

**BRAC EDUCATION PROGRAMME
(BEP)**

NFPE PHASE III (1999-2004)

REVIEW 1999-2000

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APON	Adolescent Peer Organised Network
BEOC	Basic Education for Older Children
BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BT	Batch Trainer
CLE	Concentrated Language Encounter
CPE	Compulsory Primary Education
EDU	Educational Development Unit
DG	Director General
DDG	Deputy Director General
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
HQ	Head Quarters
MDU	Material Development Unit
MT	Master Trainer
NGO	Non Government Organization
PO	Programme Organizer
QM	Quality Manager
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RED	Research and Evaluation Division
RM	Regional Manager
RT	Resource Teacher
TARC	Training and Resource Centre
TI	Team In Charge

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Executive Summary

The BRAC Education Programme (BEP) Phase III commenced in 1999 and has now been operational for one year. The main purpose of this review is to assess the progress of the programme within its first year.

The Review Team is satisfied that the major components of the Phase III programme namely the provision of Grades IV and V in the NFPE schools, enhanced organisational capacity to enable and implement on-going quality improvements across a range of pedagogy related activities, and the accompanying decentralisation process are all on target. The funding situation that delayed the opening of schools in the first quarter has resulted in a shortfall in the overall numbers of schools now operating. It is a situation that warrants on-going concern for all the partners. However, the Team believes that to date the slippage is largely confined to the number of schools and has not compromised the potential of the programme as a whole to achieve its stated aims by 2004.

In carrying out the review the Team read pertinent reports and documents, visited the field to see a variety of Phase III activities in operation and to meet parents and children, consulted with BEP staff in Dhaka at those at the Regional and Team levels and with GOB staff at the Directorate of Compulsory Primary Education.

The Team was specifically asked to review the progress that has been made in the extension of the NFPE schools programme to include Grades IV and V; to consider the impacts of the slight changes proposed in the balance of boys and girls within the NFPE schools, to comment on the life skills training for adolescents programme; to assess the progress that has been made in establishing the EDU and to review progress with regard to the operational changes taking place through a decentralisation of quality management to the field level.

A summary of the findings in relation to each of these items is presented here.

1. Provision of the full primary cycle rather than just three grades

The introduction of Grade IV and V in NFPE schools is well underway. The teacher training and support, materials and classes has progressed smoothly and teachers and trainers are confident about their ability to deliver an effective curriculum to Grade IV and V children.

The further provision of Teacher Guides and supplementary materials in some subjects will diminish the gap between the government textbook and previous BRAC materials.

On going work on the curriculum is taking place within the context of the EDU as part of its general quality remit.

In the view of the Review Team this initiative is now fully operational and showing signs that it will be successfully implemented.

EDU is also looking at ways of evaluating learner achievement. The issue of convergence between the Terminal Competencies specified by the GOB and curriculum materials are being addressed as a priority concern for many QMs and EDU staff. The research studies being undertaken related to Learner Achievement have already produced some interesting data and will continue to do so as more are completed.

Ten BRAC formal primary schools and 42 community schools have opened and though small in terms of overall numbers, they are providing a window of opportunity for replicating and disseminating good practice into the formal education sector. They constitute a valuable resource for experimentation in curriculum development and for demonstrating good practice in the delivery and management of primary education.

The community schools have drawn the BEP into close and regular contact with the government sector at national and local levels. BRAC's education ethos, its capacity to mobilise and sustain community support, train staff, and maintain standards is gaining recognition and status as a result. BEP staff are also gaining greater insight into the needs and concerns of government.

2. A slight change in the balance of girls and boys enrolled and an increased emphasis on life skills training for adolescents

The increase in the % of boys is due to demographic realities and takes place in schools in the second or third phase where the cohort of girls has already been schooled. The monitoring unit within the EDU is at the initial stage of identifying criteria that can be used to monitor classroom behaviour and identify tendencies to favour boys over girls. This is a welcome initiative which will raise awareness of behaviours and responses that discriminate against girls. The Review Team found no evidence that the increase in the proportion of boys as proposed in this Phase, is making an appreciable impact within the classroom. This is not to say that boys do not receive more teacher attention than girls but rather that the slight change in the ratio of boys and girls is not in itself leading to discernable behaviour changes on the part of the teachers and support staff.

A number of initiatives in Phase III specifically target adolescent girls. The aim is to undertake a programme that can contribute to reducing the incidents of early marriage, sexual exploitation and generalised discrimination experienced by young women. One of the most interesting of these initiatives is the Adolescent Peer

Organised Network (APON). This programme which is just now ready to be implemented will take place in Reading Centres. This response to the needs of young women is innovative in terms of both its content and delivery. It seeks to inform girls about issues relating to health, sexuality and their legal rights. The programme will be delivered by peer trainers recruited directly from among the target group. The Review Team believe that this is a timely and most worthwhile venture.

As part of the APON initiative a programme of skill development training is also ready to get underway. The purpose of this training is to enhance the income generating potential of girls and women. Closer co-operation between the BEP and RDP has also increased the opportunities for this target group to avail of training through that programme.

The preprimary units operated by BEP graduates over the past two years constitute a largely unexplored additional quality component of BEP. The Review Team believe that the experience of running these schools may be found to be of increased significance as BEP moves closer to the formal sector where children enter the system at a younger age than is the case in the NFPE schools.

3. Creation of an in-house unit for developing pedagogical and evaluative capacity

Shared decision-making with field based staff has characterised much of the EDU activity in the past year. Effort has gone into negotiating a relationship between the staff at the EDU and the Quality Managers responsible for ensuring the quality of the service provided at the grassroots level. This relationship is based on trust in the process of devolved decision-making and shared responsibility and trust in each other. The staff involved accept that this is not an easy way to operate but that it is vital if the BEP is to acquire the capacity needed to offer a quality service. The way in which the EDU staff and the QMs are working has already begun to be seen as a model of how other levels of staff at the field level could work.

The Review Team believes that by establishing a framework that provided for direct and meaningful engagement with the field, the most difficult steps in the process of decentralisation are now accomplished. Solid ground work has been undertaken to establish a way of working that necessitates upwards and downwards flows of not only information, but also accountability and responsibility. The EDU has steered, nurtured and managed the process very ably. A certain momentum has been generated so that although many issues remain to be resolved the intensity of the effort needed for the past year should ease a little at this point.

The level of commitment and enthusiasm within EDU for the work they are engaged in bodes well for the future. The Review Team is impressed by the capacity of the majority of staff to reflect on the work they are doing and to recognise the contribution their effort makes within the context of the whole operation.

The Review Team notes that there has as yet been little opportunity for the EDU to develop the expert pedagogical capacity needed to underpin its work in developing quality education at field level. The experience and knowledge of practice needs to be informed by access to theoretical perspectives. As the workload lessens this should be seen as a priority need.

EDU staff raised a number of concerns related to recognition for performance. The proposed staff performance appraisal scheme for the whole of BRAC is likely to address the concerns raised.

EDU staff and QMs have identified as the next critical task the development of quality in the BEP materials whilst also ensuring that the terminal competencies given by GOB are incorporated into the learning materials.

The devolution of much training and training initiatives to the field level Master Trainers, often at the level of Batch Trainer, and supported by QMs and the EDU has brought a new dimension into training modules. These now offer the opportunities to respond directly to local needs, while at the same time allowing the EDU to monitor performance and to evaluate the quality added factors in both curriculum and training materials.

The research capacity within EDU is being strengthened. The culture is shifting towards a perception of the EDU as a research community, supported and informed by the RED but with the EDU determining its own research agenda. It is anticipated that many more small case studies and action research initiatives will take place in the EDU during Phase III, particularly as the development of pedagogical capacity gets properly under way. The Review Team believes that the progress made to date is a good basis for building research capacity in the EDU. However the Team would emphasise that further training is vital to build on the existing potential. The response of the research group in EDU to their current technical assistance input indicates a need for substantial training and exposure to new research methodologies.

4. Significant operational changes through a decentralisation of quality management to field level

The decentralisation process, which began towards the end of Phase II, has been long and involved a high degree of negotiated dialogue and a certain amount of compromise on the part of all concerned. It is now well established and integrated into the operation of BEP.

The gap between the field and the centre is already being bridged by the appointment and training of QMs and their interaction with the EDU. Shared decision-making is now an integral part of the relationship between the EDU and the QMs. The QMs are clear about their role within BEP as the key people responsible for identifying the need for innovation and change at the classroom level. The initial confusion between

the roles of the RM and QM no longer exists. In the field there is evidence of a close working relationship between both in which issues of quality are a dominant theme. The decentralisation process has begun to impact on a number of fronts at the field level. The QMs are largely driving this part of the process.

The Review Team believes that between now and 2004 when Phase III will be completed, the QMs will require further pedagogical training and more experience undertaking classroom based field studies in order to fulfill this critical role effectively and to capitalise on the efforts made to date.

Terms of Reference for the BRAC Education Programme Phase III Review 2000

The Terms of Reference for this Review are as follows:

The purpose of the Phase III project is to provide an improved and complete primary curriculum that enables learners to retain the range of skills developed. The Phase III programme presents 4 significant differences from Phase II:

Provision of the full primary cycle rather than just three grades;

A slight change in the balance of girls and boys enrolled and an increased emphasis on life skills training for adolescents;

Creation of an in-house unit for developing pedagogical and evaluative capacity;

Significant operational changes through a decentralisation of quality management to field level.

The forthcoming [review] will consider the progress so far of these four new developments and report on their current status and any significant issues which can be inferred at this stage. The word 'review' is in brackets as this is probably more precisely a monitoring mission so a bit more of a checking and reporting exercise rather than a more reflective review of achievement etc.

The pedagogical issue, at this stage, would not be as pressing as how they are shaping up organisationally and systems-wise for the EDU and the related Quality Management.

Methodology

Reports and data pertaining to the performance of BEP Phase III since its inception in 1999 were reviewed. The two member Review Team made field trips to Sylhet, Srimangal, Rajshahi, Natore and Dhambrai where they observed various aspects of the programme and discussed issues with field staff involved in the implementation of the programme. They also visited the Dhaka Office and consulted with staff responsible for the overall management and development of the programme. One Team member also met with the Deputy Director of Compulsory Primary Education.

Two days were spent collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data from 32 Quality Managers and 26 EDU staff. Focus group workshops were conducted with the QMs and the EDU to ascertain their perception of their respective roles in relation to the development of quality in the BEP. The Review Team also wished to gain an understanding of how the EDU is positioned in relation to field staff and how its role is perceived by field staff. The findings of both focus group workshops were triangulated with individual confidential questionnaires which were then analysed. Details of the workshops, questionnaires and the findings are presented in the annexes, as are details of the field visits. These data are integral to the review and have informed the main text of the report.

Phase III has seen the operationalisation of a series key new initiatives in BEP. In the two weeks available for the review the Review Team has found it difficult to do justice to the volume of documentation and the detailed information provided by BEP staff during the discussions and field visits that were necessary in order to review the progress and achievements to date. Notwithstanding these limitations the Team have sought to present as much detail as possible so that the scale and intensity of the programme is honoured.

Structure of the Report

The report follows the TORs closely and deals with each of the 4 items raised in the same order as they appear within the TORs. In each case the Review considers progress to date and raises any significant issues which can be inferred at this stage.

INTRODUCTION

The first two phases of the Education Programme (BEP) challenged dominant perceptions of what is needed to effectively educate. It has in turn included within its target constituency sectors of the population that pose particular difficulties, namely the poor and girls. To date the BEP approach has raised questions that go to the heart of what was heretofore deemed to be essential prerequisites of approaches to schooling. The model continues to challenge perceptions of education not only within Bangladesh but also those that dominate within western discourses on education generally. As such the BEP is widely recognised as one of a handful of creative responses worldwide that seek to meet the every growing educational needs of those whom conventional schooling has consistently failed to serve. Throughout Phases I and II, BEP has demonstrated a capacity to enroll and even more noteworthy, to retain such learners within its educational programmes.

In Phase III the BEP essentially sets out (i) to achieve and sustain a level of excellence in all aspects of its provision while at the same time maintaining a commitment to serve learners whose level of disadvantage generally mitigates against such achievement; and (ii) to build on and replicate tried and tested good practices within the BEP model within more conventional educational restraints.

With regard to the first of these aims the key word that encapsulates the thrust of Phase III is 'Quality'. In pursuit of quality the Phase III proposal is ever aware that little of value can be done without a strong connection to the grassroots and equally that little of value can be sustained without being firmly embedded in the organisation's management structure and operational practices. A main focus of this review (as outlined in the TORs numbered 3 and 4) is to determine whether the process of institutionalising quality management and assurance is underway.

In Phase III the BEP has also set itself the major challenge of applying the lessons learned to date within contexts that are more closely akin to those pertaining to formal schooling. The challenge of effectively replicating these experiences necessitates differentiating between the form in which past successes took place and the substance that gave shape to that form. It is essentially about creatively responding to new sets of circumstances. It is likely that the new environment in which the BEP is now operating is one that is neither more nor less demanding than in the past. But it is different. It therefore has to respond in ways that are neither rigidly constrained by 'doing things the way we have always done them', nor by abandoning essential aspirations embedded in the BEP model in order to move closer to conventional models. A focus of this review is to determine whether the BEP is adequately covering the full primary curriculum in its NFPE schools, effectively using standard text books, and at the same time maintaining its focus on increasing access to information and learning opportunities. Convergence with Terminal Competencies of GOB was also considered as an issue. The review also explores the comparability of

BEP's achievements across its educational activities when set against those of other providers (see TORs numbered 1 and 2).

Changes to the planned schedule for the implementation of Phase III

While a detailed financial appraisal of the BEP is beyond the scope of this review the Review Team was aware that since February 2000 BEP has experienced cash flow constraints. The situation was exacerbated by the combination of a number of circumstances- the slow disbursement of some donor funds, a longer delay than anticipated in signing a contract with the EC, a drop in the value of the Euro against the dollar and no firm response from KfW regarding their participation in Phase III. Taken together the shortfall in funds represented one third of what had been expected, with KfW funding alone accounting for more than 20% of the total budget. To date there has been no formal communication from KfW to indicate their final decision re funding. In the first quarter of this year BRAC borrowed significant amounts of money to cover the shortfall in funds. To date there are hopeful indications, but no firm commitments from alternative donor bodies to allocate funds to the BEP Phase III.

The situation is raised here as there are repercussions for the scheduled implementation of the Phase III project proposal. The steps taken to alleviate the crisis involve an on-going delay in the opening of some schools scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2000. A total of 4,911 schools completed their cycle at this time and the Phase III proposal indicates that exactly the same number of schools would therefore open. The correlation between schools closing and opening means that the total number of schools remains constant at 34,000. In the first quarter of this year 1,993 of the 4,911 schools opened while the opening of remaining 2,918 schools is still pending. The following table details the schools involved:

BEP School Opening Plan 2,000				
School type	NFPE	BEOC	ESP	Total
Course completed	1,647	2,669	595	4,911
Schools re-opened	898	605	490	1,993
<i>To be opened</i>	<i>969</i>	<i>1,844</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>2,918</i>
Total schools now operating	21,573	7,064	2,445	31,082

The Review Team was informed that the criteria used to select the schools to be opened included cost considerations, for example, fewer schools were opened where the teacher was new and needed initial training. The decision was also, however,

dependent on localised factors such as the level of commitment already made to a particular community.

These measures have necessitated an intensive series of meetings with communities who expected a school to open and staff briefings to explain the situation. To date the funding situation has not been fully resolved. The BEP expect that the funding situation will be clearer by September. At that stage a decision will be made as to when these schools can be opened.

While a detailed financial report of the BEP is being prepared, the following information is provided for the schools which are expected to open in the next few months. The situation was discussed in detail with the community in a meeting held on 12th July 1984. The meeting was held in the school building and was attended by representatives of the community and the BEP. The meeting was held in the school building and was attended by representatives of the community and the BEP. The meeting was held in the school building and was attended by representatives of the community and the BEP.

The situation is being reviewed on a regular basis and it is expected that the schools will be opened as soon as possible. The BEP is committed to providing a high quality education for all children in the area and will continue to work closely with the community to ensure that the schools are opened as soon as possible. The BEP is committed to providing a high quality education for all children in the area and will continue to work closely with the community to ensure that the schools are opened as soon as possible.

BEP School Funding (1984-85)				
Year	1984	1985	1986	1987
1984	100	100	100	100
1985	100	100	100	100
1986	100	100	100	100
1987	100	100	100	100
Total	400	400	400	400

The BEP is committed to providing a high quality education for all children in the area and will continue to work closely with the community to ensure that the schools are opened as soon as possible. The BEP is committed to providing a high quality education for all children in the area and will continue to work closely with the community to ensure that the schools are opened as soon as possible.

1. Provision of the full primary cycle rather than just three grades

1.1 Progress to date

The introduction of Grades IV and V within the NFPE schools is a significant new development in Phase III. It has implications for teacher training, curriculum and the potential for progression into Grade VI. Much of the groundwork for this expansion was laid in Phase II. Over a four year period between 1995 and 1999, 1,000 NFPE 'pilot' schools completed Grades I to V. The experience of the pilot schools informed and set in train a process of restructuring in order to (i) create an elaborate network of training and continuous support for teachers and (ii) a quality management system that specifically focuses on ensuring effective teaching in these grades.

Finding

The introduction of Grade IV and V teacher training, materials and classes has progressed smoothly and teachers and trainers are confident about their ability to deliver an effective curriculum to Grade IV and V children. In the view of the Review Team this initiative is now operational and showing signs that it will be successfully implemented.

1.2 Curriculum Development and Materials

As teachers and field staff become familiar with the curriculum and the materials no major problems are anticipated. Teacher support by way of MTs, BTs and supervisory staff is in place.

All of the curriculum development activity relating to Grades IV and V is complete and the Guide Books needed for Grades IV and V are being piloted in draft form. They will be finalised by December 2000.

Additionally a large research project on curriculum development is presently in the analysis stage after piloting and will be scaled up to look at potential areas for quality curriculum development. This is being undertaken by the research group in EDU with the technical assistance of Manchester University and two members of the RED group. The final report will be available in March 2001.

The main focus at present in material development is the 20 APON training booklets. This programme is considered under item 2 below.

Expertise in Early Years' Education is also being developed. Two of the team responsible for the preprimary schools conducted by BEP graduates are undertaking a

Diploma course in early childhood studies. This initiative is also dealt with in item 2 below.

Finding

The further provision of Teacher Guides and supplementary materials in key subjects will diminish the gap between the government textbook and previous BEP materials.

On-going work on the curriculum within NFPE, Preprimary, BRAC Primary Schools, Community Schools and within the Continuing Education Programme is taking place within the context of the EDU as part of its general quality remit. Issues pertaining to the EDU and quality assurance are discussed in detail below under item 3.

1.3 Teacher Training and Support

Initial fears regarding the capacity of teachers to teach to Grade V level, particularly in English and Maths have been largely overcome. Now that 7,000 schools have reached Grade V and 6,000 have moved into Grade IV, training delivery systems and support mechanisms are fully operational, as are the management structures to sustain them. While specific individual problems arise and are likely to continue to do so the on-going support mechanisms are in place to tackle these as they emerge. Teachers spoken to in the field who are teaching Grades IV and V appear to have confidence in their capacity to teach at this level. They expressed satisfaction with their training and with the support they receive from field staff. Similarly Master Trainers, Batch Trainers, and Resource Teachers are satisfied with the overall performance of the teachers and with their own capacity to respond to teacher difficulties.

In the opinion of the Review Team the plans to deliver training to teachers, ensure its appropriateness, to train support staff, to sequence the training for each level of staff and to provide on-going support to teachers by way of field staff visits to the classroom are fully operational.

The Review Team was anxious to determine whether the funding crisis mentioned earlier had any adverse effects on the performance of support staff. Team grades allocated on the basis of monitoring reports were examined to see if any slippages were evident over the months of February to June 2000. Under this system field staff Teams are graded either A, B or C. These grades are compiled from a series of indicators based on field monitor reports submitted monthly. The grades are widely referred to within the BEP to determine the level of performance of individual Teams. The following table provides a summary of Team gradings for the period in question.

Month, 2000	Total no. of Teams Monitored	Grade A		Grade B		Grade C	
		No. of Teams	%	No. of Teams	%	No. of Teams	%
February	108	54	50	49	45	5	4.63
March/April	130	81	45	91	50	8	4.44
May	97	45	46	46	48	6	6.00
June	140	73	52	63	45	4	3.00

Given the relative evenness of the distribution of Teams over the three grades, it would appear that the situation has not impacted to any discernible extent on the Teams' general performance.

Findings

Teacher training and support mechanisms are in place and the standard is being reached. Problems exist for individual teachers but mechanisms are in place to deal with these as they arise.

1.4 Learner Performance

A small research Team in EDU in collaboration with RED is currently considering the issue of learner performance. A learner achievement test for mathematics has been developed and is in the process of being piloted at field level. The description of this test is given in Annex I.

BEP has an excellent record of both monitoring and adjusting its training procedures and materials based on feedback from that monitoring. Administration and supervision runs smoothly because of meticulous record keeping and attention to detail. The process of assessing learner performance of children in BRAC schools began before the completion of Phase II. The need to assess the learning achievement of children in NFPE schools has now become an issue, particularly in regard to the achievement of Class IV and V children who are now educated within the BEP system. SAT tests were developed in Phase II and have been used as part of the monitoring system. Now however more specific evaluations of subject content is under way.

The first examinations at the end of Grade IV were conducted in May 2000. As part of the decentralisation process the exam questions were prepared at Team Office level. Staff set the standard by reviewing the questions asked in government school Grade IV exam papers. Examinations were held at a common venue for all of the schools in a team area, usually in a government primary school large enough to

accommodate the numbers of children involved. Teachers supervised the exams in centres other than where their students were. In December the same children will also sit an examination when they finish Grade V. It is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding the overall performance of students as this is the first time such a process has been implemented. Perhaps the most significant impact is at the level of teacher morale. The experience has built confidence among the teachers and support staff that they are capable of teaching the curriculum to children to Grade IV standard. The upsurge in teacher confidence evident in the field may at least in part be due to this.

'A Competency Measure of Grade IV Mathematics' has been undertaken in 43 schools in 9 regions (see Annex I for Research Report)

'A Study of the Attitudes of Class IV teachers to the Grade IV Curriculum Materials' is in progress (this is a quantitative and qualitative study)

A study of Class IV Teacher Training for feedback into the training process is at proposal stage.

Additionally RED has produced a research report, '*An Appraisal of the BRAC's NFPE Programme in respect to coverage of terminal competencies specified by the Government of Bangladesh*' (Ghosh 1999) has been finished and circulated. This study clearly indicates that BEP materials cover almost all the necessary terminal competencies recommended by the GOB. Those not covered relate more to the difficulty of evaluating affective and psychomotor skills than a failure to cover these in the curriculum. This provides a good foundation for the proposed work of EDU and QMs on competencies and curriculum.

The findings of the Mathematics study indicates that there is a higher pass rate for children who have used the BRAC supplementary materials (95%) when compared with those using just the government text book (88.03%). The analysis of questions and answers showed that it was concepts that were new in Grade IV that caused most problem to the children and that these should be highlighted in training and be given sufficient time for the consolidation of new concepts by the teacher in the classroom.

All the usual caveats about learner achievement apply to the achievement of children in BRAC schools; the wider the constituency of learners the more children will be from the least able or most impoverished groups, this will depress learning achievement scores.

In the BRAC formal schools and community schools examinations related to textbook content and the application of learned knowledge and concepts will be held three times a year. As these examinations will be set centrally it will be easy to view progress across a range of subjects and schools as well as being able to consider fit with the Terminal Competencies specified by the GOB.

Findings

EDU is considering ways of evaluating learner achievement. The issue of convergence between Terminal Competencies specified by the GOB and developing appropriate curriculum materials is seen as a priority concern by many QMs and EDU staff. The research studies being undertaken related to Learner Achievement have already produced some interesting data and will continue to do so as more are completed.

Examinations now place in BRAC formal primary schools twice a year.

1.5 Formal Schooling

Two kinds of formal primary schools were visited and lessons observed. Discussions were held with teachers, pupils and community members as well as key people at HQ.

1.5.1 BRAC Formal Primary School

A detailed description of the BRAC primary school is given here, as this is the first review where these have been fully operational. The Review Team also believes that these schools mark a significant shift on the part of BEP into the formal sector.

The formal BRAC primary schools, designed to act as laboratory schools and as exemplars of good practice, have now been opened. Eleven of the twelve schools proposed are now taking classes from pre-primary to class II. These schools are housed in good buildings with seven rooms and space for playing areas. Tubewell, toilets, boundary walls and playgrounds have been constructed. The students and teachers keep the environment clean and tidy. Every morning there is a national assembly and flag raising. On Saturday the teachers have a cleanliness and health inspection of the children; they are able to pick up any health problems and also to teach the children about cleanliness.

The initial design of the building, which did not build in low shelves and display space at the initial building stage, makes the floor seated children appear a little 'lost' in the environment. Some small design changes to the buildings are already being planned. The provision of flexible furniture for group work, reading corners and play areas are all planned but is on hold because of the current funding crisis.

The space available in the formal BRAC primary school has made co-curricular activities such as sports, music and dancing and local games much more viable. The large playing field allows for football and other Team games and materials are supplied for these and other games. In the rainy season trees were planted around the

school and in winter some of the space will be used as a vegetable garden which will encourage children in gardening activities and also promote health.

A number of innovative curriculum activities and school procedures have been initiated in the formal primary schools which will give good feedback about new initiatives as well as providing important elements of quality education in the schools.

Teachers are being encouraged to use supplementary materials, get children to make models and pictures and to use the local environment in their teaching as a resource. The curriculum is more flexible than in the NFPE school and the management of the curriculum is structured through a Calendar provided to the school which includes holidays, activities, special occasion such as local sports, national days etc. Formal examinations set at HQ and related to the terminal competencies and the government textbooks will be conducted twice a year. Additionally daily homework in all subjects is planned and set by the teacher. There are sets of lesson plans for the year for each subject but the teachers are encouraged to innovate and experiment, "it can be changed". The emphasis in the training and curriculum is on providing creative learning opportunities for the children. Therefore practice, exercises and activities relate not so much directly to repetition of what has been taught but to using what has been taught in new and purposeful ways. Children do creative and expressive writing everyday and are encouraged to make this writing personalised and original. An example was given of class 2 being given a list of words including boat and water and asked to write what they wanted using some of the words. To the surprise of the teacher one girl wrote, "We don't have boats in all parts of Bangladesh". It is very good to see these schools being used as a context for curriculum development and innovation even at this early stage.

The teachers in the school meet fortnightly with POs and discuss the curriculum, methodologies and any difficulties that are being faced. Records are kept of these meetings.

Parents committees meet monthly, seven parents representing each class. These Parents' Committees are the equivalent of the SMC. Parents meetings are also held monthly as in BRAC non formal schools.

In the course of setting up the school the community was frequently visited and meetings held with a minimum of 15 people so that the parents were able to ask questions and explore any confusions or problems. A survey of the community identified the children coming from the poorest sector of the community. Contributions of materials or money are not required from these families.

There is a great opportunity in these schools for introducing curriculum changes and quality components. The evaluation of these developments could be considered in the context of longitudinal case studies which track a sample of pupils and teachers over two or three years.

1.6 Relationship between Government and BRAC in the context of Community Schools

BRAC relates directly with government on a number of fronts. BRAC's focus on basic education, raising literacy levels and the Union Libraries all provide opportunities for co-operation. In particular the community schools initiative is focused on here because

- it is one of the more recent initiatives
- a perusal of previous reports indicated that the relationship between BRAC and the government had not been explored with regard to this initiative
- the time involved in this review mitigated against an exhaustive examination of all of the initiative
- it fits into the new move of BEP into formal primary education.

In view of BRAC's stated view that community schools were taken up in order to bring to bear some influence on quality aspects of primary education there exists a real opportunity to improve relationships with the formal sector. The provision of education for primary children remains, almost by necessity in Bangladesh, a matter of quantitative provision for government. The pressure for schools and seats in schools is intense. BRAC, with its history of incremental development supported by excellent supervision has had the space and opportunity to concentrate on developing a quality curriculum and on introducing more appropriate and child centred methodologies into their NFPE classrooms. BRAC's expanding involvement in the formal sector provides an opportunity to utilise existing materials in new ways and new contexts and also to develop new materials. This will constitute a tangible resource for government which is already welcomed at local level and may be influential nationally.

It would be wrong to assume that there are no quality components in government primary education. CLE, the Lighthouse Project, the materials for schools and teacher training developed under the IDEAL project all have quality as a central aim. Aspects of some of these materials such as CLE have also been used with the BEP curriculum. There is a gap, however, in the public knowledge of these materials, both between educational agencies and possibly also between government, NGOs and funding agencies.

Given that BRAC has a commitment to increasing pedagogical expertise at the centre through the development of the EDU, and that they have well functioning formal schools now operating within the BRAC system there seems to exist a very cogent opportunity for engaging in the development of further curriculum materials that are relevant to the formal primary curriculum and that meet terminal competencies. Small-scale qualitative research studies of these developments are important and the dissemination of the findings in the public arena through articles, demonstrations and seminars will benefit all education sectors. Such exposure and sharing of curriculum quality materials would be one way of ensuring both the engagement of government

with BRAC and BRAC reaching their intended goal of influencing quality in the government system.

The Government initiative to invite NGOs to take up non-functioning community schools that were set up under GEP in the early nineties was responded to by BRAC, along with many other large and small NGOs. The reason for engaging with this initiative was described as, 'BRAC viewed this as an opportunity to influence the quality of "mainstream" education' (Miwa 2000).

Again this is a very good opportunity for small studies of curriculum innovation which can both describe and analyse the process of development and over time assess the quality changes that such innovations have given to the school. The formal schools, with their lack of time pressure and more consistent developmental ages of classes, are the perfect laboratory for such piloting of new ideas. These small research initiatives do not need to be very complex or even very long term, but they should be able to describe what it is that brings additional quality into the curriculum and to make clear the processes by which this happens.

The process of setting up the schools has often been lengthy and involved developing trust in a hostile community. The school visited by a member of the Review Team was a very positive example of how the community, when they see their children well taught and happy in school, can become enthusiastic supporters of the school (see Annex G). These schools are well run, well organised and well structured. The 'story' of the setting up and progress of the schools needs to be told, as it would appear that few other NGOs have been able to successfully get community schools functioning again.

The lengthy negotiations necessary to set up the community schools inevitably brought BRAC closer to the government at central level. The well documented description of the process (Miwa 2000) shows the tensions and difficulties on both sides, and the struggle to move towards constructive partnership. The perception of BRAC staff involved in these interface negotiations is that the government respects and likes BRAC, particularly in view of their ability to actually retrieve so many community non-functioning schools.

Out of a total of 194 non-functioning community schools 62 are now operating, of these BRAC is operating 42. To date 43 of the 73 schools allocated to BRAC have been formally handed over. It is expected that the most recently handed over school will be operational shortly. Of the remainder 7 schools do not exist and 23 have not yet been handed over to BRAC.

A member of the Review Team met with staff within the Directorate of Compulsory Primary Education (CPE). Discussions were held with Mr. Mostafizur Rahman Deputy Director and Professor Abul Basher Director of Monitoring CPE. A further lengthy meeting took place with Mr. Jagodish Chandra Biswas Deputy Director of CPE. At the meeting he indicated that a further 135 non-functioning schools have

been identified and sent by the Secretary of PMED to the Minister for final approval. These will then be redistributed to the NGOs who have successfully rejuvenated schools from the first tranche. He stated that BRAC's achievement to date was in his opinion due to its size and experience.

Mr. Jagodish Chandra Biswas also stated that the contractual arrangements under which the community schools are operated currently ensure that a working relationship is established between the government and NGOs at national and local levels. While NGOs are accountable to government for how they operate the schools, the special skills NGOs bring to the process are welcomed and crucial to the successful reactivation of these schools. In particular, he said NGOs have a proven capacity to mobilise the community and sustain their direct involvement in the school.

The relationship between the NGOs and government is mediated through (i) bimonthly meetings presided over by the DGCEP and (ii) 3 annual meetings presided over by the DGDPE. In the case of the latter the meetings are attended by CPE staff NGOs, and field personnel such as Thana Education Officers, District Primary Education Officers. During the meetings each of the parties present reports up dating the Director General of DPE on their performance and have opportunities to respond to each other's presentations. This meeting defines areas of responsibility and mutual accountability for progress and transparency on the part of all involved. These meetings provide a forum whereby the relationships between all parties can be strengthened. Mr. Jagodish Chandra Biswas said that as a result of initiatives such as this *"There is a better relationship between government and NGOs now than ever before"*.

The establishment of formal schools in local neighbourhoods has brought local educators closer together. Community schools are regularly inspected by Thana Education Officers and Assistant Education Officers. In addition they are also visited by Additional Deputy Commissioners, Thana Nirbahi Officers and District Primary Education Officers. To date around 30 officers have filed reports on BRAC operated schools. Their reports are positive. In one case the local Thana Education Officer plans to bring headteachers to visit the school and to use some of the BRAC English teaching materials.

Findings

Eleven BRAC formal primary schools and 42 community schools have opened and though the numbers involved are small they are providing opportunities for replicating and disseminating good practice into the formal education context. They constitute a valuable resource for curriculum development and for demonstrating good practice in the delivery and management of primary education.

The community schools have drawn the BEP into close contact with the government sector at national and local levels. BRAC's ethos, its capacity to train and support

staff, and to maintain standards are gaining recognition as is its capacity to engage with a community and to overcome resistance in order to mobilise and sustain community support for the school. The BEP staff are also gaining greater insight into the needs and concerns of government.

2. A slight change in the balance of girls and boys enrolled and an increased emphasis on life skills training for adolescents

This section looks at the changing profile of the BRAC classroom and innovative responses to the life skill needs of young women.

2.1 Change in the balance of girls and boys enrolled

The longevity of BRAC's educational programme was cited in the Phase III Project Proposal as the main reason why it needed to adjust the boys/girls ratio from 30:70 to 40:60. Figures provided by BEP show a steady drop in the % of girls with the programme since the Dec '92/Mar '93 Quarter when it was 73.5%. Since Apr/June '96 the % of girls has remained below 70% and by Apr/June 2000 it was just under 66%. Data supplied by Team offices in Natore and Paba clearly show how this trend is a feature of schools in their second, third and fourth cycles. In the case of Natore five schools were selected. All of them first opened in 1991, have operated in the same area with the same teacher, and are now in their third cycle. The % of girls has dropped from 83% in 1991 to 64% in 1995 and to 57% currently. In Paba ten schools were selected. These first opened in 1989 and are now in their fourth cycle. In each of the four cycles the % of girls were 73%, 70%, 68% and 60% respectively. Full details of these schools are given in Annex G.

2.2 Impact of these changes on selection procedures

There is doubt that communities have always pressurised BRAC to enroll more boys. It is equally likely that withstanding this pressure will continue to be an issue that BRAC staff must deal with. However, the policy decision in the Phase III proposal to shift the balance between boys and girls is not rationalised as a response to community preference for boys rather than girls education, but rather as a response to the demographic realities that come to the fore when a number of school cycles have been completed. At that stage fewer of the prime target group – poor girls, are available while a greater number of boys remain. There is no evidence from the field to suggest that BEP enrolment policy is not adhered to.

2.3 Impact of these changes within the classroom

The monitoring unit within the EDU is at the initial stage of setting up criteria to monitor teachers' responses to boys and girls. Preliminary field observation work has been carried out and by September 2000 work will commence on monitoring this aspect of the programme. Initial indications are that the majority of teachers favour boys. This tends to be a global phenomenon and therefore is not surprising. The monitoring of teacher behaviour in this regard will identify how favouritism manifests itself in the classroom and indicate the scale of the problem. It will also enable the EDU to take steps to address the issue.

The Review Team would like to point out that the shift in the balance between boys and girls is of itself unlikely to have had immediate and profound impacts within the classroom. Teachers have always taught both boys and girls. Therefore any tendencies to favour boys over girls will have featured well before Phase III began. Having more boys in the class may serve to exacerbate an existing situation but could not be seen as the primary cause. Furthermore, the nature of the increase is such that for an individual teachers the growth in the numbers of boys tends to be gradual, taking place over a series of cycles. By the time a teacher reaches a 40:60 ratio of boys to girls she is experienced and has had numerous training sessions.

The Review Team would also like to point out that in the classrooms they have visited, even where the numbers of boys were high, there was no evidence of girls being excluded.

Findings

The increase in the % of boys is largely demographic and takes place in schools in the second or third phase where the target cohort of girls has already been schooled. The monitoring unit within the EDU is at the initial stage of identifying criteria that can be used to monitor classroom behaviour and identify tendencies to favour boys over girls. This is a welcome initiative that will raise awareness of behaviours and responses that discriminate against girls. The Review Team found no evidence that the increase in the proportion of boys as proposed in this Phase, is making an appreciable impact within the classroom. This is not to say that boys do not receive favourable treatment but rather that the slight change in the ratio of boys to girls is not in itself leading to marked behaviour changes on the part of teachers and support staff.

2.4 An increased emphasis on life skills training for adolescents

A major focus at present in material development is the APON training materials and skill development training. A number of other initiatives within the BEP focus on the particular needs of adolescents who have come through the NFPE or BEOC

schools. These include the preprimary schools and strengthening links between the BEP and RDP programmes. Each of these is dealt with below.

2.4.1 APON

The APON programme is based on stories and covers issues such as HIV/AIDS, the legal rights of women, family planning, STD and other basic health and life issues. The programme is designed to be used with the adolescent members of the Reading Centres. Before the programme begins the PO discusses the programme with the mothers of the girls. A key feature of the APON initiative is that the training is delivered by a member of the group. She is known as a Peer Educator. The most able among the Peer Leaders is further trained as an Adolescent Leader. The Adolescent Leader supports 8 Peer Educators and also acts as a Peer Educator for a particular group. Each Adolescent Leader is given 5 days training and she in turn trains the Peer Educators. This programme has just started.

A short research paper on the evaluation of trainers and training has been written (Ahmed and Begum 2000) and the results of this led to the decision to use adolescent girls rather than teachers as trainers. It was felt that discussion would be free among peers and that the usual inhibitions that constrain discussions of such sensitive topics would be minimised. The programme is designed so that the participants can control the pace of their engagement with the material. The learning will be self-directed in that they can discuss issues or experiences. The Peer Educator is a facilitator or co-learner rather than a teacher.

APON will be monitored to ensure it is taking place but participants will not be 'tested' on what they have learned. The challenge for all involved in the programme will be to establish a monitoring process that can measure performance while at the same time be respectful and sensitive to the subject matter. The monitoring process has to be done in a way that does not interfere with the relationship of equals among the Peer Educator and the other participants. The APON Team is keenly aware of these challenges and has already given some thought to how best to implement this aspect of the programme.

The Review Team believes that this is a programme laden with development potential.

2.4.2 Skill Development Training

Within the APON programme a number of training modules are being developed to enhance employment opportunities for members of the Reading Circles. This initiative targets the Adolescent Leaders and Peer Trainers within APON. To date the skills identified are as follows:

Photography
 Computer data entry
 Photocopying
 Electronics

The training in photography takes 5 days and is being piloted now. Training in the other areas has yet to be developed. The skills were selected based on the potential for those trained to set up a small business, to secure employment in rural villages or within the RDP programme. Staff with these skills are difficult to recruit. Participants will be linked to the RDP credit plan to enable them establish a micro enterprise if they wish.

Findings

A number of initiatives in Phase III specifically target adolescent girls. The aim is to undertake a programme that can contribute to reducing the incidents of early marriage, sexual exploitation and generalised discrimination experienced by young women. One of the most interesting of these initiatives is APON. The programme, which is just now ready to be implemented, is innovative in terms of content and delivery. The programme will be delivered by Peer trainers directly recruited from the target group. The Review Team believes that this is a timely and most worthwhile venture.

The skill training to be offered to APON participants is in new skills that have been identified as likely to lead to employment.

2.5 Preprimary schools

The purpose of the preprimary schools is twofold:

- to provide opportunities for former BRAC students who have reached Grade VIII and are aged 14 or over to gain work experience as teachers in these classes and
- to reduce dropout levels from the government primary schools.

The children who attend the preprimary schools progress to formal primary schools. Two teachers work with a maximum of 25 children aged between 5 and 6. Each child pays 10 Tks per month and 40Tks for materials per year. The income generated is used to pay the teachers an honorarium. The teachers are given 3 days training and a half-day refresher training per month. The EDU staff responsible for this training were also involved in training for teachers within the formal BRAC Primary Schools who are teaching the preprimary class

The preprimaries first began in 1987 when 10 schools were set up. They were discontinued after a year and began again in 1998 with 50 schools. There are now 1,434 such schools, 50 of which are in urban areas and over 3,000 teachers.

In the view of the Review Team the preprimary area is one that deserves further attention. There are now greater opportunities for this to happen especially as the BEP is actively experimenting more with formal schooling.

Findings

The preprimary units operated by BEP graduates constitute an additional quality component to BEP and may be of increased significance as BEP moves closer to the formal sector where children enter school at a younger age than is the case within NFPE schools.

2.6 Closer co-operation between RDP and BEP

More than 70,000 former BEP graduates are actively involved in the RDP programme. BEP provide names of former students to RDP and to facilitate their recruitment to a range of activities within the RDP. A number of BEP graduates have also secured employment in RDP offices.

The recent funding crisis appears to have furthered the level of crossover between the programmes. Three hundred BEP staff transferred to RDP in the past five to six months. Discussion had been initiated between both programmes on the possibilities of staff transfer before the crisis manifested itself. The rationale given for these discussions was that RDP was expanding and needed new staff and BEP had no expansion plans so it had a fairly static cohort of trained staff. In addition because the BEP was not growing it had few promotional opportunities for good junior staff. It also had staff who were not 'pedagogically oriented' and would be better placed in RDP. The decision to delay the opening of schools allowed the transfers to take place quicker than might otherwise have happened. As a result of the movement 78 new Team in Charges were appointed within BEP from the ranks of the POs. Of these 48 are women.

Those staff who moved to RDP took positions of an equivalent or higher grade than they held in BEP. According to the Directors of both programmes the movement of staff has given a higher profile to BEP among RDP field staff and fostered more understanding of the work of BEP and the opportunities that exist for greater co-operation in particular the involvement of former BEP students in RDP skill training initiatives.

Findings

Closer co-operation between RDP and BEP is noted by the Review Team with regard to the skill development training within the APON programme, mentioned above, and the active recruitment of RDP members from among former BEP students. In addition the recent transfer of staff from BEP to RDP has brought the two programmes closer together.

3. Creation of an in-House Unit for Developing Pedagogical and Evaluative Capacity (EDU)

3.1 Progress to Date

The EDU has had a number of key issues to deal with in the first year of Phase III such as:

- The creation of a closer working relationship between the field and the centre
- The development of the role of Quality Manager as a key factor in this decentralisation process
- Materials development related to Grade IV and Grade V (continuing from Phase II)
- The development of materials, piloting and training for the Adolescent Peer Organised Network (APON)
- The development of research capacity in the EDU

The EDU appointed 11 staff in 1999, some of them without field experience but with academic skills and qualifications that give additional skills to the EDU team. Field officers assigned to the EDU bring a different range of skills to the job including training, supervision and administration. They are also 'grounded' in the reality of the field operation and ensure the credibility of EDU endeavours. Together the EDU staff constitute an informed and mature cohort of educators with experience of the reality of life in the rural or slum classroom. The former Materials Development Unit members have had to encompass a significant change in their role and modus operandi, including a much closer relationship with the field and more engagement with training and field piloting. They appear to have embraced this role with enthusiasm.

The responses to the questionnaire (Annex E) clearly show that the role of curriculum development and quality control are perceived as key for the EDU. The decentralisation process has been a somewhat painful process, involving shifts of power and authority, a movement towards shared decision and policy making and a recognition that capacity, knowledge and responsibility are not equated with status. It took time for staff to appreciate that participative processes require a respect for the ability of staff who are ranked lower in the organisation and that the task of quality assurance is dependent on everyone's performance. Adjustments in attitudes and

behaviours have largely been mediated through close interaction between the QMs and the EDU by way of frequent meetings, seminars and workshops. Records of all these meetings, the problems raised and proposed solutions are regularly disseminated to field level. It was clear to the Review team that this relationship is now in a positive and progressive phase, laying the groundwork for the replication of this way of working among other staff.

3.2 Profile of the EDU

In the Focus Group workshops the perception of the role of EDU, the place of the members within the EDU in this role, and future hopes for development were explored. The results of this were checked out by way of individual confidential questionnaires and personal discussions.

The role of the EDU is clearly seen as being concerned with:

- Development of quality components in curriculum materials
- Decentralisation of quality training to field level
- Liaison and feedback between EDU and the field both through interaction with QMs and in field visits and follow up to training.
- Shared decision making and problem solving with QMs
- Quality assurance within BEP

All these roles are concerned with quality and with the need to decentralise control, training and piloting of materials to the field level.

Members of the EDU find the work interesting and worthwhile and the culture of the workplace is highly valued (Q. 14). Enjoyment, satisfaction, the ability to initiate, develop and pilot materials and the culture of shared decision making are also factors that spark peoples' interest and excitement in being part of the EDU. It is likely that the comments relating to the need to have their work acknowledged at an institutional level will be addressed by the planned introduction of a work and performance appraisal scheme for all BRAC staff.

Findings

Shared decision-making with field based staff has characterised much of the EDU activity in the past year. Most effort has gone into negotiating a relationship between the staff at the EDU and the QMs – a relationship based on trust in the process and in each other and an acceptance of shared responsibility for the task of quality management. This is not an easy way to operate but it is vital if the BEP is to acquire the capacity needed to offer a quality service. This has already begun to be seen as a model of how other levels of staff at the field level could work. Solid ground work has been undertaken to establish a way of working that necessitates upwards and

downwards flows of information, accountability and responsibility. The EDU has steered, nurtured and managed the process very ably. A certain momentum has been generated so that although many issues remain to be resolved the intensity of the effort needed for the past year should ease a little at this point.

The level of commitment and enthusiasm within EDU for the work they are engaged in bodes well for the future. The Review Team is impressed by the capacity of the majority of staff to reflect on the work they are doing and to recognise the contribution their effort makes within the context of the whole operation.

The Review Team notes that there has as yet been little opportunity for the EDU to develop the expert pedagogical capacity needed to underpin its work in developing quality education at field level. The experience and knowledge of practice needs to be informed by access to theoretical perspectives. As the workload lessens this should be seen as a priority need.

The Review Team feels that the concerns of EDU staff will be met by the proposed introduction of a BRAC wide staff performance appraisal scheme. Already recent decisions relating to promotion have been undertaken in a transparent and open way.

3.3 Curriculum Development and Training

Staff within EDU responsible for material production have had a heavy work load while producing supplementary materials that support the training and textbooks needed for Grade IV and V in all subjects. This task is now almost completed.

The development of APON materials to extend the reach of the Reading Centre and to capitalise on the awareness and education of adolescent girls in Bangladesh has been a central focus of the last year. The effective training seen in the field, the attractive and effective materials and the enthusiasm of both the EDU materials developers and trainers look set to make this critical area of health and life skills a viable and effective training component. The evaluation of the APON initiative (Ahmed & Begum 2000) is impressive because it was undertaken by members of the EDU APON team and also has fed back important findings into policy making.

Training has devolved in a decentralized process which has involved BTs, who may be teachers, in assuming equality in training sessions with other MTs (see Section 1). A more localised input, supported by QMs and EDU, into training modules is now apparent.

Feedback from training sessions is also a concern for research initiatives as is the convergence of Terminal Competencies and BRAC curriculum materials.

Findings

EDU staff and QMs identify as the next critical task, the development of quality in the BEP materials whilst also ensuring that the terminal competencies given by GOB are incorporated into the learning materials.

The devolution of much training and training initiatives to the field level Master Trainers, often at the level of Batch Trainer, supported by QMs and EDU has brought a new dimension into training modules. There is now the opportunity for local development relating to local needs, allowing EDU to monitor performance and to evaluate the quality added factors in both curriculum and training materials.

3.4 Research

It was anticipated that a key factor in the development of the EDU would be the building of capacity for undertaking research studies, both short and long term case studies and action research. In spite of a necessary focus on building up the field relationship and the support and development of the role of QMs there have been important efforts to develop a research capacity within EDU. Some of this has also fed down to field level with the involvement of field staff in data collection, participatory data collection and feedback loops.

A group of six EDU members form a small research cell within the EDU and are presently working, with TA assistance from Manchester University, on developing their own research capacity as well as serving the current evaluation needs in the EDU.

The main focus of the research group is on curriculum development and research methods and procedures that help to identify and develop quality components in the curriculum materials and training. They are presently putting together research proposals that will serve this need. In the course of developing a range of methodologies they have undertaken several small field studies relating to pressing curriculum needs:

- Competency Measurement of Grade IV Mathematics (English version available)
- Teacher attitudes to Class IV curriculum in all subjects (Bengali)
- Feedback on training for Class IV curriculum (Bengali)

They are currently putting the proposal for 'De-centralisation: An Impact of Training' together.

What is impressive is the range of both quantitative and qualitative research procedures that they have tried out e.g. Focus Groups, Observation schedules, interviews, interviewing of samples of students. This appears to be a healthy learning situation which is developing with enthusiasm and commitment.

Additionally individuals within EDU have undertaken research into APON training, 'Level of Knowledge, Attitude and Skills of Adolescent Leaders and Peer Group Educators: An Evaluation'.

A Grade IV test for all subjects and questionnaire for teachers has been administered in 50 schools and followed up by sample group interviews. This study is in process of translation into English.

The group is very enthusiastic and keen to expand their knowledge and understanding of research procedures. Their present level of knowledge, particularly of qualitative and participatory data collection and analysis, will require further technical input in order to build confidence and expertise. This capacity building will be worthwhile as they will then provide a resource for the widening constituency of action researchers within the EDU.

Findings

The research capacity within EDU is expanded by new members who have some training in research. The culture is shifting towards a perception of EDU as their own research community, supported and informed by the RED but with the EDU determining its own research agenda. It is anticipated that many more small case studies and action research initiatives will take place in the EDU during Phase III, particularly as the development of pedagogical capacity gets properly under way. The Review Team believes that the progress made to date is a good basis for building research capacity in the EDU. However the team would emphasise that further training is vital to build on the existing potential. The response of the research group in EDU to their current technical assistance input indicates a need for substantial training and exposure to new research methodologies.

3.5 Future Developments

EDU now has a firm foundation, interfaced with the field and poised for a focus on quality in curriculum and training. The priority need now is to develop an upward capacity which will allow EDU staff to engage in their own pedagogical development and widen their knowledge of primary education. This is recognised by the EDU management who intend to move in this direction. The need to develop a grounded understanding of educational theories which will allow for analysis of current pedagogical situations in an informed way is also acknowledged. At present the energies and efforts of the EDU are all downwards into the field, now a good synergy has been established through the interface with QMs. To continue the task of supporting QMs and to allow for innovation and good curriculum development there is a real need for EDU to have its own source of support and enrichment.

Some members of EDU are currently engaged in Diploma or Master's studies. The development of expertise in areas such as Early Years Education and Language Development issues will increase specialist capacity within the EDU. Specific courses of study can, however, be difficult to disseminate throughout the whole system although they may greatly benefit the individual.

There remains a need to develop a joint capacity building course of study which all members of EDU can engage in and benefit from and that will give the EDU staff the input that they will need in order to sustain the level of work pressure and demand that is presently made. Additionally regular engagement of the whole of the EDU in seminar/learning situations will develop a team ethos related to learning that will help to integrate the members of EDU. Such a course would impact closely on the pedagogical capacity of the QMs by virtue of their close interaction with the EDU and therefore support the downward process of quality development to take place quickly and efficiently.

After discussion and observation the Review Team would like to suggest a possible form for such a course.

- The course should be organic in format, where agendas for learning are both self directed and mutually negotiated, and where the opportunity for growth and development of understanding of pedagogical issues is rooted in an experiential approach. Such an approach would allow EDU staff to explore issues and to engage with philosophies and theories from the perspective of the practical knowledge that they have of the field.
- The course should have a longitudinal dimension with learning inputs and study that can then be internalised through field experience and action research activities.
- Technical assistance for the course should be collegiate in nature rather than supervisory, involving consistent support and the ability to recognize directions for further learning and ways of integrating experience with theoretical and philosophical perspectives.
- In such a course the particular expertise, experience and learning capacity of individuals should be recognized as a strength to be developed, not a deficit to be overcome.
- The course should take note of the multiple variables operating within the BEP and recognise the possibilities inherent in a dynamic work situation.
- An important aim of such a course should be to enable individuals and groups of EDU staff to be able to make fast, informed and efficient inputs into quality components within BEP based on a wide understanding of pedagogy and familiarity with a range of strategies, skills and research processes.
- Ultimately such a course would produce a cohesive team of educators, with a variety of complementary skills and experiences, who have the ability to ground their work in appropriate theories and also to construct new perspectives and theories of learning that are particularly appropriate to BRAC circumstances and experiences.

In order to create the practical conditions for such a learning package EDU management would need to create time and space for a few designated days each month when input could be given and individual or group learning agendas negotiated. EDU staff would have to incorporate some element of reading and study time into their working programme. Action research studies would need to be undertaken by individuals to test out theories and new ideas. Time invested at this stage would have the benefit of greatly speeding up processes and outcomes at a later stage in Phase III.

Findings

The EDU is well on course for the decentralisation that features in Phase III's emphasis on quality. The inter-face with the field is firmly in place and the relationship between the QMs and the EDU is well defined.

Members of the EDU have the potential for developing pedagogical and research based activities that are grounded in an understanding of theory and wider perspectives of primary education. This will require steering, planned and consistent inputs in order to develop the resource for pedagogy which will be required to sustain and further promote quality.

4. Significant operational changes through a decentralisation of quality management to field level

4.1 The Decentralisation Process

Within the BEP Phase III decentralisation and quality management are intrinsically linked. In the context of the BEP decentralisation describes a process that now shortens the distance between the classroom and the centre. It is about creating the conditions for informed decision-making so that there is capacity at field level to identify quality issues in the classroom and the ability to channel these back to the policy makers for shared decision-making at the centre. This process appears to be very well rooted and is referred to by the QMs and EDU as one of the significant steps forward in integrating the field and the centre.

4.2 Progress to Date

In accessing the progress to date the Review Team conducted a focus group workshop around these issues with the Quality Managers, gave individual questionnaire to all QMs and analysed these under a number of categories. These responses were then checked against interaction with QMs in the field. (See annexes

C and D for details). The EDU perception of QMs verifies these findings. (See section 3 for details).

Decentralisation necessitates changes in institutional behaviour and has implications across the entire BEP programme. The changes at the institutional level provoke behavioural changes that manifest in how things are done. New ways of operating require attitudinal changes which can take time. This is exemplified in the area of training. The designation of MTs, and BTs with responsibility for subject based training signifies an acknowledgement of capacity and expertise that is not necessarily related to the designated status of the trainer within the organisation. Junior staff can become MTs and BTs are recruited from among the teachers. This is a reality that can be difficult for some staff to accept as appropriate. In training sessions for example it was often assumed that the role of the BT should be confined to demonstrating lessons rather than taking control of the training session. A great deal of discussion and negotiation of new norms has had to take place to overcome resistance. This is, however an integral part of the decentralisation process and the gradual finding of a pathway to deal with the sensitive issues involved is being found. The growing number of those who carry the 'vision of decentralisation', including most notably the present cohort of QMs, recognise that an integral part of this process of facilitating change involves using a range of strategies to overcome resistance.

Findings

The decentralisation process, which began towards the end of Phase II, has been long and involved a high degree of negotiated dialogue and a certain amount of compromise on the part of all concerned. It is now well established and integrated into the operation of BEP.

4.3 Possible future development

It would seem that the next stage for the development of this process is to further devolve the ability to observe and analyse classroom activities so that other staff in the field can collaborate with the QMs to introduce quality innovation and change in the support and training offered to teachers and in developments in the curriculum. This constitutes a significant shift in the organisational culture of BEP.

In order to bring about the next stage capacity is needed within the EDU which is steering the process. The EDU recognises the need to now begin to move beyond only reacting to the immediate short term issues for the QMs and to create the time and space to deal with the longer term quality issues relating to effective schooling. The QMs in turn will need to develop the ability to manage urgent issues without losing sight of important long-term developments. The EDU is now poised to begin to shift in this direction. The work done in the past year to build a partnership with the QMs means that a strong network has been established to carry the process to the next stage. As Phase III progresses this will involve further strengthening the pedagogical capacity of QMs.

This will become increasingly important as the demand for training from other educational providers grows. Already a number of local government Education Officers who have visited BRAC formal schools and community schools are asking for training for their staff in particular subject areas and in community participation strategies. The Review Team believes that the level of demand for this kind of training will grow. To date training programmes and materials have emanated from the centre. If BEP practices are to permeate the wider education arena it cannot rely on centre based expertise. Regional and Team offices need to be able to respond directly to such requests. To do so QMs need to be in a position to manage that response, i.e. mobilise local staff to design appropriate course packages or modify existing ones. They need to lead curriculum innovation and development from a position of understanding that is grounded in their experience and at the same time informed by theory. They also need recourse to focused and pertinent research studies. To acquire this capacity a specialised training package needs to be designed for the QMs.

Findings

The decentralisation process is well underway. The gap between the field and the centre is already being bridged by the appointment and training of QMs and their interaction with the EDU. Shared decision-making is now an integral part of the relationship between the EDU and the QMs. In practice an example of this is the decentralisation of training, often down to the BT level, a process requiring sensitivity and careful negotiation. The QMs are clear about their role within BEP as the key people responsible for identifying the need for innovation and change at the classroom level. The initial confusion between the roles of the RM and QM no longer exists. In the field there is evidence of a close working relationship between both in which issues of quality are a dominant theme. Between now and 2004 when Phase III will be completed, the QMs will require further pedagogical training and more experience undertaking classroom based field studies in order to fulfill this critical role effectively.

CONCLUSION

The funding situation that delayed the opening of schools in the first quarter has resulted in a shortfall in the overall numbers of schools now operating. It is a situation that warrants on-going concern for all the partners. However, the Team believes that to date the slippage is largely confined to the number of schools and has not compromised the potential of the programme as a whole to achieve its stated aims by 2004. The Review Team is satisfied that the two major components of Phase III namely quality improvement and the expansion of the NFPE schools programme to include Grades IV and V are on target.

The EDU, which has been the prime mover in creating the conditions needed to promote quality, was found to be a dynamic institution which is evolving both a way of working and negotiating shifts in power and control. The EDU has established the conditions in which the centre can build the pedagogical capacity to drive the process of adding quality to education in BEP. The groundwork has created the pathways for communicating this quality pedagogical capacity down to the classroom. Key in this communications infrastructure is the role of the Quality Manager. It is the evolution of the QMs role as shared decision and policy maker, working together with EDU, which has brought the necessary interface between centre and field.

Defining the organisational de-centralisation process – with its increasing confidence in the ability of educators at team and classroom level to implement and to innovate – has involved a cultural shift. A long and sometimes painful process that has created a team of educators, not ring fenced by central authority, but positively engaging with the negotiations and sometimes compromises that are necessary to bring about real decentralisation.

This process is, in the view of the Review Team, now firmly in place and constitutes a positive and rich foundation for focusing on quality issues in BEP.

The EDU is already an exciting development which has, in the words of Shakespeare,

*"given to airy nothing
a local habitation and a name"*

A number of small, innovative initiatives are also underway in Phase III. In particular the formal BRAC primary school and the handed over community schools have opened and are making an impact at both community and government level. The process has involved BRAC in a closer and more positive relationship with the government formal primary education sector and this has considerable potential for disseminating the good practice in BRAC curriculum and training.

With regard to issues we were specifically asked to explore we have commented on a number of elements extraneous to the specific TORs but integral to the long-term sustainability and replicability of the BEP experience.

Our findings confirm Miwa's (2000) comment that there have been significant and welcome shifts in Government NGO relationship on a number of fronts where co-operation has been asked for and given.

New initiatives in Primary Education will produce innovative curriculum development; added value elements to the school and the opportunity to influence mainstream provision of primary education.

BEP REVIEW

ANNEX A

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN FOCUS GROUP DATA COLLECTION PROCESS
AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

EDU STAFF

Prafulla Chandra Barman	Kabir Toufique Islam	Shibani Gruha
Marjina Begum	Nagis Tanzila	Nahid Sultana
Anwara Begum	Farida Yeasmin	Jahanana Begum
Sakhawat Hussain	Topon Acharjee	Amal Kumar Bishwas
Rashida Parvin	Basobi Maqsood	Trishna Sarcar
Dr. Jaya Sengupta	Marufa Mazhar	Mahbub-UI-Alam
Ruxana Hussain	Limia Dewan	Wahida Bashar
Sadia Salam Hafiz	Sheik Ashrafuzzaman	Nazneen Mahbuba
Abdul Bareque	Dilruba Begum	

QUALITY MANAGERS (name and region)

Shahnewaz Parvin, Tangail	Samina Begum, Nilphamari
KM Ferdous, Gazipur	Aminul Islam, Dinajpur
Arun Sarkar, Kishorganj	Aminul Islam, Thakurgaon
Ali Hossain, Sherpur	Omio Kumar Chowdhury, Rangpur
Irene Parvin, Jamalpur	SM Sarowar, Gaibandha
Shafikul Islam, Shambhuganj	Nagendranath Soren, Joypurhat
Afroza Begum, Magura	Dewan Ruhul Alam, Bogura
Razia Sultana, Faridpur	Rakib Khan Khalil, Sirajganj
Tariqul Islam, Kushtia	Shahnaz Parvin, Pabna
Selina Khatun, Chaudanga	Ms Rafeza, Natore
Shipra Mondol, Jessore	Subroto Das, Rajshahi
Ashok Kumar Pal, Khulna	Hafizur Rahman, Dhaka
Ashraf Ali, Maradipur	Rezanul Majid, Sylhet
Ashraf Ali, Bhola	Sohel Ahmed, Sremongol
Shabjal Hossain Khan, Manikganj	Zahidul Haque, Chittagong
Ms Anowara, Narsingdi	Selim Reza, Feni
Jesmin Khanom, Chandina	

BEP REVIEW

ANNEX B

BRAC STAFF CONSULTED

Ms. Kaniz Fatema, Director BEP
Mr. Aminul Alam, Deputy Executive Director BRAC
Mr. Shib Narayan Koiry, Chief Accountant BRAC
Dr. Sudhir Chandra Sarker, Programme Co-ordinator NFPE
Ms. Erum Marium, Programme Co-ordinator EDU
Dr. Safique Islam, Programme Co-ordinator Continuing Education
Mr. Shahid Hassan, Programme Manager, Field Operation NFPE
Mr. Monwar Hossain Khandaker, Senior Regional Manager Formal Schools Project
Mr. Sakhawat Hossain, Regional Manager Formal Schools Project

EDU Specialist Teams responsible for:

APON Programme
Preprimary
Research
Monitoring

**DIRECTORATE OF COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION STAFF
CONSULTED**

Mr. Jagodish Chandra Biswas, Deputy Director, Compulsory Primary Education
Programme
Professor Abul Basher, Director
Mr. Mostafizur Rahman, Deputy Director

BEP REVIEW

ANNEX C

QUALITY MANAGERS QUESTIONNAIRE & FINDINGS

This questionnaire is confidential. There is no need to put your name on it. Data from the questionnaire will be used in the yearly review of the BRAC Education Programme Phase III.

Please answer each question in English or in Bangla and return the completed questionnaire to Anne or Brigid.

1. Sex? Male Female
2. How long have you been a Quality Manager?
 _____ years or _____ months
3. What post did you hold before becoming a QM? _____
4. How long did you hold that post? _____ years.
5. List the training you have received since your appointment as a QM.

Name of Course	Duration	Location
i.		
ii.		
iii.		
iv.		

6. Insert a * on the above list to indicate the course that has been most useful to you in doing the job of QM.

7. What was the most important or useful topic covered in any of the above courses?

8. What was the least useful topic covered in any of the above training?

9. With regard to each of the following list the three priority concerns for you

i. teacher training

ii. school curriculum

iii. interaction with the MDU

10. Any other comment you want to make in relation to your work as a Quality Manager.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire.

QUALITY MANAGERS QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

Total number of respondents 32

1. Females 11(f) Males 21(m)

2. Length of time working as a Quality Manager.

Less than one year	5f	3m	total 8
From 1 to 2 years	6f	14m	total 14
More than 2 years	0f	4m	total 4

3. Post held before becoming a QM and length of time in previous post

TI	10(f)	19(m)
PO in charge		1(m)
Area manager	1(f)	1(m)

4. Length of time in previous post.

	female	male
Less than one year	1	2
1 year	6	0
2 years	2	1
3 years	2	1
4 years	0	5
5 years	0	12

5. Training received since appointment as a QM.

All QMs have received some training.
Those in place for 1 year or more have received at least 4 courses.

6. The most useful course in doing the job of QM.

The answers varied.

7. The most important or useful topic covered in any of the above courses.

The topics most commonly mentioned were (in order of frequency)

Refresher course training	15
Staff meeting training	13
English language	4

8. *The least useful topic covered in any of the above training.*

Few respondents listed topics. Those who did, mentioned the 'Filling-in-the-blanks' exercise within the English language course. (It is noteworthy that those who mentioned this specific item were also the same respondents who identified the topic as a whole as most useful.)

9. *Three priority concerns were identified under the headings:*

- i. *teacher training*
- ii. *school curriculum*
- iii. *interaction with the MDU*

i. **Teacher Training**

Priority Concerns: Teacher Training	Number of times cited
Refresher Course provision particularly for weak teachers and for subject-wise improvement	18
Participation in training	12
Training of MTs and BTs as facilitators	12
Basic Training provision and development	10
Co-curricular activities	8
Facilitation of small groups	6
Specific subject training and development	5
Materials supply and use	5
Presentations	3
Use of environment	3
School based training	1
Time Management	1
Selection of Trainers	1
Information about systems	1

As evident above most of the priority concerns of Quality Managers constellate around the provision of training, training of facilitators and the development of training modules. Their focus is on the improvement of existing systems and the development of a wider focus. Refresher courses are a prime concern, with about half of the respondents referring to the need to work with and help solve the problems of the weak teacher.

The selection, training and support of Master Trainers and Batch Trainers, enabling them to present effectively and to increase their subject based knowledge are also high on the list of concerns. Ensuring the participation of teachers, both in attending and participating in refresher courses is also a concern of the Quality Managers.

Few Quality Managers explicitly referred to their own needs although Time Management, Knowledge of Systems and understanding how to conduct small groups was mentioned by a number of respondents.

A desire to broaden the curriculum, to improve refresher training and to develop additional subjects (such as creative use of the environment, co-curricular activities and the development of further elements of Grade V materials) was cited by some Quality Managers.

Administrative concerns were only mentioned in relation to the supply and proper use of materials, although participation in training might be seen as an administrative matter.

ii. School Curriculum

Priority Concerns: School Curriculum	Number of times cited
Co-curriculum activities	14
Small and large group activities	14
Syllabus and problems of time for delivery	10
Development of Grade IV and V syllabus	7
Use of materials	7
School Management issues	3
Drill and organisation of drill	2
Lesson Planning	2
Use of Teacher Guide	2
Teacher's capacity	1
Examinations	1
Teacher Authority	1

The priority concerns mentioned by many of the respondents relate to the actual teaching and use of materials in the schools. They included the methodology of teaching, use of materials and the development of Grade IV and V materials.

Additionally, Quality Managers see their role as being concerned with developing new curriculum such as co-curricular activities, adjusting the syllabus so that it is able to be delivered in the time available and the development of materials related to the environment.

Some responses were directly focused on the perceived needs of teachers e.g. help in lesson planning, use of the Teacher Guide and the ability to manage aspects of school organisation such as timing.

Quality Managers clearly see their role as reflecting on the current curriculum, on the methodology for delivering the curriculum and on the development of new and wider curriculum and methodologies.

iii. Interaction with EDU

Priority Concerns: Interaction with EDU	Number of times cited
Needs based workshops and follow up support	21
Monthly meeting: open forum, discussion, ideas sharing	20
Input into curriculum and materials development	14
Shared decision making – systems and pedagogy	5
Decentralisation issues	4
Development of MTs and BTs	3
Findings from field of EDU	3

The major response from Quality Managers regarding interaction with the EDU is totally positive. The emphasis is on the Monthly Meeting and the way in which this enables Quality Managers to share ideas, problems and field level issues with EDU in an open and effective way. Additionally the Quality Managers value the provision of needs based workshops and the follow up to these, often by letter, telephone or field visit.

The input of the Quality Managers into the curriculum development process is seen by them as being a critical concern; they recognise that their field experience is valued by the EDU and their inputs incorporated in the materials and syllabus that are being developed.

The frequent repetition of the words 'open discussion', 'sharing' and 'shared decisions' would seem to indicate a very frank and positive relationship between the field and the centre. The sharing of findings from the field visits of EDU staff and the issues regarding de-centralisation are also referred to. The Monthly Meeting is obviously viewed as an open forum which acts as a mutual discussion and development focus. The EDU is seen by the Quality Manager as a provider of educational expertise and as both supporter and innovator in terms of curriculum and training.

10. Any other comment.

27 of the Quality Managers responded to this question, 5 did not. The responses fell into 4 categories as follows:

- 9 commented on the need for QMs to have the authority to undertake or participate in staff assessment to compliment their responsibility for staff development
- 6 noted the pivotal role of QMs and field staff in implementing quality
- 5 noted the increase in communication within BEP via the EDU/QMs relationship and expressed a hope that this level of interaction would permeate all levels of the programme
- 4 called for professional development for QMs to in order to enhance their staff development capacity
- 3 called for more training in all subjects for MTs and QMs and in particular English language training for QMs.

BEP REVIEW**ANNEX D****QUALITY MANAGERS WORKSHOP PROCESS & FINDINGS**

Workshop process *Time needed 2 hours and 15 minutes** 8th August, 2000
*(1 hour 45 minutes will be needed for the activity and 30 minutes will be needed for translation of instructions and of initial feedback in order to proceed to second group activity)

Break group into small groups of 5. Ask each group to do the following:

Identify the main functions of a Quality Manager and record these on a sheet of paper *15mins*

Prioritise the top three functions *10mins*

Record the three items from each group on a flip chart. Note number of times the same item is mentioned by different groups. *5mins*

Disband the small groups.

Note the 3-5 most common items.

Ask individuals to select the item that most interests them from the list. Form new small groups. If more than 5 elect to work on a specific item break them into two or more small groups but allow them to focus on the item they selected.

Give each newly formed small group 2 sheets of flip chart paper and ask each group to indicate the following:

1. how this function is exercised by them as QMs *20mins*
2. how they evaluate their level of success in exercising this function
e.g. what indicators do they look for in the short-term and in the long-term
30mins

Encourage the groups to give examples from their experience.

Hear feedback from each group. *25mins feedback*

FINDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP WITH QMS

The functions selected by the groups were as follows:

GROUP 1: Function- Staff Development

Activities of the QM

- Identify subject weaknesses
- Arrange necessary training for staff
- Assess training quality
- Follow-up assessment of staff work after training
- Encourage staff to read books, guides, and handouts on different subjects
- Enable MTs to demonstrate important lessons on different subjects in weekly meetings
- Supervise schools and assist and advise staff in preparing work plans
- Discuss different problems with staff and offer advice
- Arrange workshops to deal with specific problems
- Assist in preparing refresher modules and conduct refreshers

Criteria for short-term evaluation of performance

- Ask subject related questions and inspect lesson plans
- Decisions taken in training situation

Criteria for long-term evaluation of performance

- Improvement in team grading
- Evidence of improvement in refresher follow-up
- Monitoring report

GROUP 2: Function- Staff Development

Activities of the QM

- Subject training
- Weekly staff meetings
- School supervision
- Study circle
- Refresher for MTs and BTs
- Identify weak staff and arrange special training
- Staff development by allowing staff conduct different training

Criteria for short-term evaluation of performance

- Capacity of staff
- Observing performance of staff in staff meetings and refreshers and during supervisory visits to schools

Criteria for long-term evaluation of performance

- Monitoring by RMs, monitors and visitors
- Team grades
- Comparison of previous situation and present situation

GROUP 3: Function- School Supervision*Activities of the QM*

- Identify supervision techniques through workshops
- Staff meetings
- Prepare checklists
- Prepare workplan
- Supervise staff in school setting
- Observe performance in school setting
- Continuous evaluation
- Demonstrating lessons
- Specify topics for refreshers

Criteria for short-term evaluation of performance

- Observe capacity of staff
- Staff adherence to action plan
- Discussion with teachers and students
- Refresher modules

Criteria for long-term evaluation of performance

- Discussion with RMs TIs
- Monitoring/supervisory reports
- Assessing results of students
- Findings of research reports

GROUP 4: Function- Conducting Refreshers and Follow-up*Activities of the QM*

- Prepare framework and give instructions for operating refreshers
- Ensure refreshers conducted by MTs and BTs
- Observe refreshers, assess decisions, give advice
- Assess and reflect on decisions taken in refreshers by supervising schools
- Develop weak teachers' capacity
- Advice MTs and BTs on methods and techniques
- Time management of refreshers
- Conduct refreshers

Criteria for short-term evaluation of performance

- Observe in general
- Question and answers
- Observe refreshers
- Discussions with MTs and BTs
- Discussions with weak teachers

Criteria for long-term evaluation of performance

- School supervision
- Monitoring
- Different types of evaluation (weekly, monthly, chapter wise)
- Observation

General Comment

It was evident from the workshop that the participants had a very clear sense of their duties and functions as Quality Managers. It was also evident that they have an understanding of the implications of their work at the level of the classroom. The level of discussion indicated that they are assertive and vocal in expressing their opinions with each other and with EDU staff.

Their capacity to grapple with the changes taking place within the organisation and signified through their appointments was apparent from their responses to the question pertaining to the criteria by which they would measure their success in both the long and short term. Some groups were particularly alert to the anticipated widespread impacts of their work. Groups 1 and 2 mentioned improvements in Team grades, while Groups 3 and 4 mentioned improved student performance and Group 3 mentioned findings in research reports. What is noteworthy in these responses is the recognition on the part of the QMs that their work is not about merely performing duties or carrying out activities for their own sake but rather it is about managing or facilitating a variety of staff to perform. The outcomes the QMs strive for are not solely dependent on the QM's individual performance but on the collective performance of all of these frontline and HQ staff.

BEP REVIEW**ANNEX E****EDU STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE AND FINDINGS**

Questionnaire (The spaces provided for answers have been deleted to save space)
This questionnaire is confidential. There is no need to put your name on it. Data from the questionnaire will be used in the yearly review of the BRAC Education Programme Phase III. Please answer each question in English or in Bangla and return the completed questionnaire to Anne or Brigid.

1. Sex? Male Female
2. What is your position title in EDU?
3. How long have you been a member of the EDU?
4. If you worked in BRAC before joining the EDU what position did you hold and for how long?
5. On the following table list the training you have received since joining the EDU?
6. What experience have you had of primary education?
7. Have you had any experience in the field?
8. What knowledge do you have of rural Bangladesh? Have you ever lived or worked in a rural area?
9. What do you see as the role of the EDU?
10. What do you think that you can contribute to the development of a primary education capacity for BEP?
11. What additional skills/training do you think that you need in order to make this or other contributions to the EDU?
12. How important do you think decentralisation is in order to improve the quality of education in BRAC schools?
13. What do you see as the key issue for the EDU at the present time?
14. What do you find most exciting about being a member of EDU?
15. What do you find difficult about being a member of the EDU?

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire.

EDU Staff Questionnaire Findings

26 members of the EDU responded to the above questionnaire which was devised in order to get a profile of the members of the EDU and to establish how they perceived the role of the EDU and their own role within the EDU.

1. EDU Staff

Gender of Staff	
Female	20
Male	6

There are many more women than men in the EDU. The men tend to be promotions from the field whereas the women are more likely to be younger and recent University graduates. Some members of the previous MDU have long experience in BRAC at the centre.

2. Length of time attached to EDU

Less than one year	One year	Two years
2 male	3 male	1 male
3 female	3 female	female

3. Designation or role within EDU

Designations within EDU	Male	Female
Materials Development specialist	5	15
Trainer	1	0
Programme Organiser	0	3
Management Trainee	0	2

The respondents answered this question in different ways. Most people stated their main concern within the EDU, and this appears to be a carry over from the previous MDU designation i.e. they primarily see themselves as 'Material Developer'. Some respondents took time to break down this role and add in both the dimensions of a material developer, significantly changed since the MDU, and also to list the additional tasks they have been assigned.

The designation 'Senior Materials Development Specialist' was given by six respondents. Some respondents referred to their particular specialism e.g. pre-primary, Social Studies, Ethnic minorities etc. in their reply.

One respondent for instance described their role as:

'Material Development Specialist, Trainer for Social Studies, Co-ordinator of Alo magazine, liaison with publications for BEP, co-ordinator for Urban Schools Studies and maintaining liaison with HURIGHTS, Osaka.'

Those respondents who added detail to their designation all mentioned training, field and school follow-up and refresher course follow-up amongst other activities.

It is clear that there are defined job specifications within the EDU and that these cover a wide range of responsibilities and expertise.

4. Previous Role within BRAC

Some respondents are promoted field officers and others have worked in various departments within BRAC. It is apparent that there is wide range of field and training experience amongst the members of the EDU.

Designation/s	Sex	Length of BRAC service
Materials Development Unit	F	Not stated
MDU	F	Not stated
MDU	F	Not stated
MDU	F	2 years
MDU	F	4 years
MDU	M	2 years
Personnel/administration	F	13 years
P.O	F	1 years
P.O plus TIC	F	3 and 4 years
TIC	F	7 years
P.O plus TIC	F	Not stated
P.O. plus field officer	F	8 years
P.O plus TIC	F	1 and 3 years
P.O. plus TIC	F	3 and 6 years
P.O. plus field officer	F	5 and 1 years
P.O. plus RM	M	6 and 10 years
P.O plus RM plus QM	M	3,3 and 1 years
P.O plus FO plus Trainer	M	1,2 and 4 years
P.O. FO. AEM plus MDU	M	4,1,4 and 1 years
QM plus BRAC administration	M	12 years

5. Training received since joining EDU

A variety of workshops, both at home and abroad have been undertaken by members of the EDU. Most workshops relate to issues or current concerns and are probably needs based. There is little evidence of workshops or courses that are designed to raise the pedagogical capacity to ground experience in theory. This may need to be a future concern for EDU staff in order to raise the capacity for thinking through educational issues beyond immediate, practical issues. Some possibilities for this are discussed in Annex (x)

Name of course and number of EDU attending	Duration	Location
Child Rights Education in schools	3 days	Nepal
Parenting (2)	5 days	Local
Research based curriculum (6) TA run	12 days	Local
Study tour (2)	6 days	India
Early Childhood Education	7 days	Local
Early Childhood Education (diploma)	6 months	ECI
English Language	6 weeks	BC England
NFPE (2)	3 months	England
Language Encounter	15 days	Thailand
Gender Training	6 days	India
Children's Development (2)	1 day	Local
Child to Child	3 days	Local
Curriculum	4 days	Local
Adult Education and Language	4 months	England
Gender and Literacy (4)	11 days	England
Family Life Education	4 days	Local
Environment	4 days	Local
Child Care	4 days	Local
GQL	4 days	Local
Writing for professionals (BC)	11 days	Local
Study Tour AKF	8 days	Pakistan
Pre-Primary (2)	4 days	Local
Materials for hard to reach children (2)	10 days	Local
Child Development and working children (2)	2 days	Local
New approach to teaching primary class (2)	5 days	Local
AVA (3)	6 days	Local
English Language (2)	1 month	England
Basic Research	1 day	Local
Inclusive Education	10 days	Local
Childhood Education (diploma)	6 months	Local

6. Experience of Primary Education

Primary Experience	M	F
Teacher	3	8
M.Ed		1
D.P.Ed	1	
B.Ed	1	

7. Field Experience

Field Experience	M	F
Within BRAC	4	9
Field Testing		2
School Visits		3
Training		2
Research prior to BRAC	1	1

The answer to this question may not reflect the true picture as it is likely that almost all staff members of EDU do visit the field for both training and follow-up school activities. It is probable that most respondents did not count this as 'field experience' as they regarded working in the field as a long-term issue.

8. Knowledge of Rural Bangladesh

Knowledge of rural Bangladesh	M	F
Born and brought up	3	2
Lived and worked	1	10
Visiting e.g. grandparents		2
Research		1
School visits		2

Twenty-one of the members of the EDU have been born, worked or lived in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Others cited theoretical knowledge and understanding but did not have direct experience.

9. The Role of the EDU

Roles mentioned	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
Staff development, training and follow-up	5	8
Quality assurance within BEP	1	12
Curriculum development and revision	2	9
Liaise with field staff and apply feedback from the field	3	7
Develop and field test material	1	4
Initiate and monitor research and data collection	2	2
Identify new initiatives	2	
Develop preprimary service		1
Develop APON	1	
Develop supervision and evaluation systems	1	
Quality improvement in teaching methods		1
Visit schools		1
Enhance child-centered learning		1
Share experiences with other units in BEP	1	

It is noteworthy that a number of staff qualified their answers by mentioning that a significant aspect of the quality of BEP is its focus on children who otherwise would not receive an education.

A number of others attributed importance to the above roles as a vital strategy for decentralisation.

10. Personal Contribution to Development of BEP's Primary Ed. Capacity

Contribution	Frequency Mentioned	
	M	F
Develop & revise material	2	12
Conduct training/workshops	1	10
Collect data	1	5
Knowledge gained from working in field	2	3
Develop curriculum		5
Visit field including schools		5
Develop staff		3
Conduct meetings		2
Feedback information		2
Analytical capacity	1	
Field test material		1
Use research to identify gaps in provision	1	
Familiarity with gov system & competencies		1
Publishing and layout skills		1
Monitoring skills	1	
Ensure greater participation of ethnic children	1	

It is evident from the above that EDU staff have expertise in material production and training. This is not surprising considering the experience many of the former MDU staff acquired. It is interesting to note that 2 respondents qualified their answer by noting that their contribution was to develop new and interesting materials. A further respondent remarked that that materials developed would be of interest and relevance to the lives of the BEP pupils.

While a number of responses focus on skills it is significant that many of the contributions indicate an understanding and appreciation of the thoughtful and reflective positioning required in order for the EDU to exercise its developmental function.

11. Additional Training Needed

The responses to this question are presented under four categories:

General Training Research Related Training
Specific Skills Comparative Studies

Training needed	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
<i>General training</i>		
Primary education / pedagogy related	3	6
Curriculum development & review	2	6
Vocational training		3
Preprimary education	1	
Communications		1
Health		1
Information technology		1
Material development		1
Training of trainers		2

Training needed	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Research related</i>		
Qualitative research	1	1
Educational research	1	1
Analysis of data collected through monitoring	1	

Training needed	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Specific skills</i>		
English language training	2	2
Report writing		2
Graphic design		1

Training needed	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Comparative studies</i>		
Seminars etc. with gob and other agency staff		1
Exposure visits		1
Educational provision for ethnic minorities	1	

A number of staff noted that although they had experience working in specific areas they often had no formal training in that field. This was particularly so for those requesting general training. Those who listed training in the other categories implied they needed these additional skills or capacity to enhance their performance.

12. Importance of Decentralisation in Improving Quality within BEP Schools

Advantages of decentralisation	Frequency Mentioned	
	M	F
Local variations can be taken into account	1	4
Gap between field and HQ closing		4
Impacts evident in all aspects of service delivery	3	1
Process of decision-making more participatory		3
Shared responsibility and accountability	1	2
Fast implementation of new practices		2
Decision can be taken promptly		2
Curriculum relevant	1	1
Training is appropriate		2

From the responses there was a strong sense of decentralisation going hand in hand with a closer and more collaborative work environment within BEP. Although responsibility and authority to make decisions is being devolved to the field, the gap between the field and HQ is narrowing rather than widening.

13. Key Issue for EDU Now

Key issue	Frequency Mentioned	
	M	F
Developing curriculum based on national competencies	3	4
Develop needs based curriculum	2	5
Quality development/assurance		5
EDU staff training	1	3
Batch & Master trainer development		3
Facilitate teachers and field staff		2
Decentralisation	1	
Qualitative learning	1	
Quality control		1
Extra staff in EDU	1	
Focus on APON		1

There was a strong emphasis on revising the curriculum in line with government competencies and the educational needs of the BEP pupils. There was also a concern to support field based staff in making quality-related shifts in their practices.

14. What is Most Exciting about Being a Member of EDU?

Most exciting aspect of work in EDU	Frequency Mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Related to culture of work environment</i>		
Creative and innovative	1	3
Working on behalf of poor children & having direct contact with them		4
Can use own initiative	1	2
Nice atmosphere at work		3
Getting recognition as an analytical & critical educationalist	1	1
Working for betterment of rural people		1
Participatory approach	1	
Learning environment		1
Success of our approach		1
Field experience		1
Enjoy the work		1
Collaboration among EDU staff	1	

Most exciting aspect of work in EDU	Frequency Mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Related to task in hand</i>		
Job satisfaction from training		3
Developing new materials	1	
Batch teacher development	1	
Job satisfaction from publications		1

Respondents listed a wide range of factors that makes their job exciting. Those most commonly mentioned related to the culture of the work environment rather than the specific task in hand.

15. What is Most Difficult about Being a Member of EDU?

One respondent noted that there are no difficulties. 5 left the question blank. The responses received are grouped under three headings:

- Difficulties relating to recognition
- Difficulties relating to the working conditions
- Task related difficulties

Difficulties	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Recognition</i>		
Lack of recognition for work well done	2	4
Promotion process unclear	1	2
Lack of proper staff assessment		2
Lack of encouragement	2	
Poor motivation		1
Training opportunities not always allocated on merit		1
Mothers passed over for promotion		1
Total number of comments		16

Difficulties	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Work conditions</i>		
Lack of funds to do work that is needed		3
Low salary		2
Insufficient resources	1	
Too much work	1	1
Lack of staff cohesion		1
No sick leave		1
Basing all EDU staff in Dhaka only		1
Total number of comments		11

Difficulties	Frequency mentioned	
	M	F
<i>Task related</i>		
Differences in skills and knowledge within staff team	1	2
Participatory decision-making is difficult	2	
Promoting decentralisation is difficult	1	
Lack of skill to do the job		1
Tackling the scale of the poverty in Bangladesh		1
Total number of comments		8

In the difficulties relating to recognition all 16 comments referred to unfairness and lack of transparency in assessing staff performance. Four of the comments relating to work conditions referred to a lack of resources.

BEP REVIEW

ANNEX F

EDU STAFF WORKSHOP PROCESS AND FINDINGS

EDU Staff Workshop Process

Time needed 1 hour and 45 minutes*

*(Activity 1 hour and 15 minutes, translation 15 minutes)

1. In small groups list 6 things that would improve the quality of education in BRAC schools. *15mins*

2. Prioritise list and write each item on a separate card. *10mins*

3. Bring the small groups together

Ask each small group to chose a card to bring out under the following categories:

What item would please the donors most?

What item would please the parents most?

What item would please the teachers most?

What item would the children benefit most from? *5mins*

4. Ask large group to decide on new categories that these items could be listed under.

Agree categories. *10mins*

5. Allocate one category to each small group and ask group to decide what action/training/research is needed to achieve quality in this area. *30mins*

Feedback lists on the wall and allow everybody to view. *5mins*

EDU Staff Workshop Findings

The following categories emerged from activity 4 above:

- Curriculum development
- Training
- Research
- Networking

The action/training/research needed to achieve quality in each area were as follows:

Curriculum development

- Revision of the curriculum would be based on national competencies, but our social and practical priorities would also be taken into account.
- Analysing of national and BRAC curriculum

↓
Developing materials

↓
Field testing

↓
Revision

↓
Finalising the material

↓
Implementation

↓
Evaluation

Training

- Need assessment
- Need-based module
- Participatory and joyful training approach
- Skilled, experienced and specialised facilitator
- Assessment of training achievement
- Activity-based training aids and materials (interactive audio-visuals etc.)
- Receiving training course

Research

- Training for qualitative research
- Preparing need-based research proposal
- Selection of subject and content areas
- Methodology
 - Data source
 - Sample
 - Method
 - Techniques
 - Instruments
 - Data collection & analysis
 - Time frame
 - Final report presentation
- Necessary steps taken

Networking

- Liaison with QMs
 - Monthly meeting
 - Field visit
 - Workshop
 - Correspondence
- Liaison with MTs and BTs
 - Training
 - Workshop/Refresher
 - Field visit
 - Correspondence
- Liaison with RMs and TIs
 - Meetings
 - Field visit
- Liaison with teachers
 - Field visit
 - Refreshers
 - Special meeting
- Liaison with students
 - School supervision
 - Individual contact
- Liaison with parents
 - Parents meeting
 - Individual contact
- Liaison with
 - BRAC monitoring department
 - BEP monitoring unit
 - BRAC RED
 - Other BRAC programme
- Liaison with government
- Liaison with national and international organisations
 - Seminars
 - Workshops
 - Meetings
 - Presentations

BEP REVIEW**ANNEX G****REPORTS OF FIELD TRIPS**

RAJSHAHI 12TH TO 14TH August, 2000

During the trip the following were visited:

12th August, Rajshahi Region

Mr. Nazrul Islam, RM

Mr. Shubrotho Das, QM

1. NFPE School at Teghor, Teacher Ms. Nurzahan. This school has just completed Grade III and is about to commence Grade IV.
2. NFPE School at Borogachi, Teacher Ms. Rahima Khatun. This school has just completed Grade III and is about to commence Grade IV. We also met two former BRAC students who are now in Grade VIII.
3. NFPE School at Bogogachi, Teacher Ms. Chand Sultana. This school is in Grade V. We also met two former BRAC students in Grade X and XII.
4. BEOC Reading Centre at Karigorpara, Teacher Ms. Mumtaz Begum. All of the girls are still in school including two who are married.
5. Paba Team Office, MTs for Maths, Social Studies (I to III), Science and Social Studies (IV to V), Bangla and Social Science.
6. Adolescent Leader and Peer Educator for APON, Ms. Matowara Khatun

13th August, Natore Region

Mr. Sunil Kumargaine, RM

Ms. Rafeja Khatun, QM

1. Natore Team Office, TI Salim Reja. Also met former BRAC student now working in BRAC RDP as store manager.
2. BEOC School at Goaldanga, Teacher Ms. Shahina Begum.
3. NFPE School at Uttar Borgotcha, Teacher Ms. Rongila Begum (substitute teacher. This school is in Grade V. We also met two parents who are members of the School Committee.
4. NFPE School at Chowdhery Borgotcha, Teacher Ms. Sabihi Afreen. The Resource Teacher Ms. Nurunahari Begum who was also present is a former NFPE Teacher who is now a staff member.
5. Preschool at Chowdhery Borgotcha. Met parents of the preschoolers who were keen that their children who are attending the preschool would continue in the BRAC NFPE school.
6. BRAC Kafuria Gonokendra Library.
7. Puthia Team Office, TI Ms. Farida Parvin.
8. Met four former BRAC students working as carpenters in a furniture shop.
9. Rajshahi Regional Office and met with Rajshahi Urban Schools Team.

14th August, Rajshahi

1. Urban NFPE School at Laxmipur Dingadoba, Teacher Ms. Thouhida Begum.
2. TARC Basic Training for substitute NFPE Teachers.
3. BRAC Primary School at Birostiyi, Teachers Grade II Ms. Dilruba Begum, Grade I Ms. Rowshanara Begum, Preprimary Ms. Runa Laila.

Notes from the field

Boy:Girl Ratios

The TI in the Paba Team Office, Mr. Abul Ashan, provided the following data indicating the changing ratio of boys:girls in 5 schools that have operated in the same area with the same teacher since 1991.

School *	First cycle began 1991			Second cycle began 1995			Third cycle on-going		
	boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total
1	0	30	30	8	25	33	10	23	33
2	9	21	30	15	18	33	16	17	33
3	5	25	30	12	21	33	15	18	33
4	3	27	30	13	20	33	15	18	33
5	9	21	30	11	22	33	15	18	33
Totals	26	124	150	59	106	165	71	94	165
Ratio	17:83			36:64			43:57		

*The schools and teachers are as follows:

1. Borogasi Hat, Ms. Rahima Khatun
2. Baroy Para, Ms. Amena Begum
3. Vhola Bari, Ms. Angumanara
4. Karigirpara (Borogasi Modda), Ms. Momjaj Jahan
5. Dhormohata, Ms. Mahamuda Khatun

Within these five schools the numbers of boys increased within each of the schools as the cycles progressed. In fact these schools have exceeded the 40:60 boy:girls ratio proposed for Phase III. The shift, if not the absolute ratio, bears out the trends throughout the programme as a whole. As the school serves succeeding cohorts of children the needs of girls decreases and the need to provide for boys education increases. (See following table for further example from Natore.) It could also be argued that the social goals aspired to in the BEP are dependent on boys exposure to the content and learning environment provided in the NFPE schools. The inclusion of boys also ensures the schools are not perceived as offering an educational experience that is specific to girls and by inference of a lower standard than might be appropriate to boys.

TEAM - NATORE

BEP

REGION - NATORE

SUBJECT:- SHIFTING TRENDS IN BOY/GIRL RATIOS

DATE-13.08.2000

SL. NO.	NAME OF SCHOOL	NAME OF TEACHER	FIRST OPEN IN 1989			2nd OPEN IN 1991			3rd OPEN IN 1994			PRESENT ON GOING			REMARKS
			BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	
01	HORI GASA	MISS. KULSUM	08	22	30	08	25	33	12	21	33	09	24	33	
02	BARO GHORIA	MISS. HASINA	09	21	30	10	23	33	10	20	30	16	17	33	
03	AMHATI SHIGPUR	MISS. HALIMA	10	20	30	08	25	33	09	24	33	16	17	33	
04	SHIB DURGAM	PROTIMA	05	25	30	12	21	33	12	18	30	13	20	33	
05	KOROTA	MISS. SHAMSUNNA HAR	05	25	30	10	20	30	14	16	30	07	26	33	
06	POGHU NATH PUR	MISS. NASRIN	09	21	30	07	23	30	12	18	30	14	19	33	
07	SHINGHOR DHO	MISS. POKEYA	10	20	30	09	24	33	10	20	30	13	20	33	
08	CHOWDORI BORO GASA	MISS. JAHILA.	07	23	30	10	20	30	12	18	30	10	23	33	
09	UTTOK BORO GASA	MISS. PONGILA	09	21	30	12	18	30	14	16	30	16	17	33	
10	BONBEL GHORIA	MISS. DILRUBA	10	20	30	08	25	33	12	21	33	15	18	33	
TOTAL			82	218	300	94	224	318	117	192	309	129	201	330	

FIRST RATIO:- 27:73

3RD RATIO:- 32:68

2ND RATIO:- 30:70

4TH RATIO:- 40:60

Conversations with BRAC students

In two or three of the schools we asked students what they would like to do at the end of their education. Some of the answers revealed a deep understanding on the part of the children of their position at the lower end of the social scale. One Grade V girl said she would like to be a doctor and to work specifically with the poor. Many doctors, she said, are not interested in taking care of the poor, they spend their time in the private clinics and do not come to the hospital. She would like to be a different type of doctor, one who provided services for those without the money to pay for private treatment. Another child said she would like to be a teacher and would like to teach in the same way that her BRAC teacher does - respecting the children even if they are poor. These are just some of the answers the children gave. I quote these two cases here because they clearly demonstrate how aware these very young people are of the economic and social exclusion that permeates their lives. Responses such as these emphasise the latent potential for social transformation that exists when these children are given an opportunity to participate in education. In determining the benefits that accrue from investment in the education of poor children it is difficult to measure the potential impact these children may have in the future. They may, or may not, go on to achieve their ambition, however, there is ample evidence worldwide that when a substantial cohort of those who have experienced poverty and exclusion are provided with the tools to compete for a scarce resource such as education, it has cumulative impacts on the well-being of their community as a whole. People begin to recognise that their status is not due to their academic inability but to a range of factors associated with poverty that hold them back. Also when a reasonable number of children get access to schooling some will go on to train as professionals. As adults they carry with them an understanding of hardship that is born of their own experience. Any of them who then chose to work with the poor have a deep understanding of what the needs are.

Conversations with Former BRAC students

It was impressive to meet so many former BRAC students in the course of the field trip. They provided tangible evidence of the impact education can have on an individual's life course. Some of those we met are working and others are continuing their education. The roll numbers of those who are still studying indicate that they are in the top 20% within their respective class. Those who have already completed Grade X had all achieved a B Grade. In both Rajshahi and Natore Regions BRAC's education programme has been operational for nine years and eleven years respectively. A study is planned to trace as many of the former students as possible and profile their experiences since leaving the BRAC school. The first schools opened in both places were KK or BEOC schools that took children who were past the age of enrollment in formal primary schools. The time that has elapsed since the commencement of these schools means that many of those who participated in the early cycles are now in their mid teens to early twenties and have progressed into formal schools, taken up employment, married and become parents. The proposed tracer study will provide useful information on the impact these schools have made on their lives. A number of those spoken to who are completing Grade X or above expressed a desire to work in BRAC as teachers. If they do become

involved in the BEP they will provide excellent role models for new cohorts of BRAC students.

Sylhet 11th – 14th August 2000

Sylhet District has particular problems related to education, and a different kind of demography and poverty pattern to most of Bangladesh. Additionally the terrain which is hilly, an interior which is remote and often cut off by flood together with heavy rainfall patterns, makes for the distinct character to this area. I was interested to see how BRAC adapts in these kinds of conditions.

Distances to schools create transport and communication difficulties. Bicycle or boat is the most usual mode of transport, on foot when rain makes the bicycle impossible. Motorcycles are not very frequent on the roads, probably due to the predominantly muddy and wet conditions. Reaching schools was often difficult – the van got stuck and we had to continue on foot through large quantities of mud. In these climatic conditions the interior of the mud/bamboo school buildings are steamy and damp which must make preservation of materials quite problematical.

Sylhet town and some of the interior are very traditional particularly with regard to women and girls. There are few women on the streets or in the market, burkas are regularly worn and women do not work in the fields or the outside of the house compound. We were told that the Sylhetis do not 'value' education possibly because of the links with ex-patriots who provide a source of income for many families. This may relieve families of the pressure to earn beyond the agricultural working of their land which is predominant. Girls and women are treated very traditionally and the value of girls' education is rated at a low level. Well off Sylhetis use the private school system and there are many private educational institutions in Sylhet, the government school is poorly viewed, parents being very critical of poor teacher attendance, large classes and an inadequate coverage of the curriculum.

Sylhet city is a large urban spread, characterised by very small houses congregated in distinct slum areas. There seems to be a high level of children on the streets or working in the day time. The poverty of housing and conditions is very apparent – flooded yards, garbage dumps, houses that are poorly constructed, densely situated and inadequate in size.

A significant feature of Sylhet is the predominance of minority ethnic groups both in the city and the rural areas. In the city they form the lowest level of workers and appear to be grounded in poverty. Almost all working children in the city are in this category. There are 30 Hard-to-Reach schools for working children in Sylhet city alone, and this is considered to only cover about one third of eligible age working children. In the school visited 100% were from minority ethnic groups. In the rural areas the tea gardens operate almost entirely on labour from ethnic minorities. The huge construction work on the

In the North is mainly done by tribal labourers, the stone and sand mining along the river are also done by ethnic minority labour.

Tea owners have an obligation to provide some kind of schooling on their estates is not taken up. BRAC now operates NFPE schools in several tea gardens where there is interest shown by the management. Children are eligible to work from the age of eleven, primary schooling of good quality therefore a real need for this particular group. Villages in the tea garden are poor; health facilities are compounded by traditions and superstitions that put new mothers and small babies at risk. Where there has been exposure to good and satisfactory maternity practices and they are taken up these practices come from the community. In the case of maternal death the oldest child appears in the task of looking after the family (in one case an eight year old boy looking after the cows and doing the cooking and housework). Given the poor maternal health, the absence of children and the lack of mother presence either because of work, illness or the pressure for children to work it would seem that there will be a need for schooling in this sector of the population for a long time to come.

In this scenario a visit to a Kasia tribal village was very different. Neat, clean tended gardens and an air of calm rural tranquillity were the predominant features. The village was run by a headman and selected committee, health provision by a local woman and the primary school run by the community. Although the local language was not Bangla many people spoke Bangla and the children in the school were learning to be literate in Bangla. This seemed an ideal of rural development but it was sustained by an idyllic and healthy mountain environment, income generated by betel cultivation and stone mining and the provision of a healthy environment and diet based on their own gardens. Men and women cooperatively and made common decisions. Already they had been able to provide primary schooling for the children on the village. In such conditions the need for formal education is much less.

The opportunity for discussion, observation and questioning of children, teachers and the community is very valuable. As always brief visits can fail to really get a true focus but they do provide help in the articulation of ideas and in reflection on BRAC plans as they are implemented in the field. The dedication of staff and teachers, the happy faces of the children and the interest and gratitude of the community convince the visitor that the BRAC NFPE is not just positive and justifiable, but that in many communities it is a development that opens up opportunity and wider horizons to the most oppressed and excluded members of Bangladeshi society.

Shahibad BRAC School Srimangal (NFPE) Third Year

A very pleasant classroom with wall newspaper, pictures and decorations. Children were growing plants in small bottles attached to the bamboo wall. The class was doing Social Studies Grade V using the government textbook. The lesson was introduced using the BRAC method of discussion, group work and individual learning of words and concepts and then the children worked individually to complete the questions in the textbook. The children were well organised, interested and appeared to have no difficulties with the text (which was dense and very remote from the children's own experience.) Words like *Vasco de Gama* and *East India Company* were well pronounced by the teacher and repeated accurately by the children. The teacher did not use the map to show children the areas of the world referred to but the lesson was brisk and well delivered.

The Maths lesson was preceded by singing and games. The numbers' game was fast and all the children were highly involved and enjoying themselves. The maths lesson then took place and the children worked together, then in groups and finally presented individual results on their slates to be corrected by the teacher.

In discussion with the teacher the following points were made about the IV and V year curriculum:

- The government textbook was difficult but using the BRAC approach to teaching it helped the children to understand
- The teacher had found the maths course for Grade V most difficult and felt unsure of her own competence in maths. She had shared this with the trainers and other teachers and received support. There were handouts to support particular lessons and these helped.
- The objectives for Social Studies are very clear in BRAC books 1-3 but the government textbook has no clear objectives.
- The new Teacher's Guides for Grade V will be helpful when they are finished as they are essential to give structure to the teacher.

BRAC Primary School: Srimangal

A new building in a beautiful paddy field surrounding, some distance from the village.. Inside the school is clean and well organised.

There is an enormous opportunity here for research based innovation, trying to push out the barriers, empower teachers to be more innovative and exploratory in their teaching and to create a flexible and child centred environment in the actual classroom. Independent movement, grouping of furniture or children, resources available to the child to use will broaden the curriculum opportunities and enable new methodologies and supplementary materials and activities to be introduced.

There had been a very positive response to the BRAC formal school from the local education personnel. The Thana officer had previously been very opposed to BRAC but came to visit the formal school and went away very impressed. He took the BRAC

English materials to study and plans to bring a group of headteachers to visit the school and to observe the BRAC methods. It would be interesting if this was to develop into a mutually beneficial dialogue between the government and BRAC systems.

We visited each of the classrooms. In each class there were a proportion of 13 boys in the class of 40. This proportion had been agreed with the community although they had originally pressured for a higher ratio.

In the Shishu class they were enthusiastically identifying the alphabet using a picture chart. There was little to differentiate either the room or the teaching as a baby class however. At this stage of development the identification of the alphabet needs to be accompanied by tangible, real objects and it is an ideal opportunity to exploit the local environment and to create displays within the classroom related to a particular letter.

Class One were doing Maths and using the blackboard for revising a process and identifying problems. The BRAC interaction of support and gentle encouragement was very apparent in the teacher and the children were not nervous or intimidated by the cohort of visitors in the room.

Class Two were using the BRAC English book, their accents and grasp of words was good although they were shy about using their English. The teacher did not take the opportunity to use the English visitor as some teachers have done previously. The lesson was well presented and organised.

This school was a lovely environment with a huge amount of potential. It will be very interesting to see how the carefully planned development stages, the empowerment of the teachers and community interface come to fruition.

The Quality Manager who accompanied us was newly appointed to the area but we met the previous QM on a later visit and were able to discuss a little about the school and the setting up of the school.

Later discussions at HQ with Mr. Sakhawat Hussain and Mr. Monwer Hossain Khandkar made it possible to interpret what was seen in the school in the light of the formal school's potential as a vehicle for quality improvement in BRAC.

Makrichara BRAC School, Hobigonj

This school, situated in the tea estate area, was in a small hut rented from a temporary land owner. The estate is supposed to provide primary education, none do but some will provide a school room and a crèche that allows the pluckers to work if they have no-one to mind the baby.

The children in this school were 100% ethnic minorities and represented a large number of different tribal groups and immigrants. The teacher was also from an ethnic minority and encouraged the children to celebrate their ethnic origins, to learn and sing songs in

their own language and to share with each other their diversity of cultures. They were doing Bangla when we arrived and enthusiastically going through the very structured routine of learning new words and spellings, part by rote repetition and part by checking through blackboard work. As all these children were learning Bangla as a second language the pace and the repetition seemed appropriate and they engaged in the work with enthusiasm.

The children gave an excellent display of culturally based singing and dancing, all the children joining in with different languages.

SAWA BEOC School, Hobingonj

This school, in a remote village, is in an area where there is a strong tradition of not accepting education, and of not educating girls. None of the boys and girls in the school had been to school before, no drop-outs but first time education. Ages in the school ranged between 8 and a claimed 14 although some girls and one boy certainly looked older.

Age	Number
8	1
10	11
12	6
13	5
14	10

The pupils all wanted to go on to high school, ambitions to be a teacher figured high when questioned about their future. They all liked school and their teacher and when we briefly saw them in the lesson they were engaging with learning with great enthusiasm. It was a Maths lesson and some children were experiencing quite basic difficulties, counting with fingers etc. but with support from friends and encouragement from the teacher all the children were able to write down long numbers and do simple addition and subtraction of three figure numbers.

Phulbair School, Kalmangi

This was a tea estate school. Children were employed on the estate from eleven years old. The people on the estate looked very poor, they have a small amount of land on which they build their own mud house. The school was a room built by the temporary owner. The class 3 had been operating for two days and the teacher had just returned from Change of Class 4 day training. The whole class was engaged in learning, looking at and pronouncing difficult words from a story which they then did some reading in groups and writing about. The pace of the lesson was slow – particularly reading and marking the slates took a long time. The children were not upset by this but the thought occurs that the pressures experienced by the teacher in completing the Year 3 curriculum

in time are compounded by a structure which has 'gaps' in actual teaching and learning activity.

Again this is maybe an area for curriculum development to look at – how to maintain the structure but make some space for children/groups to engage in other activities.

A short survey of pupils in this school was done in order to check out the kind of composition of the school. 20 children were from ethnic minorities, 13 were Bangladeshi but not all Sylheti. Ages were very mixed.

8 years	1
9 years	4
10 years	11
11 years	5
12 years	6
13 years	1

These were the ages given by the children but many appeared unsure about the answer to the question and at least two girls looked to be fifteen years old.

I talked to four children, a 'corner' sample, to try and get a sense of the kind of children who attended this school.

1. Kashia girl aged 10. Father working in the north collecting betel
Mother working in the tea garden.
Older brother and sister working in tea gardens but not this one – both married.
Received an allowance of 4 kg, wheat in the week from the estate.
Ate rice for breakfast and dinner and roti for lunch
2. Bauri boy aged 9. Eldest of three brothers. Mother and sister died recently. Father works in the tea garden.
The boy looks after the two infants and cooks the meals
3. Muslim boy aged 9. Father works in tea garden. Mother is house wife.
Two sisters and two brothers. Mother looks after the babies and does the cooking
4. Saomtan girl aged 12. Father died, mother has asthma. Three older brothers. One looks after the rice field, one looks after the cattle and one works in the tea garden. She looks after her little sister and does housework.

Reading Centre Srimangal

This was a short visit due to pressure of time and the light failing and no electricity in the school. The Reading Centre was crowded, not just with BRAC graduates but some of

their friends from the high school who came with them. Every child had graduated into high school from the BEOC school, except for three girls who had got married. They visited if they were at home with their parents. The girls were very enthusiastic about the Reading Centre and looked forward to the APON sessions that were due to start. One very confident girl reading in Grade 6 had been trained as an APON facilitator for the area and spoke clearly about the potential benefits of the scheme. Not all parents had agreed to their daughters attending but many had and she believed that when it started and they understood there would be less opposition. Graduates from previous BEOC schools in this area had won scholarships, two of the girls stood second in their year at the high school. As previously felt (Appraisal Report 1998), this congregation of girls who are otherwise confined to their houses, teaching each other to play chess, borrowing books and playing games and just talking seemed to be a life line which would make a significant difference to the girls' perception of themselves and also to their future ambitions.

Sadatikor NFPE Class 2: Sylhet urban slum school

This school was housed in a previous club-house now rented to BRAC. Whilst visiting we were met by the Ward Commissioner who praised the school and said he was glad it was in his ward. We left him actually in the school talking to the children. Such support, particularly in slum areas, is essential if schools are to function well.

This school had a bright and energetic teacher, a Batch Trainer, who worked very fast with the children, using the repetition method in Maths work, but keeping a very fast pace. This, and discussion with POs, confirmed a view that urban children might require a faster pace than rural children.

The class was very well disciplined and attentive, only 2 children had dropped out, unusual in a slum area where high migration figures usually increase drop out rates.

Government Hard to Reach School, Sylhet City.

This school operated from 8.30 - 10.30. Housed in rather poor kacha conditions with stagnant water outside nevertheless the inside was clean and bright in spite of damp floor and inadequate light due to outside interference and the need to keep the windows closed. One of thirty schools operating in the Sylhet urban area this school only meets the need of one third of working children wanting schooling in this area. The children were very mixed in size and ages, and the teacher and PO obviously worked closely together to ensure maximum attendance. Children were slower than in other schools, counting laboriously on fingers, not always sure of the answer but the overwhelming feeling was of the happiness they felt at being in school and a sense of childhood retrieved. A short survey of the kind of work done by these children is given.

Kind of work	8	9	10	11	12
Housework – own home, mother working			1F	1F	1F
Collecting firewood		1F 1M			
Collecting/selling vegetables	1F	1M	2M		
Pushing rickshaws			1M	1M	1M
Cleaning rickshaws (10)		1M			
Packing polythene bags	1F				
Selling water	1F				
Supplying water for person e.g. slum owner	1F	1F	2F		1F
Collecting fish and selling	1M		1F		
Collecting waste paper		1F		1M	
Washing cars				1M	
Maid/servant			1F	1F	1F
Working in garage			1M		
Washing Clothes					1F

The POs who conducted the surveys for the HTR schools have identified enough working children who want education to open 2 more schools for every 1 currently opened in the Sylhet urban district.

Meeting with Team at Sylhet

This was an opportunity for a two hour meeting with the Regional Manager, Quality Manager, Team in Charge, and the Programme Organisers for NFPE and for Hard to Reach schools. A number of issues were raised in an informal way and a summary of issues discussed is given below:

1. Relationship between Regional Manager and Quality Manager.

They meet every Thursday to discuss quality issues and to share administrative matters. They also meet together after the RM and QM Monthly Meetings and share what has gone on there. They live in the same building and therefore day to day discuss issues between themselves and the rest of the team.

2. Different needs and problems of urban schools

- Urban schools have problems with getting school houses and these are often subject to the whims of the owner of the slum.
- It is hard to get married teachers and the migration of children and teachers causes drop out problems
- Children are sometimes more difficult, naughty, quicker, find it difficult to concentrate
- The materials are more suitable for rural children – not a lot to motivate the urban child
- There is good competition because schools are relatively close and there are more of them in the area

- Children seem 'cleverer' – they ask a lot of questions. This can cause problems for the teacher who finds it difficult to accept at first
- Opportunity cost is high and teachers go to other NGO or teaching jobs

A very interesting discussion followed about the curriculum for the urban child and also for the Hard to Reach children. Suggestions arising from this are given in Annex I.

3. Hard to Reach Schools

Discussed what they do and looked at the BRAC materials and the Government materials. Again the curriculum content was high on the concerns and a useful discussion followed that was promoted by an anecdote about a boy who worked in a steel factory and was a poor attender who started to come to school regularly after they found a picture of a steel factory and put it on the wall of the school. The 'need to find yourself in schooling materials, particularly reading materials' was then discussed at length and suggestions for curriculum development for this area were made.

I was impressed by the commitment and open-ness of these POs and felt that they could usefully take on a small research project related to the contextualisation and individualisation of reading and writing for the Hard to Reach schools.

4. Weak Teachers

The problem of how to deal with weak teachers was discussed at some length. In the classroom and in the Refresher course it was felt that these weak teachers needed more support and training than was currently available. They had tried demonstration and in-school support but felt that teachers needed more actual training. The identified areas of weakness were to do with the inability of the teacher to create the necessary interaction and relationship with the children that would allow maybe weak teaching skills to improve. In urban areas children are more difficult to discipline and naughtier, a weak teacher could well have significant discipline difficulties that make her teaching of the curriculum difficult. The point was made that interested children are less difficult to discipline and that maybe the slow pace and repetition were not always suitable for urban learners. The agreement with this was tempered by the point that if there was to be a more focused and interesting curriculum for urban children then there would have to be a shift in basic training for teachers going to work in urban conditions.

5. Class IV and V

The team felt that there were no specific difficulties arising from the introduction of the Class IV and V curriculum. The 'gap' between BRAC materials and government textbooks was a significant factor, and the content load to cover in a shorter time was also mentioned. However the team were confident that with the second phase of IV and V materials and the completion of the Guide Books for the subjects it would be within the capacity of their teachers to teach effectively. It was felt that this area of weak teachers would be an interesting and important area to take up as a short research project

particularly the focus on where the problem lies and the remedies that could be taken to improve the teacher.

This was an interesting and worthwhile discussion which revealed a deep level of concern for quality in the curriculum and certainly no facile acceptance that materials and training, as they currently existed, were the final solution. A creative and responsive team who would respond very positively to the opportunity for further development and research.

17th August:

Visit to Community School, Manikganj APON Training

The opportunity to visit a community school and experience another aspect of BRAC formal primary school activities was welcomed. The journey was achieved in the end on foot and finally by boat. The school, surrounded now by flood water, is set in paddy field, the village is agricultural and the dwellings spaced out over a number of areas. There was a beautiful fenced garden full of flowering bushes and new third classroom which has been contributed by the community and is nearly complete. The school was bright and clean. The toilets were functioning and spotlessly clean with water jugs. Children are responsible for cleaning them and the correct use of them is seen as one of the ways in which the general standard of the village can be raised. In the village 75% of adults are illiterate, the remaining 25% have some degree of literacy but not a very high degree.

Land for the school was donated by a villager four or five years ago, the 10,000 Tks raised and the two room building completed. However no school ever functioned in the building because of disputes about teacher appointment and other matters. When BRAC was offered the school by the government they met strong resistance from the village. The villagers were angry and wanted the government to take over the school. It took four months of individual and village meetings to persuade the community to let BRAC take on the school.

Today there are four classes; pre-primary to Class 3. No child has previously gone to another school as this is a remote area. The four teachers are enthusiastic and committed with an excellent rapport with the children. The children in each class not only sang and danced but also read for us and asked questions. The range of questions and the enthusiasm with which they were asked was impressive and indicates quality learning and confident relationships within the school community.

Children in this remote village have aspirations and hopes about the future. A brief survey of Class 1 showed that they had a range of ideas about what they would grow up to do.

Job Aspirations	No.F	No.M
Teacher	12	3
Doctor	3	7
Export factory	1	3
Advocate		1
Government job	1	
Army		1
Policeman		1
Engineer		1

The boy who wanted to be an advocate was severely physically handicapped. When asked what advocates do he said, *"The go to court for people who have committed crimes. Sometimes they try to get them off and sometimes they get them convicted."* The teacher referred to the boy as 'very bright mentally although he is handicapped'. It was good to see this small boy so confident and so integrated into the school community.

The story of the setting up of this school and its present successful functioning could be an exemplar. In discussion with HQ staff and the QM it was agreed that a small case study of the school, maybe over a period of time would be beneficial. Documentation on all the early phases exists and would contribute a history to the current activities.

APON Training

APON training was in progress when we visited. It was the fourth day of a five day course. The fourteen adolescent girls were working in groups using the story of rights regarding divorce in the book. The book is arranged around stories which then highlight key points, give ideas for discussion and summarise. The books are clear and the girls were obviously very interested in their content. The facilitator was a very confident fifteen year old who had full control of the groups and was obviously enjoying the job that she was doing. There was a very positive and friendly atmosphere in the room. The girls were discussing Column 18 in the marriage document where it is necessary to sign in order to avoid problems if divorce becomes a fact. One girl said, *'How can I sign I will be weeping'* which was swiftly countered by another who said firmly, *'First sign then weep!'*

This was a very impressive display of confident, empowered young women dealing with difficult and intensely personal issues in a positive way. The strong points of the APON programme would seem to include:

- The empowerment of one girl in an area as a facilitator
- The use of story to engage with difficult areas of health and sexuality
- The pace and interest of the training
- The good materials which have been carefully designed
- The use of story to engage with difficult issues
- The use of talk and group discussion

The facilitator was delighted to see her 'appa' from HQ who had trained her. An overall impression of warmth and purpose which was inspiring to see.

BEP REVIEW

ANNEX H

GROUNDED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

These suggestions emanate from discussions in the field with QMs, TICs, POs and from observation of teachers and learners. They are suggested as possible pointers for the kind of grounded curriculum development that could take place without resource based input and without radical changes to training or teacher's present competency. The observer in the classroom is often able to see the 'gap' that could be used to exploit a situation further, in particular this is likely to happen if the observer already knows a range of possible methodologies and materials. This is, of course, an important element in the need to further develop the pedagogical resources within the EDU and QMs. The examples are all focused on literacy as this is the particular expertise of the Review member.

The use of shared reading.

BRAC schools already have a better range of storybooks and literacy resources than many government schools. They therefore offer children more opportunity to develop their literacy skills. These resources remain however within the remit of the teacher and do not become common resources for use by the individual child. This is understandable in the circumstances of limited resources and the need to preserve book materials. However there is strong evidence to suggest that children need access to written materials if they are to develop strong literacy capacity and these materials do not need to be expensive or even particularly durable. The creation within the class of small books made by the children and large books made with the teacher and read in a whole class context gives an added dimension to literacy practise and also individualises some of the learning in the classroom. The opportunity to practise reading and writing skills in a purposeful and interesting way gives first time learners access to literacy in a way which empowers them. They are not reading *to* anyone, they are accessing reading for their own reasons and for their own purposes.

The BRAC classroom is bright and well organised. Children's wall magazines are on display, maps are on the wall but these seem to remain 'display' rather than to be used as reading material. Access to written material at the eye level of the student, the opportunity to look at and point at a map which is down at child level allows children to use their literacy skills in new ways. The creation of a reading corner in the classroom is a possibility, even with limited space and resources. Cardboard boxes, small bamboo shelves, even a mud-raised area would allow literacy materials to be not only displayed but to be available for children to read. Equally small games made from waste materials allow children to develop a different reading vocabulary and to experience a wider literacy.

It is also noted that many of the teachers are creative, they like to decorate the classroom and add individual aspects to their wall displays. Experience of working with teachers in a development context indicates that many of them like to make books and games, that they are able to exploit this medium and to focus it on the needs of their learners.

Reading studies across the world have highlighted the importance of talk and discussion in the process of learning to read. This is well exploited in group reading of textbooks and stories in BRAC schools. Learning the higher order skills of reading can be developed as a whole class activity, using large size books. These can be made from chart paper, newspaper that has been whitened, waste cardboard or paper, inside of paper sacks. Reading a book together fits well into the known methodology in areas of developing education. The process has resonances of rote learning, repetition and drill but the context is meaningful and psychologically motivating and because the language generated is in the children's own syntax and vocabulary the range of words used can be wider than usual and is easily read and remembered by children. The Big Book constitutes a versatile classroom resource that can be used for practising reading skills, for promoting discussion, for encouraging drawing, for promoting co-curricular activities such as drama or puppetry. Experience shows that using these materials even in large classes can be very valuable (Smith 1997).

Writing a book as a class activity makes visible to learners the processes involved in writing, from the performative skills of handwriting to the complex intellectual skills of choosing vocabulary, constructing sentences and redrafting and editing writing. This ability to see the writing process modelled can help less competent writers to gain confidence and understanding and allows those who are good writers to consider how to improve and review writing so that the final result is the best possible.

Further exploitation of the processes of making books and reading a variety of texts can be achieved by encouraging children to make their own small books. Initially picture books, alphabet books or dictated stories written down by a more competent writer can evolve into stories in book form, information books e.g. 'how to...' and songs or poems. These simple books, made from a single sheet of paper, waste paper, backs of posters, letters etc. can be hung from a string or displayed in the reading area and read by everyone in the class. One activity like this will produce 33 reading texts in a BRAC class.

Books made either as a whole group shared activity, peer group activity or individually can be exploited in a variety of ways. Books can also be shared between schools, allowing more individualised reading texts to circulate within a local area.

The particular needs of Hard to Reach learners

Children need to find themselves in their reading books; this is when reading becomes psychologically satisfying and is the way in which a reading habit is inculcated (Meek 1989). The life of the working child differs from those of many children; urban children

have very specific environments and experiences and these need to be incorporated into texts.

Allowing children to tell their own stories, writing them down and using them as reading texts can give such children psychological space in which to reflect on their own lives and to imaginatively explore alternative worlds. This is a function of play in childhood; many of these children have been denied the opportunity for play. Equally the drive for literacy is particularly strong amongst such children, they already know that in order to change their circumstances reading and writing are key skills. Finding their own stories turned into reading texts enables such children to engage with reading at a different level and instead of struggling with the encoding of unfamiliar letters they can experience the fluency of de-coding whole texts with relative ease because they already know the story and can practise the key reading skills of prediction and self correction.

Increasing the written vocabulary of children can often be related to pictures with which they are familiar. An incident related on the field trip confirmed this.

A small boy who worked in a steel factory was an irregular attender at the HTR school. The PO found a picture of a steel factory and put it on the wall of the school. The child then became a regular attender; he literally 'found himself' in the school. A further exploitation of this good initiative would be to use the picture as a kind of text structure. To put key vocabulary on small pieces of card and get the child to place them on the correct part of the picture. A further development would be to look at each word carefully, turn it over, write the word and then check the correctness against the card. After developing the key vocabulary the child can use the words in writing sentences about his work, making small books, writing under his own drawings. Other children in the school can also read and use these materials under the 'guidance' of the original child. In these kind of activities the child becomes empowered as a reader and writer and the context of reading and writing relates totally to his own experiences and understanding.

BEP REVIEW

ANNEX I

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