

Report On

A human-centric approach to communication language and its impacts on stakeholders and brand image: identifying how BRAC stands out in the development sector.

By

**Syeda Tasnim Islam
17104189**

An internship report submitted to BRAC Business School in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor in Business Administration

**BRAC Business School (BBS)
BRAC University
October, 2022**

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that:

1. The internship report submitted is my own original work while completing a degree at BRAC University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Syeda Tasnim Islam

ID: 17104189

Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:

Ms. Tanzin Khan

Lecturer, BRAC Business school BRAC University

Letter of Transmittal

Ms. Tanzin Khan Lecturer,
BRAC Business School BRAC University
66,

Mohakhali,

Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Miss,

It is my utmost honour and pleasure to submit my internship report titled “A human-centric approach to communication language and its impacts on stakeholders and brand image: identifying how BRAC stands out in the development sector”.

I have tried my best to combine the knowledge gained through your continued support and guidance, coupled with my duration as an intern in BRAC to explore the effects of using a uniquely “human-centric” communications language and style that BRAC follows, through qualitative research. I hope this paper serves to be an insightful look into what kind of communication effort is ultimately most appealing and the effects it has in fulfilling stakeholder interests.

Thus, I would be much obliged if you kindly accept this paper.

Sincerely yours,

Syeda Tasnim Islam

ID- 17104189

BRAC Business School BRAC University

Date: 27 October, 2022

Acknowledgement

I am extremely grateful to my teachers in BRAC Business School who have given me the support and imparted precious knowledge to me throughout my undergraduate career which has equipped me with the necessary skills I needed to approach this paper. I am also grateful to BRAC, especially to the people of BRAC Communication Department for providing me with a supportive work environment and helping me in becoming an enriched individual due to the experience. My supervisor, Mr. Rubab Al Islam, who granted me the opportunity to complete my internship at such a reputed organisation, and was a constant source of support and guidance throughout the duration of my internship and also volunteered to be one of the interviewees for my report, I am extremely grateful for his contributions.

I am grateful to my internship report supervisor, Ms. Tanzin Khan for her guidance which has enabled me to approach my topic in a more impactful and precise way, and my co-supervisor Ms. Afsana Akhtar. I thank them both for their patience and graciousness.

Last but not the least, I thank my friends and family for giving me the support and space I needed while completing this internship report.

Executive Summary

Established in 1972 in post-war Bangladesh, BRAC has gone on to become the largest non-governmental organisations (NGO) in the world. It currently operates in 11 countries, covering much of the global south; targeting the regions' unique needs and issues. This paper explores how BRAC has managed to stand out and stay relevant in the development sector through the lens of its human-centric communication tone, language, and style. Following qualitative and exploratory research design, this report examines the impacts of BRAC's unique communication style and on its brand image and its stakeholders- which are the objectives of this report. Combining both primary, such as personal interviews with five employees of the Communications Department of BRAC, and secondary sources of data such as previously published research reports and BRAC's published content- the report gives a deeper look into how communications play a greater role than just a supporting one- and it impacts aspects that go beyond just appealing to stakeholder interests, building brand image, etc. However, some gaps were also identified as a result of this research report, thus appropriate recommendations have been provided.

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Chapter 1: Student Information and Internship

1.1 Student Information: Name, ID, Program, Major

Name: Syeda Tasnim Islam

ID: 17104189

Program: Bachelor of Business Administration, BRAC Business School (BBS)

Major: Major in Marketing and Human Resource Management (HRM)

Report Concentration: Marketing

1.2 Internship Information

1.2.1 Period, Company Name, Department/Division, Address

Period: 6 months (3 months from 16th May to 15 August, plus 3 months extension)

Company Name: BRAC

Department: Programme and Enterprise Unit, Communications, BRAC

Address: BRAC Centre 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. Bangladesh.

1.2.2 Internship Company Supervisor's Information: Name and Position

Name of Supervisor: Rubab Al Islam

Position: Manager, Programme and Enterprise Unit, BRAC Communications

1.2.3 Job Scope – Job Description/Duties/Responsibilities

Primarily, at the beginning of my internship I did work which was about developing scripts for different types of content (social media, and traditional-style media). However, in the Programme and Enterprise Unit of BRAC Communications, which oversees the communication strategy of every programme present in BRAC, I got to work on developing content (**researching, curating and documenting, creating slide deck for proposal, writing down content plan, transcribing and translating interviews for future blog posts or subtitles**), which was related to different programmes- mainly Ultra-Poor Graduation Programme, Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme, Education programme, etc. I also edited BRAC's written materials (BRAC's webpage, blog posts) to ensure they were correctly aligned with BRAC's communication style. Furthermore, I learned how to write a Term of Reference (ToR) for specific campaigns which entailed giving a ToR to designated agencies specifying type of content, objective of the content

i.e a short campaign video, feedback procedure, team members, etc. I also learned to apply my academic marketing knowledge, while adhering to BRAC's Communication Brandbook. In short, **my job responsibilities are listed as follows:**

- Writing script for social/traditional-style media
- Ideating, researching social media content related to different programmes
- Creating slide decks which would be used for content idea proposal
- Editing written materials (future blog posts, webpage content)
- Transcribing and translating social media content
- Writing ToRs

1.3 Internship Outcomes

1.3.1 Student's contribution to the company

- Writing scripts for BRAC's content, keeping it in line with BRAC's brand image, attitude, and communication tone
- Coming up with new ideas for BRAC's social media content on a new platform
- Doing preliminary research for new content

1.3.2 Benefits to the student

- Learned how to create slide deck for new content proposal
- Learned how to do specific research related to content; always focusing on application and measurable benefits
- Learned how to develop content with brand image and tone in focus
- Learned how to address target market in a specific way: **analyse content, hypothesise a singular person who represents target market (age, occupation status, class, probable behaviours), think of how the content will affect that one person, and tailor content in a way that would result in behavioural change.**

1.3.3 Problems/Difficulties (faced during the internship period)

Problems encountered were minimal, the organisation is well-organised and welcoming. However, most of my work revolved around future projects so I had to face a certain waiting period in-between work due to proposal acceptance and presentation. It was also hard to get access to certain data since interns do not have permission to access internal documents of BRAC.

Recommendations

For future internships, both the organisation and the intern would benefit greatly from an internship design which focuses on job rotation, or adopting a typical Management Trainee Programme like some corporate institutions. This would enrich individuals in different types of experience relating to departments. BRAC would also benefit from this, since they can employ a person who is multi-talented and applies their existing knowledge and brings a fresh perspective to different departments.

Chapter 2: Organisation Part

2.1 Introduction: Mission, Vision, and Values, BRAC History, Overview and International Reach

BRAC Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Vision

A world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential.

Our 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.

Our Values

Integrity.
Innovation.
Inclusiveness.
Effectiveness.

Fig 1: BRAC's mission, vision, and values, from BRAC's official website.

BRAC History

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, or BRAC was established in 1972 by its founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, with the aim to support and provide relief to post-war Bangladesh. In its inception the full-form of BRAC stood for "Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee". It first started small- in the Shallah sub-district of Sunamganj. Primarily, in that time period BRAC focused on essential relief assistance such as providing healthcare and rebuilding housing spaces, rehabilitation efforts such as rebuilding income generating opportunities which were more immediate- such as fixing fishing boats. However, as time passed, so did peoples' needs. It was no longer about providing immediate/infrastructural assistance; the nation needed growth.



Fig 2: Brac founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed interacting with NGO's beneficiary farmers during a field visit.

Thus, till the mid-70s BRAC carried out initiatives which would mobilise and empower village communities through vocational training for women, health and family planning, adult literacy, and income-support through development programs which included rural crafts, agriculture, etc. However, to adapt a more targeted approach to better address development concerns, specific to Bangladeshi rural landscape, it began doing so in 1977 through Village Organisations (VO) to assist small farmers, landless people, vulnerable women, etc. Towards the end of the 1970s, BRAC addressed the rising child-mortality rates due to diarrhoea, and in February of 1979 it began its field trials in two villages, as part of the greater campaign to eradicate this disease. BRAC, through Oral Therapy Extension Programme (OTEP) in 1980 trained rural mothers to prepare home-made oral saline solutions through door-to-door community workers and also radio, posters, and TV ads. The programme lasted for 10 years and reached over 12 million households, 75,000 villages in almost every part of Bangladesh.

BRAC was able to gain nation-wide recognition and made an impact through OTEP which reached over 12 million households, and even after 15 years after the programme, 80% of rural households used the oral saline solution to combat the disease.

In 1985, BRAC started its Non Formal Primary Education- building primary schools, including backyard primary schools. The focus shifted from adult literacy, to educating children. In 1986 started the Rural Development Programme which focused on four major aspects: **institution**

building (functional education and training), credit operation, income and employment generation, and support service programmes. These four activities all focused on one idea: empowerment for sustainable growth.

In the 90s BRAC commenced the Women's Health Development Programme, and Human Rights and Legal Services Programme- which still occupy a large part of BRAC's interventions to the current date. In 2001, BRAC established its higher education institute- BRAC University and later on went to expand in a lot of other social enterprises which will be discussed more in detail afterwards in the report.

BRAC Scale-up and International Reach



Fig 3: “Where We Work”, provided on BRAC’s official website

In 2009, the acronym BRAC became the official name of the organisation.

Currently, BRAC has grown large enough to be called the world’s largest Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), aiding development not just in Bangladesh but internationally- specifically the global south. BRAC identifies itself as a “catalyst to change" targeting poverty through integrated, evidence-based interventions and achieving sustainable growth. BRAC currently operates in 11 countries- Bangladesh (all 64 districts), Afghanistan, Kenya, Liberia, Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. It currently employs over 90,000

people- 70% of them being women. BRAC has also set up a stichting unit for BRAC International in the Netherlands to manage and govern all of its international entities.

BRAC is also self-sustaining, being funded by its own social enterprises- notably Aarong, BRAC Seed and Agro, and BRAC Dairy. The impact BRAC has made globally through some of its interventions (as of 2018 to 2021) are as below:

- 232,000 people got access to primary education through **BRAC Education Programme**
- 96% clients of **BRAC's Microfinance Programme** are women
- 148,000 young people/adolescents reached and impacted through **BRAC Youth Development Programme**
- 12 million people had access and received basic healthcare services through the **Health programme**.

In 2020, with the onslaught of COVID-19, the need for rapid response in terms of providing healthcare and keeping up the ongoing programmes such as education, microfinance, Ultra Poor Graduation Programme (UPG), Migration, etc. Thus, the impact made in 2020, coupled with special COVID-19 efforts are displayed as below:

2020 AT A GLANCE: IN BANGLADESH



Fig 4: From BRAC's Website, "2020 at a Glance: In Bangladesh".

BRAC also has international/national strategic partners and donors. They are as pictured below:

OUR PARTNERS

Strategic Partners



Institutional donors and knowledge partners



Fig 5: From BRAC's Website, "Our Partners".

2.1.2 Social Development

BRAC's social development, which includes all eight of its important interventions/programmes which are focused on "social transformation" (BRAC Annual Report, 2020) are as below:

Eliminating extreme poverty

- **Ultra-poor graduation:** Established in 2002, this programme targets the "ultra-poor", i.e. people who earn less than \$ 1.90 a day. This programme employs a highly evidence-based, integrated, holistic approach to "graduate" participants from ultra-poverty with the aim to empower them and create self-sustaining sources. BRAC's internationally recognised and highly credible "Graduation Approach" consists of 4 facets: **livelihood promotions, financial inclusion, social empowerment, and social protection**, lasting over a 2-year period.
- **Integrated development:** Addresses specific needs of people in hard-to-reach areas of Bangladesh through a highly holistic method: **women empowerment, enhancing access to basic services, diversified and sustainable livelihood options , advocating for development efforts and reinforcement**. The aim is to improve the living conditions and livelihoods of indigineous communities and people living in poverty/ultra-poverty. 1.1 million people have been positively impacted by these efforts.

Expanding financial choices

- **Microfinance:** This programme has a number of approaches to support people in getting out of poverty: customised financial services for families, training in managing and building assets, enhancing financial literacy, building access to livelihood opportunities, etc. This program also invests in small enterprises to help them grow.

Employable skills for decent work

- **Skills development:** This programme focuses on providing skill training which translates into employable skills to people all over the country- especially vulnerable groups like women, people living in poverty (due to loss of livelihood or migration), or people living in remote areas.
- **Migration:** This programme plays the biggest role in supporting migrants, i.e. refugees, climate-induced displaced people. The programme efforts consists of providing support through providing education on workers' rights, raising awareness regarding vulnerability to

human trafficking and psychosocial support, skill development and training, financial support- to achieve sustainable reintegration of migrants back into society. This programme also strives to achieve sustainable development goals 10.7 and 8.7.

Climate change and emergencies

- **Climate change:** This programme strives to tackle climate change through nature-based solutions and climate-resilient efforts. This programme also builds sustainable practices and raises awareness to deal with climate change impacts to groups who are living in areas most vulnerable to climate change. According to BRAC, up to 1.7 million households have been reached. Furthermore, to tackle already existing climate change issues and the coming ones, BRAC has an initiative known as the “Climate Bridge Fund”.
- **Disaster risk management:** The Disaster Risk Management Programme responds within 72 hours of a disaster striking, everywhere in the country including even the most remote area. The programme serves the people who have been most affected by disasters, through immediate relief and also rehabilitation activities through humanitarian assistance.

Gender equality

- **Gender justice and diversity:** This programme advocates (in policy-level), raises awareness for gender equality It also raises awareness for gender violence. It strives to create a safe and fair society for women and girls. Between 2016-2020, over 7 million people have been reached.
- **Social empowerment and legal protection:** This programme commenced in 2021 as an extension of BRAC’s existing Human Rights and Legal Services and Community Empowerment Programme. It strives to create leadership opportunities for women to create a change in society where they are empowered and can raise awareness for issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, etc. to protect and educate their villages.
- **Strengthening Bangladesh’s RMG sector:** This programme supports women working in RMG sectors by equipping them with mid-management level skills/position to ensure empowerment. It also works at the industry-level to promote gender equality in management through raising awareness for gender-based violence, workplace bullying, providing safeguarding training, etc.

Universal access to healthcare

- **Health, nutrition and population:** Consists of “community health workers” who are people within a community that provide door-to-door basic healthcare services, and also create bridges with formal healthcare providers when necessary. Currently, this programme employs over 50,000 female community workers.
- **Water, sanitation and hygiene:** Acronymed **WASH** in short, this programme strives to deliver safe drinking water and ensure safe hygiene practices in especially remote areas and slums in urban areas. This programme also goes beyond just providing immediate service, it also builds relationships with governments and policy makers to improve waste management in these areas.

Pro-poor urban development

- **Urban development:** Focuses on building an inclusive society for everyone-regardless of class. This programme collaborates with city authorities to encourage inclusive, responsive, and empowering city development- to improve living conditions. It also supports marginalised people through income generating opportunities.

Investing in the next generation

- **Education:** Strives to create social transformation through providing primary school services at low cost, which follows an evidence-based and holistic model- the schools aid in early childhood development and addresses education gaps. BRAC is the largest “private secular education” and it partners with governmental authorities to ensure that the schooling it provides reaches as many people as possible and actually creates a lasting effect. So far, 14 million children have graduated from BRAC schools.
- **Youth platform:** Equips young people with the necessary skills to navigate life and secure jobs through training.

2.1.3 Social Enterprises

BRAC has 12 businesses which serve the public with locally produced goods and give platforms to local farmers, artisans, suppliers, etc- while also being environmentally conscious. These businesses are known as BRAC’s “Social Enterprises”. Its ethos are centred around the **3Ps:**

People, Planet, and Profit. These Social Enterprises are also a big source of funding for BRAC and support its Social Development Programmes.

- **Aarong:** Established in 1978, with the aim to give rural and local artisans a platform to use their skills and generate income. Today, it employs over **65,000** artisans all over Bangladesh, and has become one of the largest clothing/lifestyle brands in the country,
- **BRAC Dairy:** Employs over **50,000** farmers all over Bangladesh while ensuring fair pay for their labour. It has become the **third largest milk processor** in the country, providing almost every type of dairy product to urban consumers.
- **BRAC Artificial Insemination:** Employs **2,200** trained insemination workers across Bangladesh to aid local cattle farmers in insemination services while also providing higher quality cow breeds to boost milk production. BRAC Artificial Insemination enables local cattle farmers to get better income opportunities.
- **BRAC Seed and Agro:** The **largest private sector seed producer** in Bangladesh, BRAC Seed and Agro has a well-established network of local and rural farmers, retailers, and suppliers through which it markets, distributes and processes high quality seeds across the country.
- **BRAC Nursery:** Provides and sells high quality seedlings, potted plants and other services necessary for landscaping- to promote greater tree plantation. For nine years, BRAC Nursery has held the position of being the **first prize winner in the NGO category at the National Tree Fair.**
- **BRAC Sericulture:** Employs rural women with limited opportunities stemming from poverty by involving them in every step of the silk production process, which are later put up for sale in either Aarong, or trade fairs..
- **BRAC Fisheries:** Utilises the country's ponds for commercial fishing. It is now the **market leader because of its product offerings and a leading wholesaler** in the local fish food supplier regionally.
- **BRAC Recycled Handmade Paper:** Upcycles discarded paper materials into commercial stationary and decorative goods such as envelopes, gift boxes, lamp shades, etc.
- **BRAC Cold Storage:** Provides storage facilities for potato farmers to keep their harvested potatoes, enabling them to keep their yielded produce fresh for longer and actually sell them. It also involves the farmers in the potato processing industry.
- **BRAC Salt:** Ensures a steady income for local salt farmers, and also makes iodised salt accessible to people in rural areas in order to tackle any deficiencies they might be facing.

- **BRAC Printing Pack:** Produces and provides packaging material for food items, processed foodstuffs, and agricultural products. It has made a name for itself and is well-established in the local packaging industry.
- **BRAC Sanitary Napkin and Delivery Kit:** Makes safe, hygienic, and effective handmade sanitary napkins for menstruating people, and also makes safe birth/delivery kits along with medical kits to assist with safe births.

2.1.4 Investments

- **BRAC Bank:** Connects with the SME sector's entrepreneurial initiatives and potential. BRAC Bank is presently the nation's most notable SME financier and has materialized more than 410,817 dreams with loans over 220,139 million disbursed till now. BRAC holds 44.64% of the shares in BRAC Bank.
- **Delta BRAC Housing (DBH) Finance Corporation Limited:** Delivers homeowners financial stability through flexible and convenient loan programs. BRAC owns 18.39% of the shares of DBH, which is recognized as a market leader in the private sector housing finance industry.
- **BRACNet:** Implements a nationwide wireless network to connect the nation and offer low-cost access to the internet for the masses. 19.99% of BRACNet's shares are owned by BRAC.
- **Guardian Life Insurance:** Utilising innovation, responsible approaches to risk management and meticulous investing strategies to ensure that clients reap the highest possible financial benefits. 10% of Guardian Life Insurance's shares are owned by BRAC.
- **IPDC Finance Limited:** IPDC Finance plays an instrumental role in the expansion of the nation's private sector, and is the country's first private sector development financing organisation. BRAC holds 25% of its shares.
- **BRAC IT Services:** Provides end-to-end and creative technology solutions. BRAC holds 48.67% shares over BRAC IT services.
- **BRAC Tea Estates:** Tea estates aimed to improve the lives of workers with improved access to healthcare, education, and sanitation. BRAC holds 99.94%, 99.85%, and 99.12% shares of BRAC Karnafuli Tea Company Limited, BRAC Kaiyacherra Tea Company Limited, and BRAC Kodala Tea Company Limited respectively.

2.1.5 University

BRAC University was established in 2001, and since then it has garnered trust and reputation in providing quality higher education to students. Reflective of its slogan “Inspiring Excellence”, the university has quickly become one of the most notable universities in Bangladesh, occupying the 1001-1200 ranking in the latest QS World University Rankings.

2.2 Management Practices: Leadership Style and BRAC HRD

Leadership Style

In BRAC, different departments follow a different culture and leadership style according to specific functions of the department. Due to my internship being in the Communications department, I shall discuss the leadership style observed in the BRAC Communications department, and also make a general comment on the organisation’s overall style/culture as observed thus far.

The leadership style at BRAC Communications is a combination of participative style and laissez faire. The work environment itself is relaxed and flexible yet goal-focused which is very reflective of the leadership style as well. Employees ideate, and conceptualise different campaign ideas, social media promotion strategies, making content out of real life participant features/interviews or field work, etc. In all of those steps, employees are free and encouraged to be creative and bring in a fresh perspective, however, a set of guidelines and instructions are to be followed which are decided by top management- and also, meetings with the concerned superiors are regular to get their feedback and approval. It is also participatory in the sense that BRAC strives to always find unique/”second stories”, so employee participation where they can provide meaningful insight or creative way of thinking is encouraged and appreciated.

In BRAC overall, this style also applies, barring a few departments which have to be extremely structured. However, when it comes to managing programmes, a participatory approach is most essential, since they are need-based and prone to situational changes, so employees get a chance to have equal opportunities on coming up with the best possible solution in that case.

BRAC Human Resource Department (HRD)

BRAC's Human Resource Department is engaged in some very important activities such as being responsible for recruitment and selection, compensation system, performance evaluation, etc. However, due to not having access to certain information owing to confidentiality, I shall be talking about the most notable practices I have observed.

- **Recruitment and selection process:** Job postings are posted on the official website of BRAC (brac.net), under “careers” . Most eligible candidates are chosen and employed. There are 2 levels of employees: , **Contractual** (semi-permanent with about 3 years of contract unless renewed), and **Permanent** (usually top management or employees who have had a long-term experience in the organisation) employees.
- **Associate** (beginner, not permanent with 1 year contract): This position is only relevant for the BRAC Communications department, where “temporary” staff are usually employed.
- **The training and development initiatives:** There are frequent training initiatives, accompanied by field work. Usually, training sessions are conducted within the organisation premises, or in BRAC Learning Centres (BLCC) located in different regions of Bangladesh.
- **Performance appraisal system:** Performance is measured via meeting the KPI's effectively, and producing effective and measurable results. Employees who perform exceptionally well are also awarded “Top Performer” awards in acknowledgement and to boost morale.
- **Employee Onboarding:** This includes the initial stages of familiarising a new employee, etc. after recruiting a new employee. Onboarding activities include: **conducting workshops on instilling BRAC values and insight into work, workshops on safeguarding policies and raising awareness, getting employees acquainted with BRAC's Social Enterprises, its flagship programmes, BRAC International, getting the new employee acquainted with the workplace and culture, having monthly/weekly meetings for feedback, field visits, etc.** The onboarding process spans around 16 sessions, and is a month long process.
- **Safeguarding:** BRAC is extremely strict about safeguarding policies and practices. All employees, regardless of designation and seniority are expected to maintain respectful behaviour with each other- behaviours like workplace bullying, intimidation, inappropriate advances, physical assault, and sexual harrassment (Sexual Harrassment Elimination Policy) are explicitly prohibited. They must maintain the BRAC Code of

Conduct at all times. For employees who work with children, people living in vulnerable conditions, people with disabilities etc. they must adhere to Child and Adolescent Protect Policy, Adults with Special Needs Policy which states that they must not take advantage of, neglect, engage sexually, or be in a compromising situation with any of these participants. Violation of any of these factors will result in consequences such as termination or more.

2.3 Marketing Practices: BRAC Communications

BRAC Communications oversees all marketing, and communication activities for all BRAC Social Development programmes and also Social Enterprises (except for Aarong). This department creates a bridge between BRAC's activities and its donors, media, general audiences, media, and internal stakeholders through different promotional/branding/communication efforts. Since BRAC's interventions are designed to be highly human-centric, keeping empowerment of communities and individuals at the core, the Communications Department also follows a human-centric design in all its activities. From targeting, to marketing, to branding, to internal communications, the goal for this department is to be an extension of BRAC's values. The communications department has six different functional units that operate within it. They are: **Programmes and Enterprise Communications Unit** (overseeing communication activities of programmes and enterprises), **Audio Visual Communications** (responsible for all filming/audio recording related activities), **Digital Channel Management and Campaign and Content** (responsible for both online and offline marketing strategy/activities), **Design and Brand Unit** (overseeing all branding activities), **Media Unit** (media and external relations), **Leadership Communication and Employee Engagement and Material Development Unit** (internal communications).

- **Marketing strategy:** The marketing strategy of BRAC follows a social and human-centric marketing since it is an NGO. The marketing is mostly done with keeping donors, partners, and a global audience as the target audience- since BRAC has to garner funds. It highlights its impacts made through human stories, blog posts, social media content, campaigns where the participants are shown in their most empowering light. The marketing strategy

is mostly a combination of **mass and online marketing** (especially as of late)- since most of BRAC's updates, content, campaign is posted on its social media pages, presented in a simple and accessible way.

- **Target customers, targeting and positioning strategy:** The targeting, target customer identification, and positioning strategies vary according to programme/enterprise needs. However, in general, BRAC's **target customers** are its programme participants which it strives to support and empower; its **target audience** are its donors, partners, and the global audience as a whole since it is an international organisation as well; and finally, as for its **positioning strategy**, BRAC maintains the brand image/tone/attitude of being a "catalyst to change" rather than a direct agent of it, and maintaining humility and empowerment at its core. Moreover, to ensure that the end communication strategy is actually effective, BRAC puts a great importance on being as accessible, and relatable as possible keeping both the target audiences' and programme participants' humanity/behaviour in mind.
- **Marketing channels (for product as well as services):** For BRAC's "services" i.e its Social Development programmes the marketing channels are its online blog: The Goodfeed, its official website, and also its social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram. Additionally, campaign videos are posted on YouTube and cross-shared across the platforms.
For BRAC "products" or its Social Enterprises, the marketing channels are a mix of online and offline (B2B and B2C channel) marketing.
- **Product/New product development:** In this case, programme/intervention development are highly evidence-based, holistic, and integrated. The focus is always on development which can be sustainable and upheld by community members themselves. The programme interventions are also highly research-based and go through multiple stages of evaluation.
- **Branding activities:** BRAC's branding activities are all followed through the BRAC Communications Brandbook (unpublished version) which states the tone, font, brand colours, presentation style, etc. BRAC's branding activities can be seen across all communication and marketing activities. Moreover, for writing, BRAC follows a general guideline with four specified dimensions: **tone of voice (being humble and inspiring), writing for dignity (preserving programme participants' dignity and empowerment),**

writing for clarity (language that is simple and accessible), writing for impact (being engaging, with ample context for readers to relate to on a human level).

WRITING FOR DIGNITY	
1.	Tell people’s stories how they would like them told.
	Put the focus on their successes and their innovation, rather than logframe-type details such as their loan amount. Instead of sharing activity details like their loans or salary (which most people would not want to tell), share what that salary enables them to do. BRAC’s work is different, and so our writing needs to reflect that - focus on different, funny, interesting points rather than repeating the same well-worn NGO narrative.

Fig 6: From BRAC’s “Writing Guideline for Consultants”, Courtesy of BRAC.

3.	Portray people as their own heroes. Do not portray brac as their saviour.	
	brac believes in the ability of every person to change their life. brac is there to provide tools, knowledge and opportunities, but it is people who change their own lives.	
	Use: ‘Sara is a successful farmer. It took her a lot of hard work and courage, and a microloan and training from brac’.	Don’t use: ‘If brac had not helped Sara, she never would have survived. Thanks to brac, Sara now has a business.’

Fig 7: From BRAC’s “Writing Guideline for Consultants”, Courtesy of BRAC.

- **Social and digital media promotion strategies:** BRAC relies on social and digital media to reach its target audience heavily. BRAC uses all of its available platforms (as mentioned above) to highlight impact-based stories. A social media campaign can last somewhere around 1-6 months, where the concerned programme/intervention is highlighted. Recently, BRAC has partnered up with Meta, and has an Instagram mascot called “Faiza” through whom social media literacy and awareness is being promoted. BRAC also often works with digital advertising agencies to outsource content and campaign work.

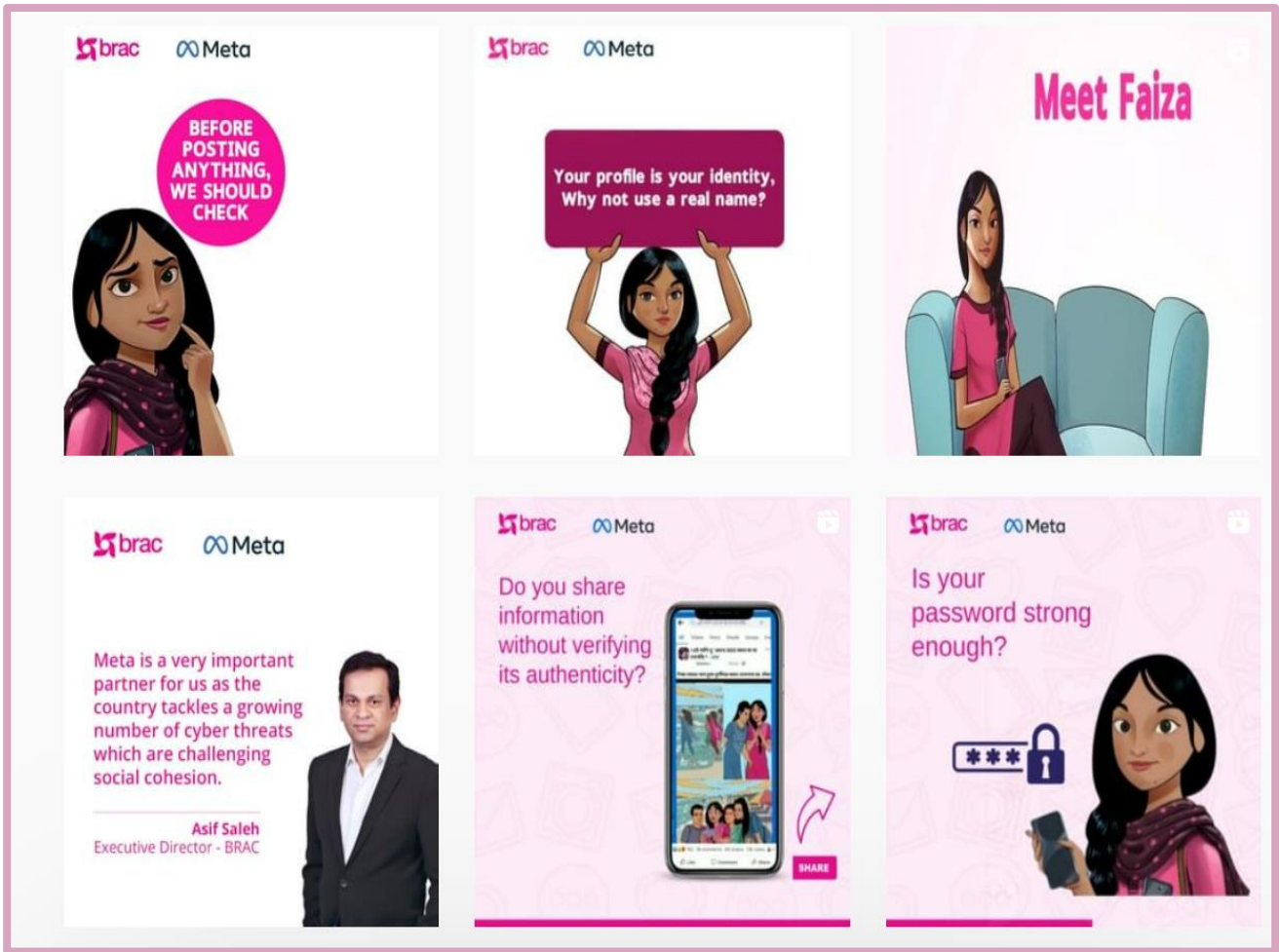


Fig 8: BRAC’s Instagram mascot “Faiza” in collaboration with Meta, from BRAC Instagram (@bracworld)

2.4 Financial Performance

The finance department of an organisation looks after the organisation's progress in terms of meeting financial strategic objectives. They also plan and check in with yearly budgets, cash flows, financial position and performance of a company to keep track of how well the company is doing financially. The work of the finance department also determines the budget which can be contributed/invested for the organisation's different programmes, and activities. It also determines if the organisation has scope to hire more individuals, or expand certain projects or not.

Note: Further research into the financial performance or the department was not possible due to confidentiality issues.

Financial Performance: Income Statement and Balance Sheet as of 2020

BRAC
Statement of Income and Expenditure Converted to USD
For the year ended 31 December 2020
(Not part of audited financial statements)

Particulars	2020		2019	
	BDT	USD	BDT	USD
Income				
Donor grants	14,583,363,308	173,714,870	13,855,431,903	165,043,858
Social enterprises	12,003,491,663	142,983,818	16,727,388,949	199,254,186
Microfinance programme	57,651,316,797	686,733,970	56,866,222,004	677,382,037
Self-financing social development programme	1,312,981,108	15,640,037	1,111,125,520	13,235,563
Investment income	1,778,027,416	21,179,600	200,683,637	2,390,514
Community contribution	584,598,015	6,725,408	1,000,167,362	11,913,846
House property	90,285,239	1,075,464	92,593,668	1,102,962
Total income	87,984,063,435	1,048,053,168	89,853,613,043	1,070,322,967
Expenditure				
Social enterprises	11,459,448,196	136,503,254	14,751,216,995	175,714,318
Micro finance programme	51,016,336,051	607,699,060	39,909,043,349	475,390,630
House property	46,491,510	553,800	46,169,419	549,963
Agriculture and food security	1,931,795	23,011	16,385,453	195,181
Community empowerment programme	273,287,107	3,255,356	279,518,943	3,329,588
Education programme	2,283,887,739	27,205,333	2,126,223,583	25,327,261
Gender, justice and diversity	117,769,034	1,402,847	118,242,230	1,408,484
Health programme	5,342,436,892	63,638,319	4,225,917,877	50,338,510
Human rights and legal aids services	288,965,657	3,442,116	341,577,024	4,068,815
Policy advocacy	47,000,250	559,860	53,531,885	637,664
Water, sanitation and hygiene programme	503,134,039	5,993,258	341,772,203	4,071,140
Ultra poor programme	1,535,199,285	18,287,067	2,008,360,909	23,923,298
Forcibly-displaced Myanmar nationals	4,337,992,383	51,673,525	4,568,977,441	54,424,984
Disaster management and climate change	383,671,746	4,570,241	217,965,788	2,596,376
Skills development programme	649,627,314	7,738,265	754,954,897	8,992,911
Migration programme	288,443,423	3,435,895	265,545,874	3,163,143
Social development programme	736,567,987	8,773,889	227,182,085	2,706,159
Other development projects	1,395,889,588	16,627,631	1,280,816,247	15,256,894
Grants	91,952,726	1,095,327	236,338,397	2,815,228
Total expenditure	80,800,032,722	962,478,055	71,769,740,599	854,910,549
Surplus/(deficit) of income over expenditure	7,184,030,713	85,575,113	18,083,872,444	215,412,417
Surplus of income over expenditure before taxation	7,184,030,713	85,575,113	18,083,872,444	215,412,417
Taxation	(991,152,028)	(11,806,457)	(729,000,000)	(8,683,740)
Net surplus for the year	6,192,878,685	73,768,656	17,354,872,444	206,728,677

Exchange rate: 1 USD = BDT 83.95 as on December 31, 2020

Fig 9: Income Statement from BRAC's website, "Annual Report 2020"

BRAC
Statement of Financial Position Converted to USD
As at 31 December 2020
(Not part of audited financial statements)

Particulars	2020		2019	
	BDT	USD	BDT	USD
Assets				
Cash and bank balances	31,723,785,710	377,889,050	24,032,522,474	286,271,858
Advance, deposits and prepayments	12,042,695,631	143,450,812	10,720,793,501	127,704,509
Inventories	6,254,983,552	74,508,440	6,099,099,677	72,651,574
Grants and accounts receivable	2,821,240,342	33,606,198	3,334,745,791	39,722,999
Microfinance loans	286,777,136,804	3,416,046,895	243,987,950,556	2,906,348,428
Motor cycle loans	64,433,780	767,526	85,192,350	1,014,799
Investments in securities and others	867,600,000	10,334,723	2,207,430,874	26,294,591
Investments in related undertakings	33,805,655,505	402,687,975	31,297,956,474	372,816,635
Property, plant and equipment	20,092,511,943	239,339,034	19,274,246,460	229,591,977
Intangible assets	153,518,231	1,828,686	112,407,916	1,338,986
Total assets	394,603,561,498	4,700,459,339	341,152,346,073	4,063,756,356
Liabilities and net assets				
Liabilities				
Liabilities for expenses and materials	18,460,033,518	219,893,193	13,897,568,153	165,545,779
Bank overdrafts	31,262,811,054	372,397,988	27,893,463,363	332,262,816
Term loans	48,211,122,990	574,283,776	44,532,426,404	530,463,686
Members' savings deposits	128,895,965,387	1,535,389,939	97,006,031,994	1,155,521,525
Grants received in advance	2,931,581,039	34,920,560	2,112,020,638	25,158,078
Deferred grant income	1,348,868,871	16,067,527	694,027,199	8,267,149
Other long term liabilities	17,208,622,473	204,986,569	17,070,707,618	203,343,748
Provision for taxation	5,551,898,106	66,133,390	4,560,746,075	54,326,934
Total Liabilities	253,870,923,438	3,024,072,941	207,766,991,465	2,474,889,714
Net assets				
Unrestricted	140,251,056,318	1,670,649,867	132,903,772,867	1,583,130,112
Temporarily restricted	481,581,742	5,736,531	481,581,742	5,736,531
	140,732,638,060	1,676,386,397	133,385,354,609	1,588,866,642
Total liabilities and net assets	394,603,561,498	4,700,459,339	341,152,346,073	4,063,756,356

Exchange rate: 1 USD = BDT 83.95 as on December 31, 2020

Fig 10: Balance Sheet, from BRAC's website, "Annual Report 2020"

2.5 Operations Management and Information System Practices

BRAC does not use any formal information system in the company for collecting, storing, and processing and sharing data with clients and stakeholders. Most data are stored and displayed through Google Workspace and Microsoft Office tools such as Google Docs, Google Slides, Microsoft Excel, etc. Sometimes even physical hard-drives are used to store information. To share information with clients and stakeholders, BRAC's blog "The Goodfeed" and its website, with programme specific pages which display direct measurable impact act as sources of primary information as well.

Thus, the information systems present in office are largely informal systems, with people using mostly what is most convenient. However, in the Programme and Enterprise unit of the Communication department, Trello, a project management tool is used.

2.6 Industry and Competitive Analysis

2.6.1 Porter's Five Forces analysis

- **Bargaining Power of Supplier:** The suppliers for BRAC are its donors or partners- they are suppliers in the sense that they supply the most crucial thing: funds. BRAC has to appeal to their interests in order for collaboration or donation. Thus, bargaining power of suppliers is moderate-high.
- **Bargaining Power of Buyers:** Since BRAC is an NGO, it does not have typical customers, it has programme participants, or clients who will ultimately benefit from BRAC's highly evidence-based and holistic interventions. Coupled with BRAC's brand image and recognition as a reliable and reputable organisation, the bargaining power of participants is low. However, when it comes to BRAC's enterprises, which have actual customers, the bargaining power is high since BRAC produces quality- yet, *ubiquitous* goods.
- **Threat of Rivals:** On a national level, the threat of rivals is low because BRAC has the most funds and is the largest in size, and has a range of programmes which addresses different needs of people in even the most remote areas of Bangladesh.

- **Threat of Substitutes:** Threat of substitutes is moderate-low since there are local NGOs as well as the government who work to address the needs of people too. However, BRAC is also a trusted organisation with a wide reach and highly tailored programmes which work to provide sustainable growth.
- **Threat of New Entrants:** It is low for new entrants to be a threat, because of the sheer scale of BRAC and over 50 years of experience and research done by the organisation.

2.6.2 SWOT Analysis: BRAC

Strengths

- **Large funding and donor relationships:** BRAC being the largest NGO in the world, naturally has a large funding available which it can use to effectively carry out its interventions. Moreover, BRAC's reputation and experience means that it has existing donor and partner relationships which are strong enough that BRAC is trusted, even more so than other local organisations.
- **Self-funding:** BRAC is fully self-funding, which means it is not heavily reliant on only outside sources of funding. BRAC has the opportunity to use its profits generated from its social enterprises and investments to reinvest back into its programmes, or even internal activities like investing in better information technology/management/marketing activities. Moreover, being self-sustaining gives BRAC the power to not be unnecessarily dependent or accountable to outsiders.
- **Award-winning and evidence-based intervention approaches:** All of BRAC's programmes and interventions are developed with keeping "sustainability" in mind. Which means, using an evidence-based approach backed with ample research which proves its effectiveness is crucial to achieve sustainable development. BRAC's most integral programmes like Ultra Poor Graduation (UPG), Education, Microfinance, etc. are all centred around integrated development and strong evidence. Moreover, UPG's "Graduation Approach" is internationally recognised and implemented by other NGOs as well to achieve the results BRAC has with it. BRAC Education programme's "One-Teacher-One-Classroom" style which enables primary school children to graduate a year earlier than traditional schooling is also an award-winning approach.

- **Years of experience:** BRAC has had 50 years of experience working for Bangladesh, and around 20 years of experience working internationally. This long tenure has given BRAC the upper-hand in understanding the complex needs of people and figuring out what approach truly works. In short, BRAC has expertise which cannot be easily replicated by other NGOs in the industry.
- **Human-centric design:** BRAC's importance in maintaining human-centric design when it comes to developing interventions, communication materials, storytelling, etc. gives BRAC an edge in better understanding their clients and participants as whole human beings, rather than just a statistic- which is essential for tailoring interventions for specific needs and sustainable growth. Furthermore, maintaining people's dignity and being empathetic has done a lot for BRAC's brand image as a whole, and sets it apart from other organisations in the development sector.
- **Scale:** BRAC's being the largest NGO in the world means it has a larger scale than every other NGO in the development sector, leading to better reach, better investment options and flexibility of funds, better chances at expansion, etc. BRAC being a large-scale organisation also acts as a shield for other industry rivals to catch up to it in any meaningful way as this cannot be replicated easily.
- **Strong Values and Culture:** BRAC has frequent training sessions, seminars, and workshops for its employees to instil its values and highlighting the impact of its work. It is strict about maintaining the organisation's values of being respectful, dignified, and empathetic in its internal operations. This results in a healthy and comfortable workplace culture, leading to higher employee retention and greater work commitment.

Weakness:

- **Insufficient marketing:** Since BRAC puts an emphasis on being humble and understated, its marketing/promotional activities are lacking despite having a strong brand image and brand reliability. As a result of not enough marketing, BRAC is limiting its reach and might alienate an important demographic like the youth from knowing the actual impact and significance of their work.
- **Local NGOs might build better connections:** BRAC's programmes expand to even the most remote areas of Bangladesh, and has a wide variety of tailored interventions to address the specific needs of people. However, still, BRAC cannot serve every person, due to funding limitations. In that case, local NGOs which focus on one specific area, or focus

on one specific intervention may be more effective in building a connection with the people it serves and address their needs better.

- **Demanding work; low pay:** Expectedly, working in the development sector; especially in an organisation as large as BRAC who is committed to reaching as many people as possible, in hard to reach areas, and providing support which is about empowerment and sustainability- it requires regular field visits, workshops, intensive research, etc. The amount of work is very demanding compared to the pay, as NGOs usually do not pay as much as typical corporate jobs. This can hinder job commitment and satisfaction of employees and lessen their motivation.

Opportunities:

- **Large marketing and branding opportunities online:** Since BRAC has not done heavy marketing so far, it has the chance to branch out and figure out creative, youthful, and engaging marketing and promotional strategies to make more of a presence. Additionally, this will also help people be more aware of BRAC's work and branding.
- **Incorporating and reaching young people:** Through better and increased promotional activities BRAC has the opportunity to engage young people and educate/inspire them towards the development sector. An example of this would be starting a management trainee programme, or hosting university competitions.
- **Huge funds for further investment:** BRAC has the funds to expand and invest into projects which go beyond programmes, like marketing campaigns. It could also reinvest funds into expanding existing programmes like the Youth Development Programme, or the Skills Development Programme to make it more mainstream and to target urban youth as well.

Threats:

- **Political factors:** Volatility in political climate is a huge factor in the effectiveness and implementation of interventions. Additionally, regulatory factors can act as a hindrance to the effectiveness of certain programmes. BRAC has to be very careful and adhere to legalities which can be costly or sometimes even lessen their reach.
- **Replicable programmes:** BRAC's social development programmes are made to be replicable, so other NGOs can implement BRAC's proven to work interventions for

development. However, if a competing organisation has large enough funds, they can be a rival to BRAC, using its unique methods.

- **Unforeseen external factors; funding issues:** External factors such as unpredictable climate change disasters, an influx of new refugees, or new disease outbreak calls for huge funding and very quick implementation. However, if circumstances like these are truly unforeseen, BRAC will face difficulties in having enough funds to reach people and actually support them in times of crisis.

To conclude, **the strengths which play a big role in giving BRAC a competitive edge** are as shown below.

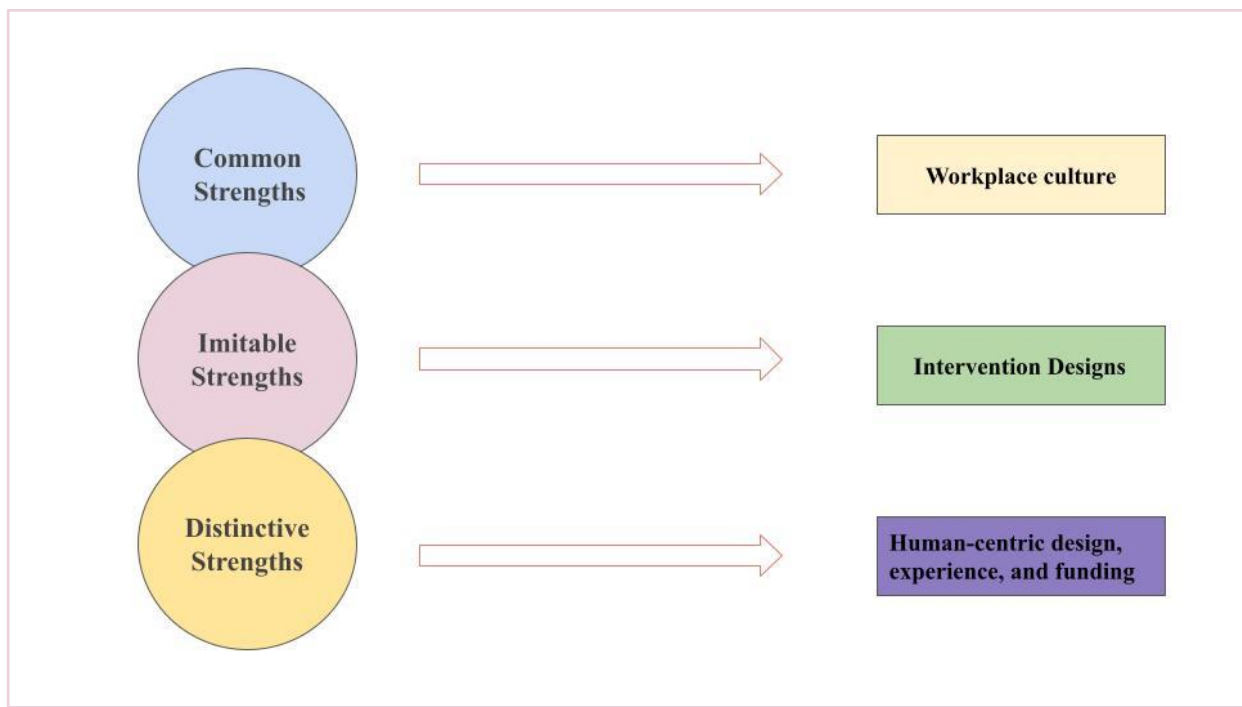


Fig 11: Common, imitable, and distinctive strengths of BRAC

2.7 Recommendations

The recommendations for BRAC, after gaining thorough insights into the organisation's different social development programmes, its social enterprises, investments, and marketing/operational/management practices are:

- Bigger investment needs to be made into creative marketing.
- More efforts should be made into targeting the urban youth.
- BRAC should take an opportunity to educate the Bangladeshi youth on the true work and impacts of the development sector along with the country's current issues like poverty, refugee influx, climate change etc. to raise awareness, and make a worthy presence.
- Branding activities should be more in focus.

Chapter 3: Project Part

3.1 Introduction

According to Karl Marx, the German economist, this capitalist system which values profits over people, actually “alienates the masses” which went against his belief that humans should be treated as whole beings worthy of having their creativity, thinking, feelings valued because they are capable of transforming society. (L. Prychitko, 2022). Human centric marketing style refers to taking into account customers’ thoughts, feelings, perceptions, behaviour, beliefs, goals, challenges, needs and dignity into account- in short, centering marketing strategy with keeping customers’ humanity and dignity in mind (Gugian, 2021). To reiterate, a human-centric approach to marketing and communication refers to treating customers and stakeholders like actual human beings, making them feel valued not for what profit they can generate for the organisation- but as important stakeholders who are worthy of dignity and the effort of building a relationship with.

Applying this method of addressing customers to communication style- the use of human-centric communication language through BRAC’s communication style and tone is very apparent. BRAC makes it a point to frame the people they support and the interventions they carry out to be centred around empowerment and dignity, keeping participants’ personhood intact. It achieves so by using very specific language in the way they communicate; for example: never using the word “help” but “support”, and referring to the people they support as “participants”- implying that the improvement is in the peoples’ hands, while BRAC is the supporting factor. BRAC is also very intentional about maintaining a “humble” and “understated” tone to further ensure that a narrative which truly highlights a person’s own capabilities and empowerment is conveyed.

Thus, this research report will examine the impact of a human centric communication style on BRAC’s brand image and also its stakeholders (employees/donors/audiences/programme participants). The report will aim to explore and highlight the positive impacts of employing a human centric approach to communication style with the help of both primary and secondary sources, i.e the literature review, and personal interviews with BRAC Communications Department’s employees. It will also identify key findings as a result of the research, and highlight points of recommendations to the organisation. The research is a result of my six month long internship period at BRAC Communications Department.

3.1.1 Problem Statement

In our highly capitalist society, materialism has become a culture and is celebrated. With that, arises the issue of seeing people as a vessel for profit maximisation. While we see this heavily profit-driven behaviour in the marketing and communication of the corporate sector, this habit of dismissing other human beings and reducing them down to just a statistic has become ingrained into our society and how we interact with others. A human-centric approach to marketing and communication refers to treating customers and stakeholders like actual human beings and valuable stakeholders. In a human-centric approach- values, integrity, and dignity are at the forefront- which is heavily demonstrated in BRAC's communication style. In BRAC, the marketing work is also done by the communications department, following the communications tone. Moreover, since sustainable development is a goal for BRAC which it constantly strives for, applying a human centric approach from its interventions to its communications tone is crucial. However, this practice and commitment to empowerment using language as a vessel is not as common in the development sector- often the communication style leans towards treating the people that benefit from an NGO's programs as people who got "saved". Thus, this paper will further be exploring BRAC's human-centric approach to communications and its impacts on stakeholders such as employees, partners, and also the people that they support- and analysing the role of maintaining empathy and dignity in creating a brand image. It will do so by taking a deeper look into the different departments in BRAC Communications.

3.1.2 Objective(s)

Broad Objective

To explore the impact of human-centric approach in the communications language through the lens of BRAC's communication style.

Specific Objectives

- To analyse the importance of human-centric language in communications and its contribution to the brand as a whole.
- To observe the impacts of a highly human-centric communication style on the stakeholders.

3.1.3 Research Questions

- **RQ1.** Does BRAC’s human centric communication style play a role in conveying a positive brand image?
- **RQ2.** What is the impact of BRAC’s human centric communication style on its employees’ attitudes and beliefs?
- **RQ3.** Is BRAC’s communication style effective when addressing external audiences and programme participants?

3.1.4 Significance

This paper explores and analyses the use of human-centric communication language through BRAC’s communication style, and compares it with the industry standard of the development sector. In doing so, the report shows the effects (on stakeholders and brand as a whole) of using empathetic, empowering language along with language which highlights peoples’ whole personhood than the “product” (interventions) or their unfortunate circumstances when addressing underprivileged people. Furthermore, it emphasises on how marketing and communications language is a powerful tool which can transform and motivate people for the better.

3.1.5 Literature Review

Topic Background (Role of Human Centric Communications, and Stakeholder Impacts)

Communication refers to “as a two-way process which involves a sender and a receiver“, with the focus on delivering/communicating a message and sharing of ideas and views (Jethwaney, 2016, pg. 128). It is a crucial part of human interaction and behaviour which helps us understand each other; specifically, through communication, one understands and receives/gives information about another person’s “needs, desires, knowledge, opinions, and perceptions" (Keyton, 2010). The “sender” crafts the message/idea by carefully selecting the most suitable symbols, language style, and gestures, which is then sent through a “medium” (channel/form) to reach the “receiver” who then decodes the message to their best understanding. Effective communication is that which does not have any noise (anything that leads to misinterpretation), (Lunberg, 2010). NGOs, just by their organisational and work nature, have to prioritise communicating with their internal and external stakeholders, to ensure sustainability; they also need to closely work with and learn the stories, feelings, opinions, needs of people in the grass-roots level in order to make effective impact through their work (Bhati, 2013).

Effective communication just does not consist of communicating to external audiences only, it must be emphasised within the organisation as well, because employees’ emotional connection to “products/services” which the organisation offers is a motivator for job commitment and loyalty (Verghese, 2017).

Communication from a brand also plays an important role in terms of establishing a solid brand image, which eventually contributes to brand trust (Chinomona, 2016). The power of a strong brand image impacts more than just the position of a brand in the marketplace and consumer choice (Saxena & Dhar, 2021). An evolved brand communication thus, has a positive impact on brand image according to studies (Kotler, 2008). It also has a significant effect on improving quality perception of a brand (Kotler & Keller, 2009). People have become a stronger and more involved part of the marketing process with access to different mediums at their disposal (Kitchen & Proctor 2015), and BRAC communicates taking those factors into account. In the case of brand identity/image, unique and effective positioning is key (Kotler et al., 2019). Furthermore, brand communication plays an important role in bringing about positive brand behaviour, and boosting brand loyalty (Afriani, et al., 2019), since brand communication is an extension of brand values, it helps in streamlining those values into brand practices. Communication should be done in a way

which streamlines brand values into work for employees by making them believe in and committed to them and expressing them as “natural expression” in their work; i.e internal communication should be “action-oriented” and connected to organisational strategy (Goodman & Mazei, 2014). For top management, the role of personal communication (or internal communication) is even more important than marketing and branding (Brønn & Peggy, 2014) as it can be seen as an extension of maintaining a company’s values, mission, vision, and consequently- its strategic goals. (Idham Hj. Md Razak et al.; 2018)

For BRAC, all of its programmes specifically follow a “human-centric design”, which means in the developing and designing phase of a programme or intervention, thorough research and field work is done to truly grasp the needs, behaviours, problems, and desires of the affected people. It means that the “product” (development programmes, in this case) is not just simply made to be delivered to people, but it is made *for* the people, tailored specifically to their needs. The greatest example of this phenomenon is BRAC’s Ultra-Poor Graduation Programme or the UPG Programme, which adapts a holistic approach by using a set of “comprehensive, time-bound, integrated” interventions, which is used to create “sustainable livelihoods and economic resilience” through 7 interventions- providing asset transfer and interest free loans, teaching enterprise development through training, hands-on coaching, matched savings, healthcare services, and community mobilisation (UPG-Programme-Bangladesh-brief, 2019). This is known as the “Graduation Approach” ; its “prioritisation of socially empowering participants improves their overall well-being, enables self sufficiency, and strengthens social inclusion within their community long term” (Konig, 2022).

Another response programme known as the “Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme”, which is currently supporting the Rohingya community in Bangladesh in getting safe rehabilitation also combines a holistic approach- providing education, educating on gender violence and gender roles, skill development training and livelihood options, psychosocial support, etc. According to BRAC’s Humanitarian Response Strategy of 2020, it mentions “BRAC aims to provide sustainable humanitarian support to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity throughout and in the aftermath of the crisis.” (HCMP Strategy, 2020, pg. 3). This clearly displays BRAC’s commitment to empowering people and supporting them in realising their own potential and inspiring hope.

By 2030, BRAC aims to reach 250 million people globally for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and for that its strategic goals include: empowering those people to have sustainable

livelihoods, reaching 30% of programme participants with multiple interventions according to their needs, and leading innovation and education in the development sector (BRAC, 2019).

The theory of goal oriented communication states that communication is simply not just a means to an end, but should be given importance as being an end itself as an effective tool of achieving organisational goals (Goldreich et al., 2012). Through communication language and style, a baseline for goal-oriented work and mindset is achieved, because brand communication is aligned with the company's strategic goals, values, and mission. Additionally, information delivered to audiences also portrays a clear message which is aligned with the organisation, alleviating misunderstandings. (Guuru & Adede, 2022).

Connecting to goal-oriented communication, Stakeholder Theory stresses the interconnected relationships between a business and its internal and external stakeholders- emphasising that the business should not only create value for one stakeholder group (shareholders) but should do so for everyone (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholder theory is especially useful when it comes to taking a holistic approach to a brand- taking into account its “purpose, mission, values, effectiveness, productivity, and impact on all of its stakeholders”; it provides insight into how the brand owes responsibility to its “customers” (programme participants in BRAC's case), employees, financiers (donors and partners), and responsibility to the community as a whole (Freeman & Dmytriye, 2017)

Standard Development Communication Patterns

The non-profit brand image, according to a study, consists of 6 dimensions- usefulness, efficiency, affect, dynamism, reliability and ethicality. These dimensions each serve different functions- “usefulness” refers to perceived success in achieving the brand mission, and community impact. “Efficiency” refers to resource management; “affect” and “dynamism” is related to perceived friendliness and relatability; “reliability” and “ethicality” are measures of perceived emotional aspects such as responsibility, reputation, morality, etc (Michaelidou, Micevski and Cadogan, 2015). These measures are needed to examine external and internal stakeholders' satisfaction and perceived value from the brand, especially in a climate which is becoming increasingly sceptical of charities/ social work (Michaelidou, et al., 2019). Thus, BRAC's human centric communication style puts forward that “human” connection, ensuring that relatability, empathy, and dignity always plays a role in meeting these six dimensions. According to Dr. Manyozo (2012) in his

book “Media, Communications, and Development: Three Approaches” , analysing development from a Marxist perspective shows that the very idea of development is a class conflict; there is a distinction of a privileged group and an underprivileged one. He also further argued that the language of development was a result of post-colonialism in certain regions (the global south), meaning much of the development sector- the language, and sentiment behind comes from a more saviour mindset than that of collaboration. This point is reiterated by people who are interested in volunteering being especially interested in organisations who have the brand image of “Heroes” and “Saviours” (Randle et al., 2013). This kind of thinking is especially seen in Western development organisations working in African countries. However, since both Bangladesh and Africa count as the “global south” and are developing regions that were previously colonised with issues in social structures, the treatment is one and the same. The Western narrative of development portrays people who live in developing countries as “passive, helpless, powerless victims who lack agency to solve their problems” and paints a “single story”. (Gatwiri, 2019) This “single story” narrative is one that only focuses on their poverty, disability, inequality, or situational factors and not their personhood or their actual stories. BRAC goes against that narrative and challenges it with its communications language style and puts a great emphasis on a “second story” one which focuses on the human factor; addresses the structural issue, and does not dwell on the dire situation of the person. A human-centric design in communication pushes collaboration; “real development can only come through partnership” where even people from the most hard-to-reach areas and rural areas are not denied a voice. (Mohan, 2022)

3.2 Methodology

The report follows a qualitative method, and is an exploratory take on finding the impact of human centric communication style on the brand and its stakeholders. It also combines primary and secondary sources of data to support its findings and analysis, and explore the objectives. The goal was to have an idea of how the different teams present in the department adhere to this human-centric communications style and how it has personally had an effect on how they view underprivileged people after using BRAC’s communication style.

- **Research Design**

The report is mainly exploratory- since the aim is to explore stakeholders’ and brand’s impact due to following a certain communications language and style. An exploratory research design was chosen because in exploratory research, the problem is not studied upon in depth.

This is relevant because of the significant lack of prior research that was identified while researching this specific topic.

- **Research Method**

The chosen method for this research paper is a qualitative one. This paper analyses peoples' behaviours and perception change of social biases as a result of being exposed to human centric communications style. These behaviour and perception changes also transform into better brand and work practices. Thus, the focus is on how human centric communication style is impacting brand and stakeholders, from a qualitative point of view rather than a measurable/quantitative one.

- **Sampling Technique and Size:**

The sampling technique employed for this research report was convenience sampling. Five employees, belonging to different units within the Communications Department were chosen not at random, but rather according to convenience of availability. Employees belonging to different units were chosen to grasp a better idea on just how deeply ingrained human centric communications style is in their specific work/job roles, and also to get an overall idea of the activities of the department.

- **Data collection method:**

The report follows a combination of primary and secondary data to analyse the specific objectives aforementioned. To be specific, secondary sources of data are the main support of this research report. Existing data on topics such as human-centric marketing and communication, effective communication and its roles, NGO cultures and language style, and BRAC's internal communication, activities/programmes, etc have been referenced in the literature review. The primary source was interviewing employees belonging to different units in the BRAC Communications Department following a one-on-one personal interview method, using open-ended questions. The interviews were also recorded (with consent). A detailed table, with each respondent's designation and their respective teams/units have been provided in the appendix.

3.3 Findings and Analysis

The respondents (Rn=5) have been interviewed against a number of categories, which they related to their job roles, in order to obtain deeper insights.

1. Job role and duties in BRAC Communications

Respondent 1 (**R1**) is the Content Team and Channel and Digital Team Lead; overseeing the Bangla content team and social media and online presence of BRAC. R1's job responsibilities include editing, supervising, and coming up with any Bangla content made by BRAC Communications or other Programmes for external audiences.

Respondent 2 (**R2**) is the Communications Manager in the Programmes and Enterprise Unit, and primarily leads independent projects, in addition to being responsible for general activities like design, marketing activities, and social media campaign projects which effectively communicates BRAC's work.

Respondent 3 (**R3**) is the Lead Content Strategist, leading the English content team for all English content meant for external audiences in BRAC. R3 creates, develops English content and thought leadership pieces on climate change, spanning over a few different mediums (Audio visuals, blogs, outsourced content). R3 also ensures that the work is accurately aligned with BRAC's beliefs, values, and message.

Respondent 4 (**R4**) is a "Material Development Specialist" in the Internal Communications unit, where the work is based on "behavioural change communications". According to R4, this behaviour change communications is the backdrop for every BRAC programme and project- since it is directly related to developing materials for field staff who will directly communicate with programme participants "*to aid effective implementation of interventions*".

Finally, respondent 5 (**R5**) the team lead for the Audio Visuals unit of BRAC Communications department, responsible for arranging and making video content like interview features, fieldwork, etc. for every BRAC Programme. R5's work is used to communicate BRAC's participant stories, beliefs and messages to outside audiences via visual media forms such as videos, photos, etc.

2. Role of Human Centric Design (HRD) in work:

According to the respondents the role of human centric design in their work is integral.

For R1 and R3, the importance of human-centric design in their respective work is similar; they both use a human-centric approach to developing/editing/putting out written content which is relatable, highlights a human story, and is impactful/accessible to the end-user (audiences). Furthermore, the experiences of R1 and R3 is also reflective of that of R4 and R5, in the sense that they all deal with presenting content to users, and are responsible for conveying human stories directly. According to R1, the role of human centric design in work provides a “baseline for taking audience psychographics and needs into account while developing content”. Additionally, according to R5, a human centric approach to work actually means having no set biases when approaching a story, and setting the context of the actual problem through peoples’ needs to add a “human element”.

However, for R2 and R4, the approach to human centric design in their work are a contrast: R4 is a “Material Development Specialist”, developing internal communications materials for BRAC employees in order to effectively communicate with programme participants/communities in the grassroots level and also takes into account the “ever-changing nature of intervention approaches according to peoples’ needs”; whereas, for R2, who leads independent projects/campaigns, content is catered to an audience- especially the urban youth. Thus, for R2’s work, human centric design looks like delivering content, and communicating through the most relevant and engaging materials.

To conclude, overall, the role of human-centric design in everybody’s work serves a crucial purpose- capturing audience response in the most effective way through appealing to everyone’s “human side”.

3. Relevance of BRAC’s communications tone and style in work:

The BRAC Communication tone and style focuses greatly on maintaining a humble, understated, and always empowering voice- with the focus on presenting a “second story”. All employees from the Communications Department are expected to maintain these aspects in their work whenever relevant

For R1, and R3 the relevance of BRAC’s communications tone in their work is high. As they have to present written content; with R1 additionally being in charge of BRAC’s online presence.

However, for R1, R2, and also R3, the BRAC communications tone provides a foundation for maintaining a uniform brand voice. According to R3, BRAC's communications style "ensures that the language used to communicate with external stakeholders is aligned with BRAC's tone, which is an extension of BRAC's ethos".

However, for R4 and R5, the tone is not as apparent in the work- it is only captured in its essence through their respective work. According to R4, the communication style "aids greatly in understanding programme participants'/audience profile and journey", however, "a greater importance is placed on effective communication to bring about behaviour change". For R5, the communication style of the organisation plays the greatest role when it comes to showcasing a "second story", and portraying the programme participants in an empowering light, highlighting their personal strength and resilience.

Thus, according to all 5 respondents, the BRAC Communications tone and style allows them to maintain uniformity of brand voice, reach and address their audiences better, and understand what type of communication will appeal to them the most. It also ensures that BRAC is shown "as a catalyst of change" rather than a direct saviour; creating an empathetic brand image.

4. Purpose of BRAC's specific human-centric approach to communications style:

The purpose of BRAC's human-centric approach to communication style serves that of uniformity within the organisation. It ensures that all the stakeholders are well-versed in the kind of brand image BRAC wants to establish, and also ensures that the communications style strongly reflects the brand values, mission, and vision as well- which is all about sustainable development via empowerment of disenfranchised communities.

In the discussions above, repeated use of certain linguistic choices such as words like "support", "sustainability", "empowerment", and "dignity" are used. These words give the reader an idea of how BRAC views its programme participants; they see the programme participants as not just receiving "help", but receiving the push they need to change their own lives according to their own unique needs. This also creates a way for the audiences, and donors to naturally feel a connection to the participants, and "root for them" since these linguistic choices highlight the participants' more than BRAC, and shows that the road to improvement is one that is of consistent effort. Thus, the communication tone here is also working in helping maintain a positive emotional relationship and creating brand trust (Indradewa, et al., 2015).

Following the literature review, especially the theory of "Goal-Oriented" (Goldreich et al, 2019) communication which refers to communication efforts serving a larger purpose of aiding in

achieving organisational goals; it also serves the purpose of effectively communicating organisational values/message to outside audiences (Guuru & Adede, 2022)- according to all the respondents, the answers reflected these aspects the most.

According to R1, R2, R3, and R5, even though their work is different the most common answer they all gave was that BRAC's human-centric approach to communication serves the purpose of re-establishing programme participants' who often come from underprivileged/vulnerable backgrounds' dignities, provides a unique narrative and a "second story" (which is more suitable for targeting the stories of the global south), and actively tries to go against typical NGO storytelling (providing unique positioning in the development sector).

R4 was unable to answer this question directly, however both R4 and R5 provided the insight that in their work human-centric communication is more intuitive- and serves the purpose of "blending in with the locals" since their work involves directly communicating with people at the grassroots level.

5. Effect of BRAC's communication style on external stakeholders (donors/audience):

According to R1, R3, and R5 the effect of BRAC's communication style is to promote empathy and "second story" narrative on a cognitive level for not only internal stakeholders, but external as well. It works to challenge audiences' probable biases, and implores them to think empathetically rather than "sympathetically". It also promotes better storytelling through being relatable.

According to R1, who is in charge of Bangla content and BRAC's social media presence, "donors, partners, and collaborators are more likely to contribute if the communication language relates to their personal beliefs of ethicality". According to R2, a human-centric communication style works in creating impactful pieces, which aids in effective "Call-to-Action" posts; audience participation is achieved. "This communication tone helps in communicating BRAC's human-centric intervention designs", according to R2.

According to R3, this communication style presents a "nuanced and dignified story"; R5's answer also reflects this opinion. Furthermore, according to R5, the communication style is "necessary for invoking human connection because human stories are relatable by nature".

6. Effect of BRAC's communication style on programme participants:

According to most of the respondents, the effect of BRAC's communication style is first and foremost- establishing dignity. According to R1, BRAC's communication language "paints participants in a light which is more truthful and complete", and also shows that the participants are "cared for". R2 and R3 echoed the same sentiments, with R3 adding "the communication style ensures that programme participants are not demeaned, or patronised in any way".

R4, and R5, whose work is directly involved with the programme participants themselves and relies on direct communication with them, also gave important insights. According to R4, "the information delivered to participants has a great importance on being comprehensible, and every piece of information and communication material is developed keeping participants' ease in mind", this means that the importance of effective communication is great which takes into account the language, and style participants themselves will most closely identify with. According to R5, programme participants are "more likely to naturally and more accurately share their stories when they know they are respected and being portrayed in a dignified way".

7. Effect of using BRAC's communication style on a personal level:

In the literature review, it was repeatedly mentioned how internal communication plays a great role, and how alignment of employees' personal beliefs with that of the organisation's is a motivator for job commitment and loyalty (Verghese, 2017).

All of the respondents said that as a result of constantly using this empathetic and dignified lens of communicating, they have an increased personal awareness of nuanced and complicated structural issues. Working for an organisation which places a great importance on communicating in this style, it has also helped them reinforce their own personal beliefs and values- making the employees empowered as well. There has been an increase in personal empathy, because BRAC's communication style is human-centric which means the employees have to view the programme participants as individuals and fellow human-beings who are facing unfortunate circumstances.

3.3.2 Key Findings

By analysing the primary and secondary data we can relate the purpose, contributions, and gaps of human-centric communications language relevant to the brand along with stakeholders as such:

- **Being accessible and consistent at the core:** Being consistent with the founder's beliefs and values, and the brand's mission; always keeping programme participants in focus. Issues are contextualised through participant stories, and not the other way around.
- **Effective Communication:** Focus is on making information accessible to the target audience (framing of story, language used, medium in which content is being posted, communicating in the field, etc).
- **Communications is an extension of strategic objectives:** BRAC's human centric communication style is consistent with the human-centric intervention designs, organisations' commitment to achieving sustainable development, and brand's core values. Thus, communications fulfil the role of ensuring brand's messaging is aligned.
- **Portraying an accurate story; establishing connection:** Establishing a connection with external audiences and the programme participants; audiences such as donors/partners are more likely to react and relate when the story is human, leading to better brand connection, increased funding, and image.

- **Challenging societal biases and typical “saviour” narrative of NGOs:** Inspiring hope via communicating that real transformation comes from empowerment of self and consistent effort- nobody is being magically “saved”. Empowering language is key for sustainable development, especially in the global south since much of the world views it as the “third world” and dismisses it.
- **Empathetic brand image:** By opting for a human-centric communications style, keeping participants’ dignity, accessibility, and audiences’ ease in focus- BRAC paints an empathetic and reliable brand image.
- **Human-centric communication is intuitive:** Even though a great importance is placed on being human-centric, the communication efforts vary depending on the type of work and is intuitive rather than following a rigid guideline.
- **Employee connection:** Employees relate with the style of communication on a personal level, leading to increased social awareness, empathy and also consistency in better work practices. This has also led to a higher sense of job commitment.
- **Behaviour change communications is used for targeting participants:** Human-centric communication is an extension of “behaviour change communication” while addressing people in the field. Behaviour change communication is more direct, with a rigid goal.
- There is a **lack of evaluation system for effectiveness of communication style/efforts.**

3.4 Summary

The report showed that maintaining a human-centric communication tone contributes greatly to the different kinds of content BRAC produces. It is an instrumental factor in delivering and presenting the work, impact, and stories of BRAC and its participants. For the brand itself, it has resulted in empowered, socially aware, and committed employees. It also increases brand trust and image which aids in garnering funds for programmes and interventions. The tone is also strongly aligned with BRAC’s mission, values, and goals- leading to better chances of achieving long term goals which is sustainable development.

Furthermore, the human-centric communication tone and style of BRAC challenges the typical “saviour” and “single story” narrative of NGOs, and positions itself in a unique way effective for targeting the “global south”. It aids in invoking emotional connection with audience and programme participants, and boosts further understanding of the causes of social inequalities and issues- the individuals suffering are not to blame and they are not powerless people incapable/unworthy of change.

3.5 Limitations

Limitations arose from confidentiality policies of BRAC, where I could not have a deeper look into the complete communications guidelines and other appropriate materials. Furthermore, due to lack of field visits, I was unable to interview programme participants themselves to get an idea about how effective BRAC’s communication style truly is, and their opinion towards the impact. Lastly, due to time constraints, I could not do a deeper research or have more interview participants.

3.6 Recommendations

The recommendations and implications after exploring this topic deeply are:

- More marketing and branding efforts should be made for making people aware of BRAC’s unique workplace culture, human centric design of programme and communications style, etc- in order to increase people’s and potential candidates' interest in working with BRAC.
- There should be a more concise guideline on how to effectively communicate using human-centric design of communication so new employees have a shorter adjusting period, and also for alleviating scope of misunderstandings.
- Programme participants’ stories should be targeted more to the urban youth rather than focusing more on donors/partners.

- There is a need for evaluating how programme participants and audiences are affected as a direct result of using this type of communications style, since it can help BRAC understand the true impacts of using a human-centric communications style.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

- Briefly, can you describe your job, and the role it plays in the BRAC Communications Department?
- What is the role of “Human Centric Design” in your work?
- To what extent is maintaining the BRAC Communications style/tone relevant in your work; how does your work reflect the “humble” image of BRAC?
- In your opinion, what is the purpose of the style of communication BRAC maintains?
- What effects (if any) does the BRAC communication style have on its external stakeholders?
- What effects does maintaining the BRAC communication style have on its programme participants?
- As an employee of BRAC, has using the highly human-centric communication tone that the organisation maintains had an effect on you personally?
- For the former question, if it did have an effect on you, can you please explain what they are?

Table 1: List of Interviewees

Respondents	Unit	Designation
1.	Content Team and Channel and Digital	Team Lead
2.	Programme and Enterprise	Communications Manager
3.	Programme and Enterprise	Lead Content Strategist
4.	Internal Communications	Material Development Specialist
5.	Audio Visuals	Team Lead

