push out' by addressing dimensions of poverty that many conventional, especially micro-finance, interventions do not address. Specifically, 'pushing out' involves a shift away from the conventional concerns of service delivery and focuses on human capital. It also takes into account the structures and processes that disempower the poor, especially women.

BRAC will identify the ultra poor using the following criteria:

- Female headed household with single income earner;
- Widow living on her own;
- Woman with disabled husband;
- Dependent upon seasonal wage employment, domestic work or begging;
- Owning less than 10 decimals of land;
- Poor housing quality;
- Scanty clothings and very low quality household goods;
- Vulnerable to natural disasters due to flooding, cyclones or river erosion;
- Suffering from chronic food insecurity.
- Having no or very little productive assets.

Another criterion will be used for identification of ultra poor in the context of introduction of the *Special Investment Programme* which is currently being formulated will be

- Households with at least one member capable of getting involved in an income generating activity.

BRAC Education Programme (BEP) is designed to reduce mass illiteracy and contribute to basic education of a significant portion of the country's children, especially those of the poorest families, and to ensure enhanced participation of girls in education.

Most of the BRAC schools are now located in villages where BRAC has organized the landless people into village organizations. The schools have proved to be equally effective in the non-BRAC areas.

BRAC has developed two primary school models directed to two specified age groups:

- The first one is Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE), a four-year programme for children aged 8-10 who have never been enrolled in any school, or who have dropped out during class I.

- The second one is Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC), a three-year programme for children aged 11-16, who have dropped out or never attended school.

The growths of BRAC's Health Programme has been a direct result of the lessons learnt from its decade long OTEP experience. The experience provided adequate inputs and learning's for implementing, replicating, managing and gender sensitizing a programme. Based on the needs of the programme participants and the mission of BRAC, the health programme has been pursuing these strategies:

- a. The VO members are the prime target population. Non-VO members, including the ultra poor are also served as part of the national programmes.
- b. Developing expertise in a number of health issues and services and disseminating the same to the government and other organizations to build their capacities.
- c. Setting up operational research the results of which have generated useful ideas, knowledge and components of national programmes such as ARI, Nutrition, and TB and serving as an active partner.

3.3 Achievement analysis

BRAC's programmes cover the main aspects of lives of the people with whom it works. BRAC activities are carried out through different programmes including Rural Development Programme (currently named 'BRAC Development Programme, Education Programme, and Health and Population Programme, and Micro finance programme), of BRAC are tools of alleviating poverty and empowering the poor. Through micro finance programme BRAC provides financial assistance for the poor who do not have the access to banks or formal financial institute. BDP provides credit to VO members all over Bangladesh through 431 area offices. As of February 2001, 102,527 village organizations or VO's have been formed with a membership of 3,854,647. A VO consists of 45 to 50 members.

Micro Enterprise Lending and Assistance (MELA) programme provides loans to small enterprises having sound potential for growth. MELA is designed to generate income and create new employment through enterprise development in the rural and semi-urban areas. The number of current borrowers in MELA is 8,793. Amount of cumulative loan and outstanding is Tk 312 million and of Tk 312 million respectively. The average loan size is Tk 56,217.

BRAC encourages its VO members to engage themselves in six different types of employment and income generating activities, i.e. fisheries, sericulture, poultry, livestock, agriculture, and social forestry. BRAC provides credit as well as backup services for these activities. Through poultry programme 36,783 new jobs were created in the year 2000. On average a Poultry Worker can earn Tk 637 and a Chick Rearer can earn Tk 590 per month. BRAC's poultry farms at Ahladipur (Rajbari), and Sherpur (Bogra) produced 4.03 million chicks in 2000.

A total of 28,538 new jobs have been created in the fisheries programme in 2000. In the same year 6,614 acre water body was brought under carp/prawn-culture. On average, a farmer earned Tk. 1,038 from carp poly-culture and Tk 2,507 from fish nursery per month.

BRAC's social forestry programme involves a variety of activities to increase awareness about the need of planting trees in rural areas. The programme aims to reduce the adverse effects of deforestation and augment income generation that alleviate poverty. Through the urban social forestry programme 1,012 new nurseries were established and a total 28 million seedlings were produced in 2000. On average one could earn Tk. 2,620 per month from horticulture nursery. BRAC has simultaneously been carrying on its agriculture extension programme to increase the nutritional and income status of poorer farm households by increasing the agriculture production of VO members through technology transfer. In 2000 BRAC's agriculture extension programme created 18,170 new jobs and brought 9,289 acres under vegetables cultivation. On average one could earn Tk. 1,272 per month from vegetable cultivation. BRAC's sericulture programme has linked the rural producers with urban market and provided an opportunity for the transfer of money from the urban sector to the rural poor.

BRAC also initiated the Income Generation of Vulnerable Group Development Programme in 1985. Under this programme the VGD (Vulnerable Group Development) cardholders, destitute rural women, receive a monthly free ration of 30 kg wheat for 18 months. BRAC provides various training to these women in different marketable skills, mainly in poultry, goat and cattle rearing, and vegetable cultivation. After receiving the skills training these VGD women become eligible for credit.

BRAC's social development programme is an initiative to foster sustainable development through awareness and institution building and to empower the VO members, who are mostly women and powerless. This programme was expanded in 1998 to incorporate Gram Shobha, Palli Shamaj and Popular Theatre as tools for empowerment. The VO's, Palli Shamaj, Popular Theatre, Legal Education, and Legal aid help the programme to achieve some of the specific outcomes, both through awareness and institution building. Human Rights and Legal Aid Services programme is also designed to provide legal education and legal support to VO members. After launching the programme it was found that 72% of the VO members could understand the basic law, family law and citizens rights. It is gathered that 96% of marriages are already registered officially and 82% of all divorces follow proper legal procedures.

BRAC introduced the Non-Formal Primary Education Programme (NFPE) in 1985 as an innovative device of meeting the educational needs of the children of poorer households. Emphasis on enrolment of girls created equal opportunities for girls. BRAC's education programme is now operating 31,082 schools with 1,000,632 learners, operated by 30,566 teachers and supported by 3,017 staff. The programme has already taken some new initiatives, such as Pre-primary, Formal Laboratory schools, Community schools and Cultural Integration of Ethnic Minority Groups. Adolescent Peer Organized Network

(APON) is one of the new initiatives of education programme, which is a pilot project to improve the quality of life of female adolescent who attend Reading Centers.

By the end of June 2000, the Programme was operating 6,342 NFPE schools in grade IV enrolling 212,116 learners (60% girls) and 7,183 schools in grade V with an enrollment of 236,543 (65% girls) students. One of the important components of the programme is its Education Development Unit, which is constantly involved in increasing the quality of the teachers and staff. This unit focuses exclusively on establishing pedagogical links in the field through certain cluster. These are: Pedagogy Management, Research and Monitoring, Adolescent Peer Organized Network (APON) and New Initiatives. All staff of Education Development Unit are involved in each of these cluster.

BRAC has been trying to replicate its NFPE model to wider area through its Education Support Programme (ESP). The ESP has so far extended its support to 383 NGOs for 8,595 NFPE schools with 87,300 are being provided with technical support. 326 NGO's for 5,355 schools with technical as well as financial support so that they may successful replicate BRAC's NFPE model.

BRAC's Education Programme also introduced Continuing Education Programme (CEP) in 1995. The CEP is a device to mainstreaming the post-literacy activities of education programme by promoting the reading habit of both the rural and urban citizens through an organized network and a new infrastructure. These objectives are achieved through two components is the Union Library or Gonokendra Pathagar and the reading centres for girls and woman. These libraries aim to make reading materials available to people at the village level in Bangladesh. Every library has a children's corner to focus on the increasing of child readers. So far over 460 libraries have been opened and run by the local community with active support from BRAC. The other component is the Reading Centers which are set up two months before a Basic Education for Older Children School completes its cycle. The centres are set up to develop the reading habits among adolescent girls and women in the community. Through Reading Centres women are encourage to take part in indoor games and develop computer and tailoring skills.

BRAC's Health Programme pursues a broad approach to address the health needs of the poor. Community health workers trained by BRAC raise awareness on health issues and impart simple lessons in curative and preventive health that can greatly reduce mortality and morbidity. Essential Health Care (EHC) covers a population of 19 million and provides a combination of basic health interventions described as an "essential package of health services." EHC is linked to BRAC's rural credit and enterprise development programme. The essential package of health service is delivered mainly through 32,152 village health volunteers called Shastho Shebikas (SS). The package includes provision of basic curative care, providing latrines and tube wells for safe water and sanitation, pregnancy related care, health and nutrition education, HIV/AIDS awareness and community mobilisation for immunisation. The current activities under the EHC are directed to increase the rate of use of contraceptive methods to 55%, increase the number of slab latrine user families to 60%, ensure safe water for all purposes, increase and maintain vaccination of 85% of the target children and pregnant women, and increase and

maintain vitamin A capsule distribution to 85% of target children (1-6 years) of age. A comprehensive package of services, including complete reproductive health care, is delivered at community based outreach centres (90) called Shushasthos. Shushasthos have been set up to provide technical back-up to BRAC's health programmes and to offer secondary level clinical services establishing and maintaining referral linkages with tertiary care facilities for further care.

In 1993, BRAC launched a community based pilot nutrition programme. A study undertaken in a later year showed that after demonstration supplementation for 2 years, the adolescent girls had better body weights than girls of the same age entering supplementation. The positive effect of the nutritional interventions was evident by increased weight gain of pregnant women and higher birth weight of their infants. For children under 2, after 3 months of supplementation, 65% of them had weight gain which averaged around 744 grams. This was a quite successful experimentation done by BRAC.

During 1993-94, the government of Bangladesh and other development partners (UNICEF, World Bank) felt the need to intensify the focus of nutrition with community-based comprehensive services. Considering its pioneering experience and expertise gained through the above pilot, BRAC was requested to take part as a member of the core team to conceptualize and design the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project. This model was to be effective in public-private partnership and inter-sectoral co-ordination for nutrition.

Birth weight of 8186 children (81% of all children) born of the families of the target population in 10 upazilas and total population in 27 upazilas, were taken and orientation was given to their mothers on care of the newborn each month. In 27 upazilas, where services Growth Monitoring and Promotion are provided among 185904 (87%) of 214651 children under 2 years of age of the total community every month. In 10 upazilas, 97% mothers of 214 children born with the birth rate less than 2.5 kg are being provided with Growth Monitoring and Promotion sessions each month. In addition all the pregnant women are also provided antenatal care and nutrition education in 27 upazilas.

BRAC has been providing ESP directly through three services delivery points i.e., static center or Shushastho, out-reach center or BRAC satellite clinic and depot holder matched with the Rural Service Delivery partnership (RSDP) service delivery strategy. Through these service delivery points, BRAC's Health and Family Planning Facilitation Project distributed 84,679 cycles of pill, 85,841 pieces of condom and 10,226 injectables were given in August 2000. During this period, 1,979 customers were provided with IUD services, 42,574 pregnant women received pregnancy-related care in the second visit, 50,328 children were vaccinated against measles, 215,728 diarrhea episodes were treated by ORS and 119,535 children were treated for ARI. During the first National Immunization Day (NID) in November 1999, 380,483 children received polio doses. In the following month, 389,494 children received polio doses and 299,526 children received vitamin A capsules. On average 38,601 patients received curative care from direct service delivery points in a month. In addition, 1,635 patients were under treatment

for tuberculosis. In the outcome, sputum conversion rate was 92% and cure rate was 91% for sputum smear positive cases.

3.4 Organizational Learning

BRAC has been characterized as a learning organisation, and its extraordinary success in rural development has been attributed to the basic features of its operational mode (Korten, 1980). BRAC began with relief and rehabilitation operation in 1972 after the end of the War of Liberation. It soon realised that relief is not permanent solution for long-term solutions for the problems of a poor, country like Bangladesh. BRAC thus looked for permanent solution of the problems of the poor and started a community development project aiming at the development of the community as a whole. The outcome was unacceptable for a pro-poor organisation like BRAC. So a suitable approach was explored. This resulted in another transformation in its approach to rural advancement. BRAC decided to leave aside the affluent section of village society and work directly with the poor. The target group approach was thus adopted.

BRAC learned through experience that poverty is a complex syndrome and its eradication requires a holistic approach. There have to be other programmes along with employment and income generating activities. For example, there should be interventions like health and education. The approach to poverty alleviation has thus to be holistic.

BRAC realized that women in Bangladesh played a much more vital role in production. It is the women who manage poverty at the household level. So no attempts to socio-economic development can be successful without involving women in the development process. Another experience is that the poor women in the rural area are forced to manage an entire household with extremely limited means, So they turn out to be better resource managers than their male counterparts.

Over the years BRAC has gained insights into some other realities about development. BRAC realises that development is a complex process requiring a strong dedication to learning, and being more responsive to the needs of the poor, children, adolescents and women. To become vibrant and dynamic, an organisation has to be 'learning organisation' and listen to the poor. BRAC places a strong emphasis on capacity development of its programme participants and their organizations at all levels. Capacity building of the staff and the programme partners has to be a continuous process. The management should be decentralized, and financial sustainability of the organization should not be overlooked.

BRAC realizes that vast and comprehensive interventions are needed to get over the massive problems of poverty and underdevelopment. Small may be beautiful, but large interventions with quality are essential. A development has to be dynamic and it should respond to the changing needs of the society. BRAC further realizes that to bring about changes in the socio-economic lives of the poor, the society should be taken along.

BRAC feels the need to advocacy. The basic purpose of advocacy is to ensure social justice and empower the poor, thus addressing their problems. BRAC should have a persistent policy and programme of advocacy for the poor. The policy should cover values such as equity, justice and mutual respects, focus on empowerment of the poor and making relevant party accountable to them.

4. Organizational societal vision

A just, educated, healthy and democratic Bangladesh free from hunger, poverty, and environmental degradation as well as all forms of exploitation based on sex, religion and ethnic background.

5. Mission statement

In the light of the changing environment, BRAC has redefined the mission statement as follows:

BRAC works with people many of whom still live in poverty, illiteracy, disease and other handicaps; specially the hard core poor, women and children; With multifaceted development interventions, BRAC strives to bring about changes in the quality of life of these people. BRAC firmly believes and is actively involved in promoting human rights and dignity through poor people's, specially women's social, economic, political and human capacity building. BRAC is committed to making its programmes socially, financially, and environmentally sustainable using new methods and improved technologies. As a part of its support to the programme participants and its financial sustainability, BRAC is also involved in various income generating enterprises.

Although the emphasis of BRAC's work is at the individual and community levels, the sustenance of work of the organization depends on a pro-poor, pro-women and pro children policy environment and on supportive infrastructure. To achieve that, BRAC will continue its efforts to bring about changes in the macro level policy environment.

The fulfillment of BRAC's mission requires the services of competent professionals committed to the goals and values of the organization. BRAC, thus believes in promotion and development of programmes of excellence that will produce leaders and managers with competence and commitment.

Given that development is a complex process requiring a strong dedication to learning, sharing of knowledge, and being responsive to the needs of the poor, children, adolescents, and women. BRAC places a strong emphasis on overall development of its programme participants, and their organizations at all levels. BRAC thus engages itself in the process of capacity development of its staff and programme participants.

In order to achieve its goals, wherever necessary, BRAC welcomes partnerships with the community, like-minded organizations, governmental institutions, the private sector, and development partners both at home and abroad.

6. Goals

Over the last thirty years BRAC has attained a significant growth through its sustained and multi-dimensional development interventions. Economic development, improved health care and education are interlinking interventions in the effort to break the cycle of poverty. It had three major goals:

- The alleviation of poverty
- Empowerment of the poor
- Empowerment of the women

BRAC is exceptional from many NGOs who generally work at the local level contributing to the micro level economy. BRAC acknowledges the reality that poverty is not only local, but also a national and global issue. BRAC has thus involved itself in the national and international arena. A fourth goal has, therefore, emerged:

- Contributing to national and international pro-poor advocacy

7. Organizational shared values

BRAC is a value driven organization. It strongly believes that values are the foundation on which an organization is based and describes what the organization stands for. Values establish moral and ethical priorities, which serve to guide all organizational activities. The organizational principles, standards and qualities are also reflected through its practicing values. BRAC has identified a number of organizational values and it places equal importance on all the values. These are - Concern for the people, Human dignity, People's capacity, Gender relations, Fairness, Honesty and integrity, Discipline, Creativity and innovation, Participation, Accountability, Cost consciousness, Team work, Openness, Sharing information, Transparency, Professionalism, High quality products and services, and Concern for environment.

8. BRAC's strategic issues and directions

In order to materialize its mission and goals, BRAC critically examines the performance of its internal strengths and external opportunities. A number of strategic issues and directions that have been identified are considered as the means of attaining goals of poverty alleviation, empowerment of the poor and women, contributing to the national economy.

BRAC's strategic issues are:

8.1 Organizational issues

8.1.1 Financial sustainability

8.1.2 Financing health care

- 8.1.3 Capacity development
- 8.1.4 Governance and leadership development
- 8.1.5 Transparency and accountability
- 8.1.6 BRAC diversification efforts
- 8.1.7 Improvement of management efficiency
- 8.1.8 Gender equity
- 8.1.9 Inter-departmental coordination and cooperation
- 8.1.10 Knowledge management
- 8.1.11 Internal culture and values
- 8.1.12 External relations
 - 8.1.12.1 Working with the government
 - 8.1.12.2 Involvement in community school
 - 8.1.12.3 Adult education
- 8.1.13 BRAC's target people
 - 8.1.13.1 Hard core poor
 - 8.1.13.2 Urban poor
- 8.1.14 Capacity enhancement of the community and its involvement in governance and development
- 8.1.15 Reaching inaccessible areas
- 8.1.16 Concern for environment
- 8.1.17 Quality service
- 8.1.18 Pro-people IT
- 8.1.19 Social and natural disaster management

8.2 Programmatic issues

8.2.1 Social sector

- 8.2.1.1 Social development

8.2.2 Economic Sector

- 8.2.2.1 Income and employment generation of the poor
- 8.2.2.2 Income generating enterprises

- 8.2.2.3 Linking the poor to the national and international market
- 8.2.2.4 Local crafts and designers
- 8.2.2.5 Agriculture productivity
- 8.2.2.6 Investment financing

8.2.2 Education Sector

- 8.2.3.1 Quality education
 - 8.2.3.2 Programme for NFPE graduates
 - 8.2.3.3 Programme for adolescents
 - 8.2.3.4 Scaling up pre-primary education
 - 8.2.3.5 BRAC's involvement in secondary and higher education
 - 8.2.3.6 Education programme for indigenous people
 - 8.2.3.7 Scaling up continuing education
 - 8.2.3.8 Early childhood development

8.2.4 Health sector

- 8.2.4.1 Mother and child care
- 8.2.4.2 Women's and children health right
- 8.2.4.3 Health and nutrition right
- 8.2.4.4 Adolescent health
- 8.2.4.5 Nutrition and food fortification
- 8.2.4.6 Safe water and sanitation
- 8.2.4.7 Health security
- 8.2.4.8 Preventive and curative health services
- 8.2.4.9 Emerging and reemerging health issues

8.1 Organizational issues

Four issues have been highlighted. These are:

8.1.1 Financial sustainability

Strategic directions:

- Making the organization financially sustainable
- Promoting community managed programmes
- Promoting diversified and quality services and products

BRAC's development programmes are largely supported by international donors which is declining over the years. To make the organization financially sustainable, BRAC will explore new possibilities of mobilizing fund from internal and external sources for investment in order to generate revenues for financing its activities. It will emphasize to strengthen the fund controlling mechanisms for utilizing resources more effectively. BRAC is committed to programmes that are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable. In this regard, capacity development of the programme participants and the community involvement will be emphasized.

BRAC has been constantly trying to reduce its dependency on donors' funding and has been undertaking new initiatives to make the organization financially sustainable.

8.1.2 Financing health care

Strategic directions:

- Promoting diversified and quality health services and products
- Generating revenue and promoting community financing in urban and rural areas with the focus on cost efficiency.

Due to low mobilisation of fund from within the country and reduced donors' support in the social sector like health, sustainability has currently become a vital concern. Sustainability of the health programme requires larger revenue generation and community financing in urban and rural areas. The focus has to be on cost efficiency. Diversified health services and products with quality are to be promoted with provision of safety net programme for the hard core poor.

8.1.3 Capacity development

Strategic directions:

- Revisiting existing Human Resource Development processes
- Retaining professional staff and diversifying their skills

There is lack of well-trained and motivated workforce, as required for attaining the organizational goal. Efforts will be made, during the coming phase to develop human resources through various mechanisms. These may include making effective staff development plan, developing objective participatory performance appraisal system, improving staff selection process and creating an enabling environment for proper utilization of professional staff. The process also includes enhancing the recognition system of staff by different means. Informal processes and mechanisms need to be strengthened for ensuring feed back and staff development.

8.1.4 Governance and leadership development

Strategic directions:

- Promoting women leadership in the organization
- Strengthening the process and mechanism of second line leadership at all levels of the organization
- Re-defining the role of the General Body and Governing Body of BRAC

The prevailing system of governance of BRAC will be reviewed keeping in view the changes occurring in the environment in which BRAC works incorporation of "new blood" (competent, relevant, interested professionals including international personality). It requires to building an interface between the Governing Body and Management. BRAC ombudsperson needs to be positioned for giving neutral judgment on the policies and strategies adopted by BRAC.

The leadership is one of the main concerns of BRAC for maintaining its credibility and sustenance. In this context, BRAC emphasizes to promote women leadership across the organization. The Senior Managers will continue to ensure common understanding by sharing BRAC vision, mission goals and values for promoting the leadership processes, specially the women leadership both formally and informally. The leadership qualities of BRAC Local Representative (BLR) including their knowledge base about the organizational policy and strategies will be strengthened. The leadership profile will be developed for different levels of managers in BRAC and promoted through different interventions. For example, there will be a group of best staff from field, who are not considered as leader but can enhance their leadership skills by participating in different meetings, workshops, seminars and symposia. A coordination forum of second line leadership will be initiated to accelerate the process of leadership development.

8.1.5 Transparency and accountability

Strategic directions:

- Opening up BRAC programmes for scrutiny by civil society and other stakeholders
- Promoting democratic values and environment within and outside the organization

BRAC is concerned to institutionalize the information flow process within and outside the organization. Attempts are being made to make the organization more open. There are more fora now for staff interactions at all level through which sharing of organizational mission, strategies, procedures and other important decisions of BRAC are being shared. Job descriptions of staff at all levels are also being reviewed for making them accountable to the organization. The financial and other relevant documents will be made accessible to all stakeholders.

The organization strives to promote democratic practices by ensuring openness and valuing new ideas and innovations at all levels. Mutual respect, listening habits, gender

sensitiveness and team building culture will be maintained and strengthened for creating a democratic environment within the organization.

8.1.6 BRAC diversification efforts

Strategic directions:

- Maintaining BRAC wide policy for addressing national issues
- Promoting BRAC wide thinking
- Strengthening relationship with government, other NGOs and private sector

BRAC programmes, have attained a good horizontal coverage in Bangladesh. BRAC will now work for expanding its activities vertically and diversifying its programmes to address the national issues. Bangladesh is facing many complex and critical problems which cannot be solved by the NGOs alone. BRAC needs allies to achieve the goals of national reconstruction and prosperity. The organization will follow cooperation strategy to ensure more representation in the existing apex bodies and networks. BRAC will strengthen its current public relation endeavours and organize exposure of its mission and programmes for national and overseas audience groups.

BRAC has been promoting its identity both among the staff and outsiders by disseminating its vision, mission, goal and objectives. This process needs to be continued. At the same time it will try to develop BRAC wide career plan for the staff members. BRAC has been using a number of nomenclatures that at times create confusion among the staff and other people. The nomenclature of BRAC will be rationalized focusing on BRAC for ensuring a common understanding among the staff and outsiders.

8.1.7 Improving management efficiency

Strategic directions:

- Ensuring organizational dynamics
- Strengthening security of staff

BRAC remains a learning organization and is committed to undertake demand responsive programmes to address the changing needs of the staff, its programme participants and the country in general. BRAC will further strive towards a decentralized management structure-ensuring placement of appropriate staff at the required levels. Lateral entry into service will be encouraged for the needed places with proper criteria. There is a need to have transparency in matters of staff evaluation, promotion and elevation to higher positions. The organizational values and culture will continue to be practiced with a supportive management system.

8.1.8 Gender equity

Strategic direction:

- Updating BRAC gender policy and ensuring its proper implementation across the organization

From its inception, BRAC has committed itself to address the needs of the women both at the organizational and field operation level. BRAC formulated a gender policy and guidelines in 1995 and a number of steps are in place to implement these policies. In many aspects, positive achievements have been noted.

However, the gender policy needs to be disseminated for furthering the efforts of promoting gender equity in the organization by treating gender as a cross cutting organizational issue. BRAC will carefully formulate gender sensitive programmes by making provision of ensuring women's participation in programme planning, implementation and evaluation. BRAC will take special measures to implement the existing gender policy and adopt some affirmative actions for promoting women in management positions, and other organisational areas. For that it will provide focused attention on capacity building as well. BRAC will provide the gender sensitive employment opportunity and working environment for all its staff at different levels.

8.1.9 Inter-departmental coordination and cooperation

Strategic directions:

- Intensifying the exchange of information and experience among the programmes
- Institutionalizing BRAC wide job rotation

BRAC local representatives organize experience sharing discussions among different programmes of BRAC at the field level. This process needs to be strengthened by organizing formal programme presentation forum at the field level and by exchanging reports, minutes and circulars. BRAC wide convention will be organized based on certain issues so that it ensures greater interactions among the programmes. At the Head Office level, programme wise focal points will be identified for smooth coordination. The existing ED's forum and the Director's forum should be continued as important means of coordination. Documenting the important decisions and circulating the proceedings of these meetings among the managers and staff will be very useful.

BRAC wide job rotation will foster effective sharing of programme experience among the staff. The job rotation process has thus to be institutionalized.

8.1.10 Knowledge management

Strategic direction:

- Improving BRAC knowledge bank

Over the years, BRAC has accumulated vast experiences by working with different stakeholders inside and outside the country. These knowledge and experiences accumulated through its own work need to be documented and disseminated through various means and ways including publications. BRAC will organize exposure visits, discussion forum, and programme presentation forum for wider dissemination of the knowledge accumulated through its own work. At the same time BRAC will make endeavours to widen its knowledge base by acquiring the experiences of other organizations. The communication department needs to be strengthened and the Internet system needs to be improved for the purpose. In order to develop the knowledge base of the field level staff, regional library could be established and a mechanism be developed to use those libraries. A consultant group will be developed in BRAC with diverse expertise to disseminate BRAC knowledge more professionally.

8.1.11 Internal culture and values

Strategic direction:

- Ensuring practice of BRAC values and culture

BRAC has all along put emphasis on maintaining and upholding certain values in adherence to its mission. These values and culture are being disseminated among the members of its staff through training and role modeling by the managers. It requires to be ensured that the values are practiced by all from the top to the lowest level. Developing a follow up mechanism for ensuring proper implementation of the values at different levels is also required. Regular discussion and training need to be continued to maintain an enabling environment within the organisation for fostering the BRAC values and culture.

8.1.12 External relations

Strategic directions:

- Clarifying the role of BRAC vis-à-vis Government, NGOs, civil society and apex bodies
- Improving partnership/relationship with stakeholders including donors

BRAC has always acted to complement and supplement government programmes wherever possible. The organization has been working with the government in the field of health, family planning, education, IGVD, and employment creation. However, for sustainability and greater impact of the present national development interventions, there is need for partnership programmes with the government. This will require the

continually orienting the government about BRAC's mission, strategies, and interventions. For the partnership, there is a need for alliance building, networking and strengthening the organizational capacity.

BRAC will strive for becoming more transparent to all its stakeholders. In the changed situation, BRAC needs to redefine and articulate its role with relation to national politics and political parties.

8.1.12.1 Working with the government

Strategic directions:

- Strengthen co-ordination with the government
- Articulate specific principles
- Increase participation with the technical resources of the government.

BRAC has collaborated with the government on many projects and has had some impact on mainstreaming the system. To further increase the impact, it is necessary to articulate some specific principles and policies for working with the government.

For this, both sides must initiate steps. BRAC has significant experience in operating a primary school system. It can help the government in delineating its implementation processes that will benefit and improve the educational system. Currently, BRAC has engaged some government personnel for technical assistance in the field of vocational training. This is a good example of how BRAC can utilize existing government resources. This participation with the technical resources of the government should be expanded.

8.1.12.2 Involvement in community school

Strategic directions:

- Increase the number of community schools based on certain principles
- Improve and ensure quality of education in the community schools
- Identify financial support from different sectors (viz., parents, government, community and donor)
- Strengthen coordination with the government for the community school

In the early 1990s, the government handed over some of its non-functioning community schools to BRAC. BRAC is operating these schools successfully. The standard of these schools has improved, but additional resources from donors/government are needed to ensure and further enhance this quality. Additional resource is also necessary in order to respond to the government's call for take over additional community schools. There should be a liaison with the government, guardians, community members, and donors to keep them updated on the progress of the schools and to convince them of the need for

funding. This ongoing process will also require a closer relationship with the government.

8.1.12.3 Adult education

Strategic directions:

- Improve and develop a life related curriculum for adults
- Strengthen cooperation with the government, including in the area of financial support

In the past, the government has funded adult education initiatives. BRAC has been cooperating with the government in implementing the programme. BRAC needs to work to further strengthen its relationship with the government to ensure future funding and to collaborate on future initiatives.

8.1.13 BRAC target people

Since BRAC's inception, it has developed specific criteria for selecting the target groups. After thirty years of independence, different government and non-government organizations have introduced scores of development interventions. Because of these, a remarkable change in the socio economic situation of the society has taken place. In the changed situation, BRAC feels that there is a need to redefine the concept of its target groups.

Strategic direction:

- Redefine the existing definition of BRAC target group.

The financial institutions in Bangladesh provide financial assistance to the rich, and affluent class of the population. The poor and marginal people have very limited access to these institutions. BRAC realizes that the poor have rights to access to the institutional credit. Along with micro-finance, BRAC should carry on other development interventions for the hardcore poor, small farmers and marginal people of the society.

8.1.13.1 Addressing the needs of hard core poor

BRAC Development Programme has been working with the poor throughout the country covering more than 3.7 million households. Experience shows that the poor are not a homogeneous group and that the existing programmes does not adequately and effectively address the development needs of the hard core poor. In carefully considering the situation, BRAC has now planned to initiate a new programme directed to meet specific needs of the hard core poor.

Strategic directions:

- Designing an appropriate programme for the hard core poor.
- Strengthening long term planning for mobilizing fund.
- Strengthening special monitoring and evaluation system.

As a development organization, BRAC has formulated a specific definition for its target group which is a little bit different from the BRAC's normal groups. A scientific process of identifying hard core poor will be explored with the help of Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC. For covering the hard core and developing the better implicative mechanism, a separate programme design will be needed which will involve separate VO, and separate management. This new programme can be a package with such components as housing, adult education, health and family planning and other locality specific needs.

The programme should be designed considering the reach of the programme and how much employment it will create. The hard core people generally suffer from food scarcity during the lean season. To cope with this situation BRAC can introduce a wage employment programme with support from international organizations like WFP. The HNPP provide some free services to these people. BDP has already introduced several steps to address the needs of the hard core poor by making provisions of fair wage through its Micro Enterprise Lending Assistance (MELA) and IGVGD.

Special activities can be introduced for the disadvantage groups to cover the loss of their assets, food, stuff, sudden death of the income earning members of a household and sickness resulting from the natural calamities. BRAC will develop the skills of the hard core through adult education and training, and support them with the supply of quality inputs and creating marketing network for their self-employment.

Sound advocacy policy and mechanism are to be developed to strengthen the relation with the government and civil society for better implementation of the programme and for reaching more hard-core poor in the country. The programme will have a long-term plan for mobilizing funds.

For better implementation of the programme, a special monitoring team is needed. Regular follow-up and supervision of the input supply and the programme activities are a must.

8.1.13.2 Urban poor

BRAC started its initial activities to ensure the livelihood of the rural poor. BRAC now realizes that a large number of poor people are living in the urban areas who are a part of the distressed class. A lot of programmes can be taken up for improving their socio economic situation, such as, ensuring food, education, housing, health care facilities and

sanitation. Keeping these in mind, BRAC launched its Urban Development Programme for the urban poor in 1997.

Strategic directions:

- Designing an appropriate programme for the urban poor.
- Strengthening long term planning for mobilizing fund.

In designing an appropriate programme, BRAC has to revisit and assess the specific needs of the urban poor. BRAC has to develop effective diversified income generating activities for these people. For ensuring better security of the slum dwellers, specially women, BRAC has also to create facilities for their residential accommodation. To increase their employment and income earning opportunities, various skills and human development training will have to be provided. The growing environmental pollution is a big health hazard for the people in urban areas. In addressing these problems, BRAC has to formulate strategies for increasing the awareness of the urban dwellers. In addition, BRAC needs to establish a network among different agencies to protect the people from the environmental hazards. For all these activities a long term planning for fund mobilization will be taken.

8.1.14 Capacity enhancement of the community and its involvement in governance and development

BRAC realizes out of its experience that participation of the community as a whole is essential for successful implementation of the development interventions. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to develop the knowledge, skills and efficiency of the community people. It is also essential to adopt measures for ensuring the sustainability of the programmes.

Strategic directions:

- Promoting mechanism for involving community at different levels.
- Incorporating of capacity building of local government institutions.

Union Parishad is the lowest administrative unit of the local government system elected by the people. It is also the centre of many development activities at the grass roots level. BRAC is working with the poor who constitute majority in the rural community. It is important to involve the community people in development activities, particularly in pro poor programmes. For their capacity development, it is essential to assess the needs of the community and undertake programmes accordingly. Strengthening professionalism and linking the para-professionals with the community is another way of providing support to the community and reaching various services at the door steps of the people. BRAC can initiate workshops, meetings, and training to develop the

managerial capacity of the local government functionaries and make them pro-poor minded. Also BRAC can help involve the community people in the process of local level planning for development of the community as a whole.

8.1.15 Reaching inaccessible areas

Strategic directions:

- Maintain a flexible policy for reaching inaccessible areas
- Strengthen and increase community involvement
- Develop a mechanism to support small NGOs and government.

BRAC has set up a network of schools that has spread all over the country. Still, there are areas that are difficult to reach and not easily accessible. These include areas that remain under water for many months in a year and where the communication system is weak. Education of the children of these regions can not be ignored. By following a flexible policy in respect of total number of students and the number of girls required for a class, BRAC can establish schools in these areas. A programme like BRAC's Educational Support Programme that works with local NGOs can also be developed for the inaccessible areas. Communities in these areas may be entrusted with the taking some additional responsibilities such as supervising the teachers and repairing of school buildings. These types of measures can help extending BRAC programmes in the hard-to-reach areas.

8.1.16 Concern for environment

Strategic directions:

- Promoting greater environmental awareness
- Ensuring environment friendly programme and projects
- Ensuring remedial measures for preventing environmental degradation

Environmental concern is a burning issue. Creating awareness among the masses is essential for maintaining a sound environment. To create such awareness BRAC initiated different kinds of environment friendly programmes and projects, such as social forestry, roadside plantation and garbage collection in urban areas by organising fora. Through these fora BRAC reaches to its stakeholder groups and thus contributes to overall environmental development to a large extent. To reduce the adverse effects of pollution and deforestation further measures should be taken on a priority basis.

8.1.17 Quality services

From the very beginning, BRAC believes that quality services are necessary for improving the standard of lives of the poor. With 30 years of experience, BRAC realizes that it is appropriate time now to revisit the quality of the services and the products

provided through its various programmes, namely BRAC Development Programme, Health, Nutrition and Population Programme and BRAC Education Programme.

Strategic directions:

- Revisit the existing delivery mechanism of products and services.
- Revisit the existing products of micro credit for moderate and hardcore poor.
- Revisit the existing savings products and its mobilization process.
- Creating more employment through MELA programme

BRAC provides different kinds of services for the betterment of the poor both in the rural and urban areas. It is necessary to ensure quality of the services and the products that are being delivered to the people. It is necessary to ensure that the skill development process for the related staff are continued in order to produce and deliver quality products and services. Promoting appropriate technology and establishing a quality control mechanism are essential to ensure quality services and products. It is also necessary to offer quality services at a reasonable price.

BRAC offers diversified development activities and services having market demand. Micro finance is one of the core activities which occupies a vital place in the total BRAC development interventions. Micro finance comprise a number of components like micro credit for the landless and marginal farmers, and small entrepreneurs, different savings products, insurance facilities, etc. All these components should be undertaken in order to meet the development needs of the rural and urban poor.

A BRAC programme has to be borrower-friendly. For that, BRAC has to assess the needs and choice of different client groups. It has to develop product variety suitable for specific clientele groups like hardcore and moderate poor and the marginal groups. For better implementation of the programmes adequate training should be provided to the concern staff and quality staff should be develop for the special products. BRAC will also revisit the implementation process of savings mobilization. To create greater employment opportunities and ensure resource flow from the urban to rural areas, micro and small enterprises should be encouraged to grow. Credit provided through BRAC's micro finance programmes can play a vital role in this regard.

8.1.18 Pro-people IT

Strategic directions:

- Bridging the digital divide between rich and poor, rural and urban
- Diversifying the uses of IT
- Linking IT with production

IT is generally assumed that people living in the northern part of Bangladesh are enjoying the fruits of some IT technologies, compared to those of the southern part. This digital divide should be reduced for greater benefits of the nation. BRAC operates a good number of Gonokendra libraries, which target the larger community. If computer and Internet connections are provided in the libraries, people will have greater access to information and technology. Moreover to develop the economic sector of the country IT should be linked with production. For example, producers get necessary information about the prices in different markets, they will be able to market their products either jointly or individually.

8.1.19 Social and natural disaster

Strategic directions:

- Promoting awareness and preventing culture for social disaster
- Designing appropriate action programme process of disaster
- Ensuring disaster preparedness
- Assisting in rehabilitating the river erosion affected people
- Provisioning for emergency services and rehabilitation supports

BRAC recognizes that it cannot reduce the vulnerability of an expand opportunity for the poor especially women, without redressing unbalanced power relationships and oppressive social practices. BRAC's institution building activities create a base for social action for rural poor women to exercise their rights under the law. Already BRAC has taken action locally on issues such as acid throwing, polygamy, marriage registration, early marriage, divorce, violence and physical punishment, inheritance etc, social disaster to ensure a sound and healthy society. BRAC also works for reducing the effects of natural disasters by ensuring early preparedness for disaster. It also provides relief and first aid on emergency basis and rehabilitates the distressed poor.

8.2 Programmatic Issues

8.2.1 Social sector

8.2.1.1 Social development

BRAC has been working with the poor with an integrated development approach, comprising micro finance, social development, employment and income generation, health and education. Social development is one of the very important components among the BRAC activities. Through this programme, BRAC attempts to raise the voice of the poor for establishing their human and legal rights in the society.

Strategic directions:

- Revisiting and strengthening the existing social development policy and programme
- Introducing a mass campaign mechanism against women and children's violence throughout the country.

BRAC has been working for a long time with the poor people through its social development programme. BRAC now realizes that it has to revisit the existing social development activities to know the effectiveness of the programme. The organization should take necessary measures to develop the capacity of the staff to ensure efficient implementation of the programme. This can be done through the provision of training and workshops at home and abroad. For achieving wider impact, a separate advocacy and coordination unit can be instituted to strengthen coordination between the government and different non-government agencies. It is also essential to revisit the existing activities in order to minimize the gender gap among the staff and programme participants. For protecting human and legal rights and providing supports to the abused women and children, BRAC should promote and strengthen its legal aid programme. A separate investigation cell can be established for timely collection of information regarding these matters. The cell can provide professional counseling to the people in the society as required. BRAC should also initiate a programme to address the issue of women and children trafficking.

8.2.2 Economic sector

8.2.2.1 Income and employment generation for the poor

Strategic directions:

- Ensuring access to market
- Extending employment opportunities
- Strengthening capacity of the stake holders
- Introducing appropriate technology
- Enhancing access to financial institutions

BRAC's strategy to push down in order to reach the poorest among the rural population and equip them with skills will enable them to participate in the mainstream economic activities. Through food assistance, training and provision of credit, BRAC has created opportunity for sustainable livelihoods of a large number of the ultra poor. Lack of access to the financial institutions including banks is one of the major constraints for economic development of the rural poor as it deprives them from the opportunity to borrow, save and invest in productive activities. Accesses to credit at a reasonable price can enable the poor to be involved in various income generating activities, that will allow them to become economically self-reliant. An important part of the credit operation is

mobilization of savings, which can provide an opportunity to the poor to save a lump sum and earn profit. BRAC further believes that it is essential to create adequate employment opportunities to make the poor economically empowered. In careful consideration of the scenario, BRAC initiated different skill training, input support as well as monitoring and supervision which go a long way to strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders. Additionally BRAC puts emphasis on the appropriate technology which plays a vital role in increasing the capacity of the stakeholders.

8.2.2.2 Income generating enterprises

The overall development of a community depends on development of a variety of income generating sectors in that area. The income generating sector involves different avocations such as agriculture, poultry and livestock, fisheries, sericulture, and different types of trading. By developing these sectors, BRAC can widen the scope of income and employment activities that can ensure sustainable livelihoods of the poor.

Strategic directions:

- Strengthening the policy of income generating sector development
- Undertaking more environment friendly programmes.

In BDP, different sub-sector programmes are being implemented to generate income and employment opportunities for the rural and urban poor. In order to create larger employment opportunities, BDP encourages development of more small enterprises taking into consideration the market demand. BRAC has now to develop a policy for marketing of the products of thousands of small enterprises in the national and international markets. The organization also needs to consider the environmental issues while planning a new project. To achieve these, capacity of the BRAC staff involved in programme implementation has to be developed through appropriate training and workshop at home and abroad.

8.2.2.3 Linking the poor to the national and international market

Strategic directions:

- Ensuring access to market
- Promoting competitive price
- Encouraging new products

With adoption of modern technology, productivity of the rural people can be developed substantially in different sectors. The producers do not, however, get the right price of their products due to lack of marketing opportunity. To overcome this situation BRAC will support the large number of rural producers for their access to market. BRAC must

give them the ideas of minimizing the cost of production and marketing their products. Marketing will obviously need quality of the products. BRAC should also give them ideas of new products and new technology and training as the situation will demand.

8.2.2.4 Local crafts and designers

Strategic directions:

- Promoting and upgrading indigenous crafts and designers
- Ensuring access to market
- Upgrading professional skills

Bangladesh is rich in different types of traditional handicrafts and designs. But existence of many of the crafts, craftsmen and designers are now at risk as necessary attention is not being paid to them. Their survival depends on creating sufficient opportunities to retain and develop their skill. BRAC should ensure their access to local and international market. Besides this, BRAC will support them upgrading their knowledge in respect of product designing. This will encourage them to produce new crafts and product varieties.

8.2.2.5 Agriculture productivity

Strategic directions:

- Promoting agricultural diversification
- Assisting the poor, marginal and small producers/farmers in increasing agriculture productivity.
- Ensuring access to quality inputs.

To increase agricultural productivity it is essential, among other things, to promote agricultural diversification. BRAC has already taken a programme in agricultural extension to increase the level of income and nutritional status of households, by augmenting agricultural production through technology transfer. BRAC assists the poor, marginal and small producers/farmers to grow vegetables by offering them a package programme that training, technical service and credit. One of the main constraints faced by the vegetable growers is the poor quality seeds. Therefore BRAC initiated measures to provide quality inputs, closer supervision and supplying them with highbrid seeds.

8.2.2.6 Investment financing

Strategic directions:

- Promoting local entrepreneurship both in urban and rural area
- Establishing financial institutions by BRAC
- Strengthening competitive investment climate
- Encouraging the use of rural resources for development

Micro Enterprise Lending and Assistance (MELA) is working to provide larger amount of loans to the village organization (VO) members as well as the outsiders having potential to develop their own small business. MELA is directed towards those who have progressed from absolute poverty to relative prosperity but found difficulties of access to bigger loans from banks. MELA attempts to stimulate the growth of small enterprise in the semi-urban and rural areas. Therefore MELA's linkage with the BRAC Bank will acceleration the pace BRAC's goal of alleviating poverty from the country. The process will also lead to competitive investment and use of rural resources for its development.

8.2.3 Education sector

8.2.3.1 *Quality education*

Strategic directions:

- Introduce a mechanism for continuous improvement of curriculum, materials and training.
- Strengthen educational research and monitoring capacity.
- Strengthen quality staff.
- Upgrade teachers' skills to make them independent.
- Develop sharing mechanism with other agencies.

While BRAC has succeeded in providing education to over 2 million students, there is always room for improvement. In the past, the focus has been on expansion and efficient delivery. Now more focus is placed on improving quality within the classroom. It is times now to have mechanisms in place that will work for continuous improvement as per needs. There is also need to improve evaluation system to see if activities are going on the way as per plan. Teachers need to be developed so that they get increasingly involved in school management. This will encourage growing participation of the community and reduce dependence on BRAC field staff for supervision. Maintaining liaison with other educational agencies will enable BRAC to have more access to quality materials.

8.2.3.2 *Programme for NFPE graduates*

Strategic direction:

- Providing opportunities to BRAC school graduates, particularly in BRAC wide programmes.

The government is providing scholarships to girls to study in secondary schools, but these are insufficient to cover all BRAC school graduates. BRAC will supplement the government's efforts to ensure that no student of BRAC school is deprived of secondary education due to lack of their financial ability. BRAC will try to provide part-time employment, so that, those student will be able to pay their school fees out of their earning.

8.2.3.3 Programme for adolescents

Strategic directions:

- Examine the present adolescent programme and make it more life skill oriented with a special focus on adolescent girls
- Make gender friendly programme by offering special packages for boys
- Involve the community and parents to prevent drop-out
- Scale up the programme by involving other agencies
- Involve the adolescent graduates with relevant income generating programmes
- Develop a vocational training related policy based on global and local market demand

In Bangladesh adolescents have not been considered a special population group with their specific needs. But adolescence is an important transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, and so interventions are necessary. BRAC's BEOC (Basic Education for Older Children) schools include some curriculum on life-skill issues. There is however, scope for improvement, in the curriculum, particularly in dealing with reproductive health and other important social and environmental issues. This curriculum must be updated keeping view the need of the girls. At the same time, the aspect of boys must be included because they are also lacking awareness on issues like HIV/AIDS. Currently, BRAC's APON programme reaches close to 60,000 girls. To reach a larger population and to share and exchange knowledge in the related field, BRAC will work with other agencies. The programme should not only aim to raising awareness, but also to build leadership skills and economic empowerment. Consequently, BRAC will create income-generating opportunities for adolescents that keeping in view both local and global demand. Different programmes in BRAC, viz., health, education, and social development are directed to the adolescents. Together, a package may be developed. Provision of special gratuities can be created to encourage the adolescents to prevent early marriage.

8.2.3.4 Scaling up pre-primary education

Strategic directions:

- Encourage the government and the private sector to operate pre-primary schools
- Operate pre-primary schools as complementary of government and private schools, based on defined principles
- Operate pre-primary schools with partial financial support of people/community
- Encourage donor agencies to financially support pre-primary schools
- Update the curriculum

The pre-primary education sector is not well developed in Bangladesh. The majority of children join primary schools without receiving adequate preparation. Consequently, many are unable to adjust to the school environment, particularly with the rules and

regulations instituted by different schools. As a result many of them drop out. To prevent the dropout, BRAC has been operating pre-primary schools that promote a friendly and caring environment with games. With the experience gained, BRAC will advocate for increased government participation in this area.

BRAC's model has shown that community members are willing to pay for pre-primary schooling. These fees as support from the government, and/or donor support will allow the pre-primary programme to expand.

8.2.3.5 BRAC's involvement in secondary and higher education

Strategic directions:

- Develop programme framework in the area of secondary education
- Improve the community's participation in secondary education
- Strengthen the quality of education
- Upgrade the capacity development including infrastructure through joint basis (model school)
- Develop a network to share the problems with the govt. and other agencies

BRAC has so long concentrated on extension and quality of primary education. Many BRAC school graduates are now in secondary schools. However there exists a number of areas in secondary education which deserve immediate attention. Quality as well as the coverage (37%) is poor in the secondary schools. As of now, no other agency (NGO and civil society) is involved in supplementing the government's efforts in secondary education. By involving itself in this field, BRAC has an opportunity to apply its experience in and contribution to a new and critically important area. BRAC will work to mobilize the community's interest in secondary education and stimulate cooperation of and network with the government and other agencies.

8.2.3.6 Education programme for indigenous people

Strategic directions:

- Preserve and promote ethnic diversity.
- Develop mechanism for designing literature and materials for indigenous people.
- Develop mechanism for cultural exchange.
- Follow partnership mechanism.

The minority groups particularly the scattered indigenous people in Bangladesh are increasingly being integrated with the national population. However their religion, language, and culture will be at risk if no attention is given. If they were provided with opportunities to practice amongst themselves and share their traditions with others, they would be less marginalized. Within the schools, literature and materials about the indigenous population will provide indigenous students with a sense of pride and will

also enlighten the Bengali children. Songs and dances from different regions will be an enjoyable way for the students to participate in cultural exchange. BRAC will develop partnerships with community leaders and assist them in designing activities to empower the children in their locality.

8.2.3.7 Scaling up continuing education

Strategic directions:

- Scale up community involvement
- Link up with other agencies to generate fund for vocational training
- Expand the programme nationwide
- Take advantage of modern technology and link up with other organisations globally
- Promote leadership
- Promote social values and responsibilities through Continuing Education.

BRAC operates a good number of libraries. This is quite insignificant compared with the country's need. Reading centers designed for the BEOC graduates are low-cost while the Gonokendros target the larger community and become self-financing within two years of operation. Community involvement is an important feature of these libraries. Increasing community involvement will make the libraries more dynamic and enhance the sense of local ownership. If additional computers and Internet connections are provided in the libraries, rural people will have greater access to information and technology. Through a variety of courses, the libraries will promote social values in different areas like afforestation and develop human resources including skills.

8.2.3.8 Early childhood development (ECD)

Strategic directions:

- Examine the existing ECD activities and undertake cooperative activities at public and individual /private level.
- Encourage government and work on the basis of defined principles.
- Promote advocacy for operating ECD schools in respect of policy formulation, national plan of action and allocation in the annual budget of the government.
- Generate funds from the community, private organizations, government, and donor agencies

The overall development of a country depends on efficient utilization of its human resources. Children are the future human resources and it is necessary that they receive adequate nurturing and support for development. The foundation for a child's development takes root during their first five years. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for early childhood development. Recognizing this need, BRAC can make its entry into the area of early childhood development.

8.2.4 Health sector

8.2.4.1 Mother and child care

Strategic directions:

- *Mobilizing pregnant women for ante, post natal cares and family planning.*
- *Launching advocacy on proper childcare through-growth promotion and immunization.*
- *Counseling for care of newborn with birth weight promotion.*

In Bangladesh females occupy a lower status than males in many respects including access to health services, nutrition and education. Women are deprived in matter of interfamilial food distribution also. They do not get sufficient antenatal care services and food during pregnancy. Safe delivery and postnatal care are also not ensured at village level. As a result, the maternal death is as high as 600 per 100,000 live births in Bangladesh. BRAC is actively involved in providing services of ante natal care, post natal care, family planning and other health services. BRAC also works on awareness building of health related issues for women and children. But the services need to be enhanced through different forum and collaboration with the government.

8.2.4.2 Women's and children's health right

Strategic Directions:

- Raising mass awareness on reproductive health, and against sexual abuse of women and children in the community
- Ensuring necessary services related to practicing reproductive rights
- Strengthening linkage with BRAC social development programme

Reproductive health (RH) has long been viewed in the developed countries with great importance for its far-reaching implications. In our country, reproductive health is a new health terminology with which majority of our people are not familiar. Many people are unable to attain optimal reproductive health because of incomplete knowledge about health and sexuality, sexual diseases; unavailability or poor quality of RH services, gender bias and lack of empowerment of women over their sexual and reproductive lives. Besides, sexual abuse of children and women has become a common phenomenon in our society. They are abused within and outside their respective home. To remove this kind of insecurity, children and women need to learn about how to break the silence of the society by its proper handling. Cases like acid burn, sexual exploitation, etc, can be linked with the social development programme of BRAC. Additionally, BRAC can

ensure necessary services (contraceptive, pregnancy related care) related to practicing reproductive rights.

8.2.4.3 Health and nutrition rights

Strategic directions:

- Raising mass awareness on nutrition rights of women and children in the community
- Developing a mechanism to integrate the issue of women's empowerment in national development

National development cannot be achieved without empowering the women who make up half of the country population. Women in our country are repressed socially, economically, religiously, and culturally due to lack of knowledge and practices of human rights. Therefore, mass campaign on awareness on nutrition rights of women and children in the community needs to be enhanced. Materials on nutritional rights should be made available to women and children for their use. Holding small group discussions in the villages, in meetings, workshops and community centers may play significant role in introducing this right and removing psychological and social barriers.

8.2.4.4 Adolescents health

Strategic directions:

- Strengthening and expanding the existing health, nutrition, and reproductive education programme in the community
- Making provision of separate adolescent friendly programmes

Adolescents in Bangladesh comprise 23% of the total population. The strategy and approach of current health system in Bangladesh do not provide appropriate health care services to adolescents. Among the ongoing programmes, adolescents are only being addressed through the education forum focusing on girls. Strengthening and expansion of existing health, nutrition and reproductive education programmes are necessary in the community (focusing married adolescents and boys also). Moreover, provision of separate adolescent friendly programme (curative package at Shushashto, combating micro nutrient deficiency, preventing unsafe abortion and early child bearing and education about AIDS) should be in place.

8.2.4.5 Nutrition and food fortification

Strategic directions:

- Building awareness on fortified foods among community and policy makers, and strengthening awareness on consumer rights

- Doing advocacy and building capacity of entrepreneurs and promotion of fortified food industries
- Ensuring affordable fortified high energy food, specially for the ultra poor

Fifty percent of all child death in Bangladesh is associated with malnutrition, and of those who live 48% of the under five children are underweight (low weight for age), and 45% are stunted. About 30 to 40 percent of infants are born with birth weight less than 2.5 kg and 50 percent of women suffer from chronic energy deficit. For the above situation macro and micro nutrient deficiencies play a vital role. The economic consequences of Bangladesh's malnutrition problems are profound; resulting in lost productivity, and reduced intellectual and learning capacity. In addition to causing individual tragedies like maternal and child mortality, malnutrition exacts heavy costs from the health care system through excess morbidity. It is necessary to strengthen the knowledge on the need and availability of micronutrient in various foods. In our country due to flood and soil turn over plants, do not contain enough micronutrient. BRAC can build awareness of fortified foods in the community, and among policy makers and entrepreneurs including the women involved in small enterprises. Awareness on consumer rights can be strengthened by BRAC. Fortified food industries can be built or promoted by BRAC. Affordable fortified high-energy food, especially for the ultra poor, can be part of the scheme.

8.2.4.6 Safe water and sanitation

Strategic directions:

- Strengthening awareness campaign on safe water and sanitation
- Addressing the demands based on emerging needs
- Developing mechanism for financing the WatSan Programme
- Scaling up arsenic mitigation programme

Large majority of the population are not only out of the system of using sustainable sanitation but they are also at risk due to arsenic contamination of ground water. The existing water and sanitation programme needs to be revisited with in-depth analysis of the situation and problems are to be identified. Demand driven production should be enhanced. Awareness campaign (mass media etc.) based on the gaps can be strengthened. A flexible credit facility for water and sanitation schemes can be introduced. The arsenic mitigation project is to be scaled up and divisional arsenic testing plants can be installed on a pilot basis.

8.2.4.7 Health security

Strategic direction:

- Developing policy on behavioral and nutritional health of the programme participants as well as BRAC staff

As a measure of the health security and job satisfaction, there can be provision of social insurance scheme for all BRAC staff. A community health insurance programme for the programme participants, ultra poor, and non-group members can be introduced.

8.2.4.8 Preventive and curative health services

Strategic directions:

- Ensuring total health care services through referral system at local, regional and national level
- Expanding existing Essential Health Care services

The community demands that BRAC should address both curative and preventive health care. So essential health care (antenatal, natal, postnatal, curative, preventive) services can be expanded. Complete health care services (regional upgraded clinics, pharmaceutical) can be introduced by BRAC on a pilot basis.

8.2.4.9 Emerging and re-emerging health issues (Arsenic, STD/AIDS, ARI, Dengue, TB, Pollution, Non communicable disease, rehabilitative health care, immunization)

Strategic directions:

- Strengthening networking among the working groups on emerging and re-emerging health issues at national and international level
- Developing mechanism for mass campaign throughout the country on emerging and re-emerging health issues

Globally there is a transition in environment and disease pattern. The health issues has changed, reemerging health issues should be explored. In addition, existing programmes (external and internal) should be revisited and the gaps be addressed. The existing rehabilitative health and immunization programme, for example STD/RTI, HIV/AIDS, TB, ARI and Arsenic Mitigation Programme should be expanded. To make these programmes effectively functioning, alliance with related organization and networking among working groups should be strengthened