

Internship Report

Title of the report: Advancing BRAC Graduates (ABG) – the Future Champion Programme, BRAC Education Programme (BEP)

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Acronyms

ADP	Adolescent Development Programme
BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BPPS	BRAC Primary and Primary School
CEP	Community Empowerment Programme
DM	District Manager
HSC	Higher Secondary School Certificate
JSC	Junior School Certificate
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
PACE	Post Primary Basic and Continuing Education
PO	Programme Organizer
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SMC	School management Committee
SDP	Skill Development Programme
ABG	Advancing BRAC Graduates

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Summary: BRAC and BRAC Education Programme

BRAC is a development success story, spreading solutions born in Bangladesh to 11 other countries around the world touching the lives of 1 in every 55 people¹ – a global leader in creating opportunity for the world's poor. What started out as a limited relief operation in 1972 in a remote village of Bangladesh has turned into the largest development organization in the world, organizing the poor using communities' own human and material resources, it catalyses lasting change, creating an ecosystem in which the poor have the chance to seize control of their own lives. It is working in many areas but more significantly in education, health, gender, human rights, skills, micro credit, safe migration, agriculture and food security etc.

In 2013 BRAC was named the number one NGO in the world in terms of impact, innovation and sustainability, by the Global Journal, polling a host of development professionals. Again in 2016, NGO Advisor (a Geneva-based independent media organization that produces the Top 500 NGOs) announced its 2016 Top 500 NGOs World rankings, and BRAC returned to the top spot.

BRAC Vision

“A world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potentials”

BRAC Mission

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

BRAC Values

Innovation: BRAC has been an innovator in the creation of opportunities for the poor to lift themselves out of poverty. BRAC values creativity in programme design and strives to display global leadership in ground breaking development initiatives.

Integrity: BRAC values transparency and accountability in all its professional work, with clear policies and procedures, while displaying the utmost level of honesty in its financial dealings. BRAC regards these to be the most essential elements of its work ethic.

Inclusiveness: BRAC is committed to engaging, supporting and recognising the value of all members of society, regardless of race, religion, gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic status and geography.

Effectiveness: BRAC values efficiency and excellence in all its work, constantly challenging itself to perform

¹ www.brac.net

better, to meet and exceed programme targets, and to improve and deepen the impact of its interventions. Moreover, BRAC has identified eight programmatic and five organizational priorities for the next 5 years. These are:

Programmatic strategic priorities

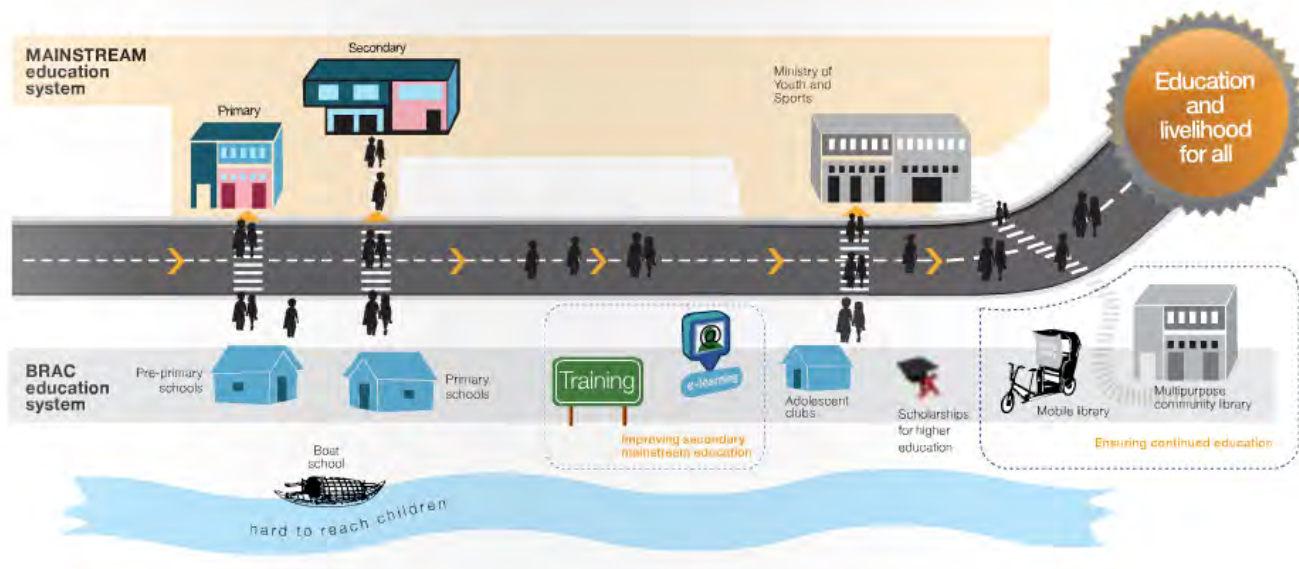
1. Eradication of extreme poverty
2. Expanding financial choices for the poor and addressing market gaps at the base of pyramid
3. Early childhood education and improving the quality of education
4. Addressing the challenges of climate change
5. Universal Health Coverage and Nutrition for all
6. Pro poor urban development
7. Skills development for the youth
8. Promoting gender equality within and outside the organisation

Organizational priorities

9. Developing leadership, management and business thinking capacity
10. Increase the efficiencies of structures and processes and increased use of data for decision making
11. Increase influence by generating more knowledge and engage in evidence driven advocacy
12. Strengthening support programmes to provide support to the programmes more effectively
13. Develop systems and processes to leverage and work with wider BRAC family and BRAC International

BRAC Education Programme

BRAC's work in education directly supports Bangladesh's progress towards achievement of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). BRAC provides extensive support to the education sector in Bangladesh. BEP is the largest programme of its kind with 1.3 million children currently enrolled in its 41,660 primary and pre-primary schools, and has 11 million graduates. BRAC's adolescent clubs provide life skills training to more than 255,000 teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, BEP supports secondary education through the training of teachers and school heads and runs a small rural secondary school programme itself. The main strategic objective of BEP is to reach the unreached and to bring positive change in teaching and learning throughout the education cycle.



Infigraph: BRAC Education Programme

BEP takes a holistic life cycle approach in its education programme by providing services for underprivileged children from early childhood to adolescence and beyond. BEP's proven effective approach is implemented in collaboration with communities and strives to be sensitised to the realities of poverty.

The main strategic objectives of BEP are addressing inclusiveness, urban slum and youth; development of early childhood, the use of information and communication technologies in its different settings to achieve better results. Thus BEP will contribute to improve the country's education goals through Early Childhood education (ECD), Pre-primary education, primary school, secondary schools, Adolescent Development, Support to mainstream Secondary schools and Advancing BRAC Graduates (ABG) and lifelong learning opportunity through MCLC.

Narrative of Profession/Internship and lesson Learned

I work for BRAC Education Programme. The purposes of my position are to developing and delivering strategic plan, budgeting, proposal and reports writing, community mobilization, advocacy and networking and overall implementation of Advancing BRAC Graduate (ABG) Programme and to well track over 350,000 BRAC primary school graduates each year at secondary level education, reduce child marriage and promotes them to higher education as well.

Detailed of ABG a programme is given bellow:

An Overview of ABG

BRAC began its education programme in 1985 focus on children from underprivileged families that are left behind from the formal education systems. So far approx. 10 million children including Person with Disability (PWD) and ethnic children have finished their primary level education from BRAC schools, after which they have been conceded in secondary schools.

Studies directed by BRAC presume that BRAC graduates who are conceded in secondary schools frequently can't finish their secondary level because of numerous discriminating circumstances. In any case, it is vital to finish secondary level to achieve an adequate level of learning. From this acknowledgment, BEP began tracking of BRAC Graduates at secondary schools in 2011 to ensure their enrolment at the secondary level, advance consistent participation, decrease dropout rate and so forth with the goal that they support at the secondary level and effectively finish the course. The programme is currently tracking 388,186 (girls 62%) students in 11,282 formal secondary schools with 20,000 Para Committee and 25,000 Reading Groups and targets to track 500,000 BRAC Graduates in secondary school.

Key Activities

Ensuring enrolment in Secondary School

It is the first and foremost duties of staffs in ABG programme to admit all the BRAC Primary Schools (BPS) students who passed in the National Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) in to a formal secondary school. All the tasks regarding the enrollment like contact the schools, discuss the socio-economic matter with the headmaster etc. are done in presence of BEP staffs and the parents. Enrollment date and time are decided in a parents meeting in the month of December. After the enrollment, the information of enrollment has included into a follow up register.

Rapport Building with Secondary School

A good relationships are maintain with secondary schools and provide them clear ideas about the ABG programme, its mission and vision, the activities as well. Some other issues are discussed like reduction of monthly fee, examination fee, performance of learners etc. These steps make a significant role to prevent the dropout of the students.

Creating Community committee

A committee is formed incorporated of 7 well-educated individuals and guardians from that community to follow up students. If the community is large, more than one community committees are formed. The responsibilities of the Para committees are:

- To follow up the attendance in the classroom and examination of the ABG students at schools and discuss regarding this issue at least once in a month.
- To ensure the purchase of essential educational materials of the students.
- To attend the parents meeting once in each months.
- To assure the regular basis lesson preparation of the students at home.

Ensure Students Attendance

Once every month, staffs go secondary schools to ensure and encourage students to regularly attend school. The staffs interact with the guardian once every three months or on a regular basis at a personal level to encourage guardians regarding continuation of schooling and ensuring regular attendance of the students at school. Certain measure are taken to improve the school attendance such as involving the community committee to actively take measure concerning the irregular students, encourage students to participate in different kinds of school activities

Meet with the ABG students

In the meeting with the ABG students it's identify and find out the subject wise problems they face during going through their lessons and help them to find out a study partner to solve those problems. In the meeting students are encouraged to study on a regular basis and even persuade them to study at night for a decent number of hours and also motivate to read the text books extensively, and explain that if they studied the text book it would help them pass and even achieve better results at the board examination

Tutorial Support:

Tutorial support is given to provide free after-school tutoring to underprivileged students by volunteer tutor. The tutor helps the students with comprehension of difficult concepts in subject lessons and textbooks. This is one of the initiatives with no capital investment while returning significant outcomes in terms of improved students' academic performance.

Financial Support to students:

Underprivileged and meritorious BRAC graduates are also provided with financial support. BRAC also maintains contact with secondary school authority and other organizations to manage scholarship and full/partial waiver for BRAC graduates.

New Interventions/Activities

Separate Staff for ABG Programme

The ABG Programme was implemented through Staff members of BRAC primary school (BPS). There was no separate supervisory staff for ABG programme. Time constraints of BPS staff were a challenge for ABG programme and the programme undergone lacks in supervision. I struggled for separate staff with higher management and finally in 2016 separate staffs are recruited in ABG Programme.

Introduction of cost recovery:

The ABG programme is aligned with BRACS' cost effectiveness strategy. It is a low cost programme which is implemented mostly through community involvement. In addition to that I introduced cost recovery in ABG. The programme started to recover 100% cost of computer literacy training from community.

Lesson Learned

I have learned priceless lesson by working with BRAC Education Programme, particularly in the current programme titled as Advancing BRAC Graduates (ABG) Programme which includes:

Project/programme Management Skills:

I learned, different stages of a project including the general process of how a project is initially planned, developed and completed; as well as how much work and detail goes into every stage. I learned the managerial essentials skills to run a project efficiently

Behavior Change Communication (BCC) Skills:

Changing attitudes and behavior towards education of community people is critical. To mobilize community people and track BRAC Graduates at secondary school highly depended on Behavior Change Communication (BCC) Skills. How to create persuasion among community and run promotional programme like education is an important learning to me.

Communication and presentation Skills:

Maintain regular communication with field, evaluation of field activities and develop strategic planning, maintain database, preparing presentation and presented it to senior management is vital to any programme and project management. I have learnt all these skills

Financial Management Skills:

Budget is fundamental. Without proper budget programme cannot sustain in the long run. Identifying key components, cost analysis and preparing budget is most critical which I learned while working in ABG programme.

Proposal and report writing Skills:

Proposal and report writing serve important functions in development sector and are common and necessary tasks for staff in various levels and roles throughout an organisation.

It is essential for the operation of humanitarian programmes that organisations have the capacity to design, write and deliver high quality project proposals and reports. I have the opportunity to develop this important skill in BRAC Education programme.

Self Evaluation

SWOT analysis of the ABG programme

Strengths

Good rapport with high schools management It is seen that very good rapport and understanding is existing between the high school authorities and ABG Programme. This is because of frequent follow up of the schools, involvement in parent's meeting, engagement in open table discussion etc. This understanding can help BRAC a lot to achieve the goals of ABG program

Supportive attitude of school

The supportive attitude of the schools is really commendable. Almost all the schools are ready to help the BRAC graduates in any way they need like, full free studentship, no exam fees, scholarships, financial help before registration for public exam, educational material purchase etc. But schools should be aware about the need of the students and that why the parents of the students need to maintain a regular communication with the school authorities.

Well- structured Para committee

The formations of the committees are well maintained as per process. Each committee includes seven members from the respective locality. They are well informed about their role and responsibilities by the BRAC staffs. Para committee can really play a significant role in Advancing BRAC Graduates Programme.

Strong acceptance level within the community

BRAC is working with the community and for the community since 1972. As BRAC has made great influences in almost every aspects of the community from 1972, community stake holders have a strong trust on BRAC and their activities. When BRAC came up with new dimensions in their activities, people from the community took that very positively. This positive acceptance can be a vital asset in this programme.

Weakness

Huge work load of staffs

After analyzing the daily action plan of a staff, it can be easily understood that huge work load is existing on a staff. That's why efficiency of the tasks that one staff performed are declining.

Inadequate follow up of school and Para committee

Due to heavy work pressure, staffs could not spend adequate time to follow up the higher secondary schools and Para committee in a regular basis. Sometimes they need to leave the ABG activities because of the heavy work pressure of BPPS programme. Proper work distribution needs to be implemented to ensure standard efficiency to all the activities of the both programme.

Inadequate coordination with ADP, PACE, CEP and STAR programme

There are some activities that are very much related to some other programmes like Adolescent Development Programme (ADP), Post primary Basic and Continuing Education (PACE), Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) and Skill Development Programme (SDP). Inadequate coordination with these programmes caused hamper to the production hour of the staffs. Proper coordination can increase efficiency without engaging more production hours.

Absence of dedicated staff

ABG is a complete programme with its own goals and objectives as well as a structured action plan of the activities. Dedicated staffs are needed to efficiently complete all the activities and move forward towards the goals and objectives of the programme. But due to the lack of proper budget and staff availability, the proper distribution of the exiting staffs of the BPPS programme can be a solution to boost up the present situation of the ABG programme.

Opportunities

Cross coordination among different programmes

There are some activities in ABG programme those are very much related to some activities of other programmes like Adolescent Development Programme (ADP), Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) and Skill Development Programme (SDP). etc. To save the production hour and the maximize use of the workforce and resources there is no other alternative than to coordinate with the other programmes related to ABG. This coordination will surely ensure the effective and smooth operation of the programme and direct the efforts towards the goal.

More engagement with committees and SMCs

In TBG programme, secondary schools are not operated by BRAC like BPS schools. So somebody should be there to make a coordination and liaison with the schools along with the BPS staffs. Community can play a very prominent role here. BRAC should emphasize more to maintain the engagement with Para committees and SMCs. This engagement will make them more motivated to be aligned with ABG programme.

Inter branch coordination of the programme

Sometimes some students completed their primary level from a BPS school under one branch and got admitted to a secondary school under another branch. Inter branch coordination will help to track this kinds of students without any hassle. This coordination can be in many more ways. This will also save the production hour and workforce.

Priority of jobs for BRAC graduates within BRAC

One of the most challenging issues in ABG programme is retain the students through education till the SSC. But because of the financial crisis most of the families are interested to engage their children to income generating works rather than education. If we can emphasize and ensure any income generating work for the SSC graduates, parents will be more interested to get their children into school to continue till SSC graduation. BRAC can prioritize these BRAC graduates for jobs within BRAC according to their qualifications and skills.

Threats

Fund unavailability

Being a fully structured programme, ABG need a fair amount of funds to run the operations smoothly towards the goals and objectives. But due to the unavailability of proper fund, the operations are being hampered very badly and that's causing interruption to achieve the expected targets.

Migration

Both in rural and urban, migration are very common issue among the people. Most of the migration happens in order to search for a better living standard for the family. Due to migration sometimes tracking become very difficult for the BPPS staffs.

Natural calamities

Various types of natural calamities like flood, earthquake, drought, river erosion etc. always make a negative impact on the locality. Those calamities are one of the main causes of migration and cause financial imbalance in a family, sometimes schools are damaged. All these collectively affect the educational activities of a locality.

Less communication local govt. officials

BRAC always maintain a close communication and liaison with the govt. stakeholders. This communication helps BRAC a lot to effectively operation many activities in the field and the strategy level. More communication local govt. officials and stakeholders will help BRAC to extensive extent.

Recommendations

1. Preprimary graduates should be included in ABG program as they have also been in a BRAC school.
2. Fund can be generated from the local businessman and local elite persons by the para committee members. This fund will be disbursed to the poorest students according to the need analysis.
3. Sufficient follow up is one of the most important activities in the ABG programme. In current situation, with the current workforce sufficient follow up of the school and the other stuffs cannot be possible. Proper fund and sufficient staff availability is needed to ensure the follow up and other activities.
4. Local PS can also be recruited for only follow up purpose. This can be managed comparatively less budget.
5. To save the production hour and the maximize use of the workforce and resources there is no other alternative than to coordinate with the other programmes related to ABG like PACE, SDP, CEP etc. This coordination will surely ensure the effective and smooth operation of the programme and direct the efforts towards the goal.
6. ABG students should be included in PACE activities such as ChatroBondhu, Mentoring etc. by the PACE staffs.
7. Along with the follow up, open discussion session can be arranged in BRAC office in a regular basis. This will also help to increase the communication and acceptance level of BRAC to the schools.
8. Annual hygiene camp can be arranged in collaboration with other organizations and schools

9. BRAC can collaborate arrange various day celebration programmes, parents' day, awareness campaign in the secondary schools and engage the BRAC graduates in various kinds of extracurricular activities.
10. Motivational meetings with JSC and SSC applicants can be more structured. Some important topic can be included like exam preparation, exam hall guidelines, psychological counseling etc.

Conclusion

The ABG programme is a future champion programme that brings sustainability of the graduates of BRAC Primary School and reduce dropout rate in secondary level education. Moreover, significant impacts of the programme will be to:

- Better learning outcomes in secondary schools with increased secondary completion rates.
- Improve quality education
- Reduce dropout rate
- Reduce gender inequality as girls will be more empowered being educated and reduced child marriage
- Better participation to increase better entry to labour market

Working in ABG Programme enhanced my critical thinking and analytical skills as well as improved my professional. The experiences boost my ability to work multidimensional task in a multicultural environment.

Appendix

A. Sample of work: Budget

**BRAC Education Programme, Phase-III
Advancing BRAC Graduates (ABG) Programme
For the Period of January to December 2016**

SI No.	Items		Unit Cost	Quantity/Number	Total Cost Budget
			Jan-Dec 2016	Jan-Dec 2016	Jan-Dec 2016
			Taka	Nos	Taka
1	Costs for ABG				
1.1	SSC Students (form fill up)		2,300	1,000	2,300,000
1.2	Admission supports for students		1,500	1,000	1,500,000
1.3	Orientation for Para commity	yearly per person 25 tk. for 8 persons	200	3,000	600,000
1.4	Student guided by Chatrabhundu /LRP para-wise (out of PACE Area) (per month Tk. 1,000)	150 chatrabandhu	1,000	1,800	1,800,000
1.5	Computer training	100% community contributopn	100	3,000	300,000
1.6	Salary Ps (30 Personnel)	Only for 2016	9,430	360	3,394,800
1.7	Salary PS	200	8,925	2,400	21,420,000
1.8	Technical Leader (G- IV)(8 personnel)	8 personnel at divisional level	42,490	96	4,079,040

1.9	Travelling & transportation (Technical Leader)	10% of 8 Personnel	4,249	96	407,904
2.0	Travelling & transportation (PS)	230, 88, 60, 55, 50 staff respectively	1,800	2,760	4,968,000
2.1	Meeting / workshop with staff	at BLC	100,000	2	200,000
2.2	Advocacy and Networking(lumsum)				717,000
2.3	Staff training & Development(10% of salary)				2,549,904
	Sub Total of 1 (1.1 to 2.3)				44,236,648
	HO Management and Logistics Expenses(8%)				3,538,932
	Sub Total of ABG (Excluding Common Cost)				47,775,580
	Common Cost				7,315,610
	Total Cost for TBG (excluding common cost)				55,091,190

ABG Budget
For the Period of January 2017 to December 2020

SI No.	Items	Unit Cost				Quantity/Number					Yearwise Total Cost				Total Budget
		Jan-Dec 2017	Jan-Dec 2018	Jan-Dec 2019	Jan-Dec 2020	Jan-Dec 2016	Jan-Dec 2017	Jan-Dec 2018	Jan-Dec 2019	Jan-Dec 2020	Jan-Dec 2017	Jan-Dec 2018	Jan-Dec 2019	Jan-Dec 2020	
		Taka	Taka	Taka	Taka	Nos	Nos	Nos	Nos	Nos	Taka	Taka	Taka	Taka	Taka
1	Costs for ABG														
1.1	SSC Students (financial support including PWD)	3,000	3,150	3,308	3,473		3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	10,500,000	11,025,000	11,576,250	12,155,063	45,256,313
1.2	Admission supports for students	2,000	2,100	2,205	2,315		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	4,000,000	4,200,000	4,410,000	4,630,500	17,240,500
1.3	Orientation for Para commity	210	221	232	243		5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	1,050,000	1,102,500	1,157,625	1,215,506	4,525,631
1.5	Computer training	200	200	200	200		3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	2,400,000
1.7	Honarium of Volenteer	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500		20	20	20	20	840000	840000	840000	840000	3,360,000
1.7	Salary PS(HSC)	9,180	9,914	10,708	11,564		511	511	511	511	58543430	63226905	68285057	73747862	263,803,254
1.8	SSr (G- IV)(8 personnel)	43,703	47,200	50,976	55,054		8	8	8	8	4363335	4712402	5089394	5496546	19,661,678
1.9	Travalleling & transportation (Technical Leader)	4,370	4,720	5,098	5,505		8	8	8	8	419,551	453,116	489,365	528,514	1,890,546
2.0	Travalleling & transportation (PS): 10%	918	991	1,071	1,156		511	511	511	511	5,629,176	6,079,510	6,565,871	7,091,141	25,365,698
2.1	Meeting / workshop with staff	105,000	110,250	115,763	121,551		4	4	4	4	420,000	441,000	463,050	486,203	1,810,253
2.2	Advocacy and Networking(lumsum)										1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	6,000,000
2.3	Staff training & Development(10% of salary)										6,290,677	6,793,931	7,337,445	7,924,441	28,346,493
	Sub Total of 1 (1.1 to 2.3)										94,156,170	100,974,364	108,314,058	116,215,774	419,660,366

HO Management and Logistics Expenses(8%)											7,532,494	8,077,949	8,665,125	9,297,262	33,572,829
Sub Total of ABG											101,688,664	109,052,313	116,979,182	125,513,036	453,233,195
Common Cost											9,838,539	11,357,435	11,137,979	10,664,632	42,998,584
Total Cost for ABG											111,527,202	120,409,747	128,117,161	136,177,668	496,231,778

B. Sample of work :Programme Presentation

**Advancing BRAC Graduates (ABG)Programme
(Started in 2011)**

Alignment with BRAC and National Goal

BRAC Priorities :

- Eradication of extreme poverty
- Skills development for the youth
- Promoting gender equality within and outside the organisation

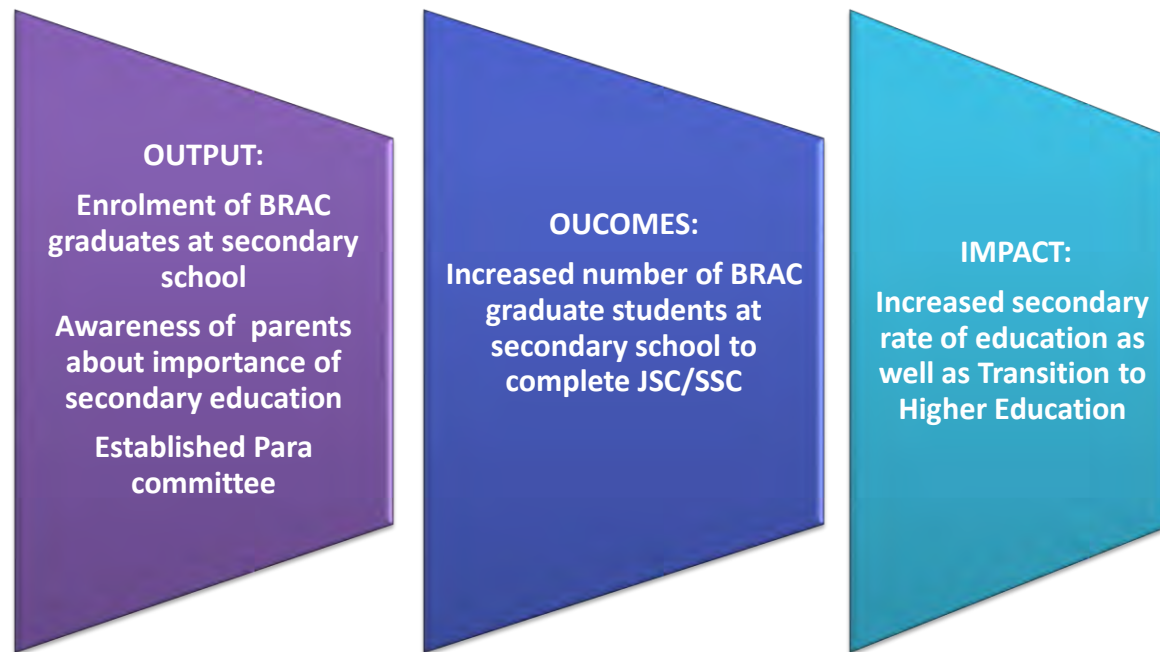
SDGs:



Sectoral Goal:

Students will choose different streams of Higher studies and will earn their livelihood by acquired vocational education

Results Chain



Key Activities

Admission confirmation

Formation of Para Committee and ensure committee meeting

Aware parents about benefits of education follow up students

Rapport building with secondary school

Financial support for SSC students

Learning team formation and volunteer support

Computer Training for students

Collaboration/Synergy across BEP

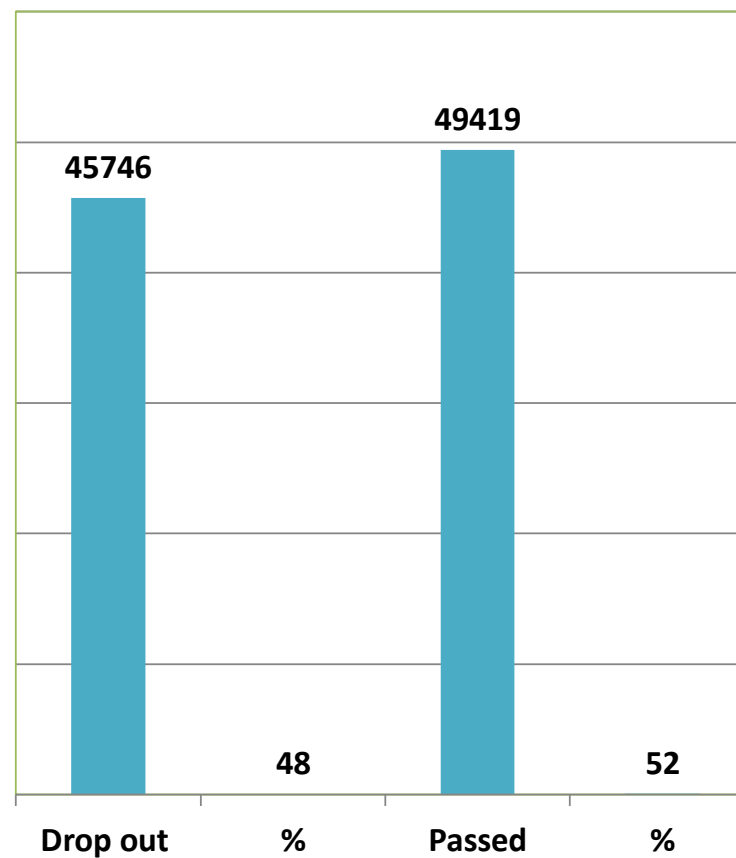
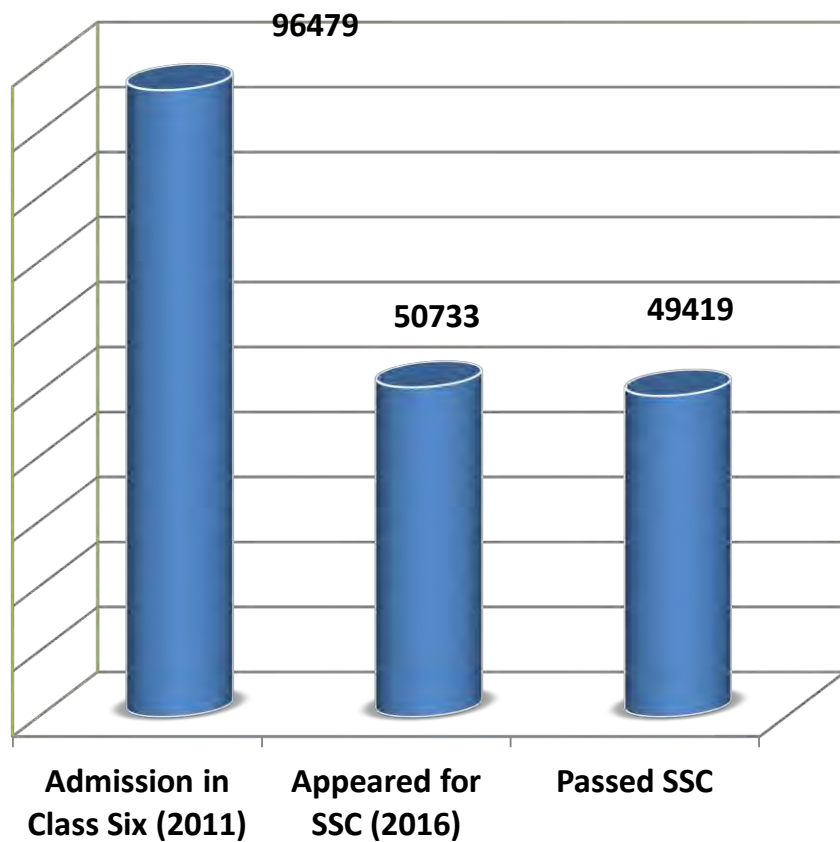
Advocacy

Year wise Students Enrolment

Year	BRAC PSC Graduates	BRAC Graduates enrolment
2011	117,934	114,858
2012	143,516	138,741
2013	185,534	182,903
2014	101,908	83,608
2015	43,843	41243
2016	120,018	99407

Achievements

Performance in SSC (Cohort 2011)



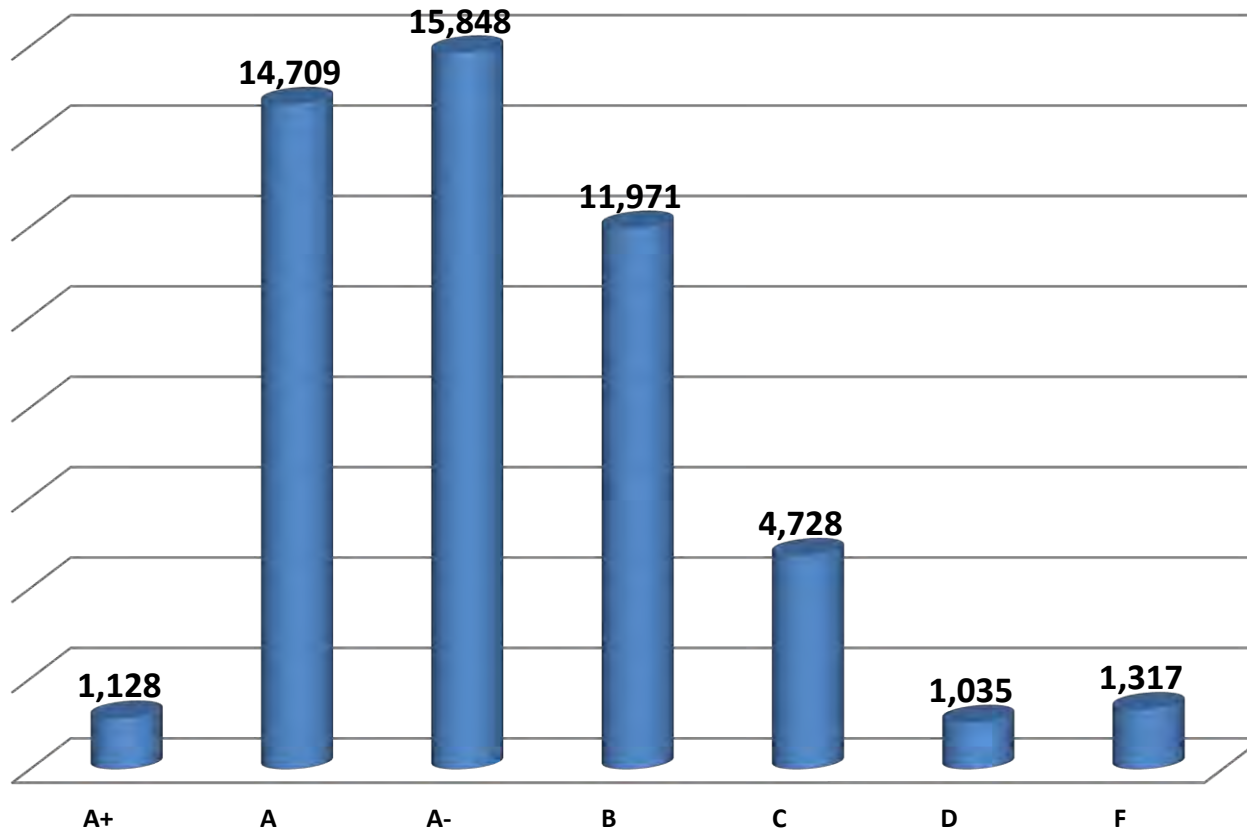
Achievements cont...

Year wise students performance in SSC

Year	Appeared	Passed	Pass rate %
2016	50,733	49,419	97.41%
2015	54,801	51,886	95%
2014	51,178	49,180	96%
2013	22,332	21,066	94%
2012	32,561	28,650	88%

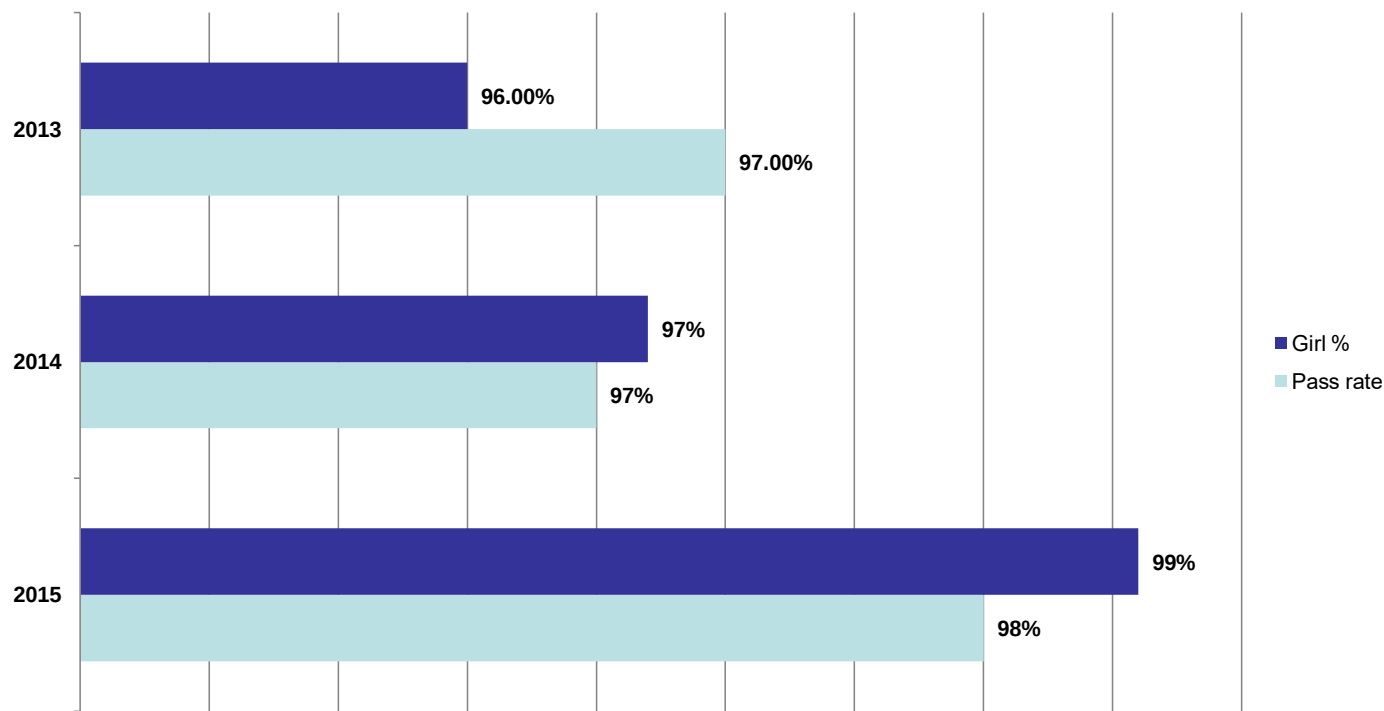
Achievements cont....

SSC Results(grading) 2016



Achievements cont...

Performance in JSC



Achievements cont....

- Currently tracking 388,186 students
- Working in 11,282 formal secondary schools
- 20,000 Para Committee
- 25,000 Reading Groups

Impacts

- **Educational:**
 - **Improve quality of education**
 - **Reduce dropout rate**
 - **Transition to Higher Education**
- **Social and Economic outcomes:**
 - **Holds girls in studying and refrain them from early marriage**
 - **Reduce gender inequality as girls will be more empowered being educated**
 - **Better entry to labor market**

Limitations and Challenges

Limitation:

- E-Students profile
- No ABG activities at closed branch offices
- Mitigation for dropped out students
- Adequate Staff

Challenges:

- Established as promotional programme
- Fund Rising
- Reduce dropout rate