



The Lakshmi Mittal and Family
SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE
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Remembering Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, Founder of BRAC

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The Mittal Institute is sending our deepest condolences to Sir Fazle Hasan Abed's family and friends in his passing. He will be warmly remembered and solely missed.

Below, Martha Chen, Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and who spent two decades of resident experience in Bangladesh working with BRAC, shares a touching tribute to Abed Bhai.

I had the amazing good fortune of working with Abed-bhai in the 1970s, co-founding a cyclone relief agency in 1970 and then working at BRAC from 1975-1980. I cannot say how very lucky I feel to have had Abed as my first boss and my longtime friend. Working for BRAC – for Abed – shaped my career, my life – and that of my family. It is, therefore, with deep admiration and affection that I write this brief tribute to him.

A Bengali intellectual, with an equal love of Shakespeare sonnets and Tagore poems, Abed is at heart a humanist with a deep commitment to reducing poverty, inequality and social injustice. A former corporate executive, Abed has a unique ability to think big but start small and local: diagnosing problems, testing solutions, building models of discrete manageable interventions that can be taken to scale through replicating the models. He also has a gift for seeing the potential and bringing out the best in all those who work with him and BRAC.

Trained as a chartered accountant, Abed can manage large sums of money – in the early days, before BRAC had grown significantly, he once told me that he could see all of BRAC’s financial spreadsheets in his head.

Most central to the success of BRAC, though, has been Abed’s moral compass, his humanity – that keeps him focused on the problems of the poor and disadvantaged.

Marty Chen

WIEGO Network

Harvard Kennedy School

Abed Bhai, Founder and Chairperson of Bangladesh development organization BRAC, gave the Mittal Institute’s 2014 Mahindra Lecture, providing an enlightening account of the extraordinary accomplishments of the global organization. “Hope is an element in which people take action, and energize themselves out of poverty,” he said.

Abed Bhai recently spoke with Professor Tarun Khanna at the Harvard Business School for the [Creating Emerging Markets](#) project, revealing the lessons learned from his work creating BRAC, which today has educated over seven million children.