



**Proposal to the European Commission  
for Additional Funding for  
*BRAC NFPE PHASE III PROGRAMME*  
June 2001 - May 2004**

**BRAC NFPE**



NFPE School



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## *Abbreviations*

AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
ATEO	Assistant Thana Education Officer
BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BLR	BRAC Local Representative
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DC	District Commissioner
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DGIS	Royal Netherlands Agency for International Development
DPs	Development Partners
EC	European Community
EDU	Education Development Unit (BRAC)
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HO	Head Office (BRAC)
IDEAL	Intensive District Approach Education for All
LCG	Local Consultative Group
NFPE	Non-Formal Primary Education
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
RED	Research and Evaluation Division (BRAC)
TEO	Thana Education Officer
TNO	Thana Nirbahi Officer (GoB Executive Officer at Thana level)
TRC	Thana Resource Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

## 1. Introduction

This proposal aims at providing a clear, thought through justification for the BRAC NFPE programme to remain at the original level of 34,000 schools. For this purpose, BRAC has developed a strategy for its involvement in the education system in Bangladesh. The strategy is characterised by two main time horizons: a short-term strategy aiming at the period 2002 – 2004 (until the end of the present phase III, i.e. end of May 2004) and a medium-term strategy aim at the period 2004 – 2009 (next phase of BRAC Education Programme).

The **overarching objective** of BRAC's strategy in Education is

**The reduction of poverty through the provision of high quality of education.**

### The purpose

- of the NFPE programme is to continue with the running of 34,000 schools in order to target the drop outs and students that cannot enroll in the Government system; and
- of the strategy is to seek ways of working with the Government in order for BRAC to transfer its acquired knowledge and best practices to the mainstream education system and therefore increasing its quality.

### The main outcomes are:

- With 34,000 schools BRAC will provide primary education to 1.1 million students in a 5-year programme (ending in May 2004), who otherwise would not have not been able to have any education.
- Due to the large intervention in the education system, BRAC is able to play a major role in the public arena as an advocate of quality education. The **new strategy** will have as outcomes the following:
  - GoB assisted in the provision of quality primary education;
  - Civil society sensitized about the current situation in the primary education system;
  - DPs informed and encouraged to implement improved quality of primary education strategies with GoB and other service providers.
  - Collaborative Research with Bangladesh research institutions into education at primary level undertaken.

In the following sections, the proposal will provide the chronology of the events that have led to the development of this strategy (Section 2. Background); the proposal will subsequently elaborate in detail the strategy above outlined within the two time-horizons (Sections 3.1 and 3.2). The final section will cover the financial implications and the draft budget.

It is worth pointing out that BRAC's Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) Programme in its current phase III, will not be changed as far as its provision of primary education. The BRAC's NFPE model will remain constant throughout the remaining programme period, i.e. up to the end of May 2004.<sup>1</sup> Only activities related to the BRAC's strategy in education vis-a-vis other actors will be explained in details.

The strategy will provide the necessary justification for the request of additional funding to the Members of the Donor Consortium in general and to the European Commission in particular.

## 2. Background

In June 1999 BRAC started phase III of its Non-Formal Primary Education Programme with expected contributions from the existing Donor Consortium Members, namely DFID (UK), EC, DGIS (Netherlands), AKF/CIDA, UNICEF, Novib and BMZ (Germany). Firm commitment by the BMZ (Germany) could not be secured, and by September 2000 there were strong indications that no funds will be earmarked by BMZ for the programme despite some early suggestions.

The expected contribution, at the time of the BRAC proposal for phase III, from the BMZ was approximately DM50 million (or US\$26 million).

The lower than expected commitment, coupled by a deterioration of the exchange rate between the Euro and the US dollars, resulted in the fund shortfall of approximately USD30 million (calculated with a constant number of school of 34,000 throughout the period of the programme).

With the view to scatter the impact of the shortfall, at the beginning of 2000 BRAC took the decision to scale down the programme from 34,000 to 31,000 schools. Towards the end of 2000, BRAC would have taken steps to scale down the programme by a further 3,000 school, reducing further the programme in the year 2001 to 23,000 schools in order to adequately cover the total fund shortfall.

With a programme of 23,000 schools, BRAC:

- Would have given primary education to 736,000 pupils - a drop of 354,000 from the original programme proposal;

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<sup>1</sup> For details on BRAC NFPE Phase III, refer to the BRAC project document, final version, 29 September 1998. Copies available from BRAC NFPE or BRAC DLO.



- Would have had to restructure its teachers' workforce from 34,000 to 23,000, and another 1,214 programme staff would have had to be either re-allocated or helped to find alternative employment outside BRAC.

Therefore BRAC's impact on primary education would necessarily diminish as a result of the shortfall. This would have had implications not only in the number of graduates, but also on BRAC's ability to influence the education system in Bangladesh.

After internal consultations and several meetings with European Commission officials, BRAC realised that in order to justify a programme size of the original magnitude (34,000 schools) a clear and thought through strategy and an indicative plan of actions on education should be devised. The strategy will not only provide BRAC with a vision and a mission statement, but with well-defined objectives, outcomes and activities.

### 3. BRAC's Strategy

The section on the strategy will cover the period 2001 – 2004 (until the end of the current phase III) and the period that will probably constitute the next phase of the NFPE programme, i.e. 2004-2009.

The first sub-section will briefly examine the primary education sector in Bangladesh, and where and how BRAC is placed within the sector.

The next two sub-sections will cover the short- and medium term BRAC education strategy. The short-term strategy will be more detailed, with individual activities outlined and explained in an indicative plan of actions.

In its strategy BRAC will consider three main actors involved in the Education Sector of the country, namely the **Government**, the **Donor community** and the **civil society**.

#### 3.1 Background on Bangladesh Primary Education Sector<sup>2</sup>

According to Government publications, the GoB took active measures in accelerating its primary education programme in the light of global awareness in the education sector as well as its national goals.

These include:

- i. Enactment of Compulsory Primary Education Law in 1990.

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<sup>2</sup> From publications by GoB/UNICEF: Primary Education in Bangladesh; Education for All (EFA) Assessment Report 2000 and the CAMPE publication: Education Watch Report. Available in UNICEF CD ROM (2000) *Bangladesh: Basic Education*.

- ii. Creation of a separate Primary and Mass Education Division in 1992.
- iii. Introduction of compulsory primary education programme in 68 Thanas in 1992 and expansion of this programme all over the country in 1993.

In addition to those, in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), the GoB has accorded high priority to primary education for socio-economic development of the country. For achieving the goal of Education for All, the objectives for primary education during the Fifth Five-Year Plan are to:

4. increase gross enrollment rate to around 110 per cent (net 95 per cent) with particular emphasis on girl enrollment,
5. increase primary education completion rate to at least 75 per cent,
6. improve the quality of teacher training, supervision, management and monitoring system,
7. revise and update curricula with a view to making them relevant to the needs,
8. set up an effective information base at the thana level,
9. undertake innovative programmes and conduct research and evaluation,
10. strengthen capability of National Academy for Primary Education, Directorate of Primary Education and Primary and Mass Education Division,
11. reduce gender gap and regional imbalances and
12. inculcate social consciousness among the children about their duties and responsibilities as good citizens.

By 1998 the Government primary education sector consisted of:

79,818	Primary level educational institutions, of which:
37,710	Government primary schools,
19,658	Registered non-government primary schools (Government pays for 80% of running costs and the community pays the remaining 20%),
3,177	Unregistered non-government primary schools,
2,837	Satellite schools (having classes I and II),
1,582	Secondary high schools with primary sections,
10,121	(Primary) Madrasahs (religious schools),
1,691	Kindergarten schools,
2,989	Community schools and
53	PTI experimental schools.

In 1998, a total of 18,360,576 students (gross enrolment) were studying in these institutions. It was estimated that realistically 35% of enrolled students would drop out, i.e. approximately 6 million. The latter are the targets of the NGOs non-

formal primary education schools. By 1998, BRAC alone was targeting 1.1 million of these drop-outs with the NFPE programme consisting of 34,000 schools.

The main causes for such a high drop out rate are the high teacher:pupils ratio, i.e. 1:70/80, sub-standard teachers' training, poor methodologies adopted to teach pupils, and the limited successes in the decentralisation and local level planning of the schools. All these factors contribute to the relatively poor quality of primary education in the Government sector.<sup>3</sup>

An interesting element in this discussion is that the GoB seldom acknowledged the role of the NGOs in the effective provision of primary education. The GoB seems to be more keen in considering NGOs within the context of its Non-Formal Education, which consists of the provision of basic education to adults, drop outs, people that have moved back to illiteracy and so on. Since the curriculum in the non-formal system does not follow either the primary education curriculum or the official primary education cycle, it cannot be considered primary education as such. BRAC NFPE programme does not fall into this category since BRAC adopts the GoB curriculum for its grades and GoB books for grades 4 and 5, so students can be fully integrated into the formal secondary school system.

The question that therefore arises is where can BRAC's NFPE programme be placed? The conventional *wisdom* amongst the critics of NGOs that programmes such as BRAC's NFPE run in parallel and therefore in competition to the Government's. In addition to that, their only survival is due to external commitment by donors. They therefore conclude that since such parallel systems cannot be sustainable they should not exist.

This obviously is far from the truth. BRAC's *raison d'être* is based on the realisation that Government provision of primary education is sub-optimal and sub-standard, i.e. far too many students drop out from school (according to GoB statistics) and demand for education is not fully met by the formal system. BRAC's NFPE therefore complements the GoB intervention, by acting as an education's safety net for the most disadvantaged members of the society. *Until 9 million or more students are virtually left without education, BRAC's NFPE can play a major role.*

The question of the dependency on donors' funds is indisputable. BRAC's programme can and will continue as long as there is interest in the part of international donors to provide education to poor children and as long as the GoB is unable to provide adequate primary education for all.

Although there is a certain degree of confidence that donors (whether existing or new ones) will continue their commitment to NFPE beyond the year 2004, perhaps not with the same magnitude, BRAC realised that it needs to look at its own involvement in the education sector. This exercise cannot and will not just look at BRAC's involvement in the provision of non-formal primary education but also at the establishment of dialogue with Government and at possible *entry*

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<sup>3</sup> Detailed insights in to the problems affecting the primary education system in Bangladesh can be found in the references mentioned in footnote 2.



points for BRAC into the Government system. In addition to that, experience has taught us that, shifts in emphasis in development policies at donors' Head Quarters may be a source of uncertainty for a programme like the NFPE.

This realisation led BRAC into thinking realistically of a strategy to be pursued in the primary education system as a whole including as its main interlocutors the GoB, the DPs and the civil society.

The next two sub-sections will tackle the short- and medium term strategy. The former will be more detailed and will cover the period until the end of the current phase III. It will outline objectives, outcomes and activities for which a draft budget has been drawn.

The medium term strategy will have fewer details, since it will need to incorporate lessons learned from the initial two and a half years until 2004.

### 3.2 Short-term Strategy

BRAC, together with the other main actors in the education sector, shares the same concerns about the relatively poor quality of education provided to pupils at primary level. Furthermore, BRAC also believes that improving quality of education will improve enrollment and retention rate in the Government primary education system.

BRAC's contacts with the Government education system already exist with collaboration with the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) for an adult education programme (started in 1997), schools for Hard To Reach (HTR) Children in collaboration with UNICEF<sup>4</sup>, and particularly worth mentioning are two programme fully sponsored by GoB with BRAC as the implementing agency: the running of community schools and the pre-schools.

The community schools are low-cost, social education institutions set up by the government. These schools were constructed by the General Education Programme (GEP) between 1990-1996. The School Management Committee were responsible for operating the schools smoothly and all materials, teachers salary etc. were provided by the GoB. However, after a few years the GoB found that the performance of these schools was deteriorating. As a result of this finding, 73 schools (out of 194 non-functional community schools) were allocated to BRAC out of which 43 schools have been handed over so far. There are now 43 community schools operated by BRAC. These schools follow the GoB curriculum, competencies and books, and all supplementary materials are provided by BRAC, which also provides supervision.

The pre-schools cater for children who will join the *formal* education system (4-5 years old). The purpose of these schools is to prepare the children for primary schools. This kind of approach is crucial in order to reduce the drop out rate later

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<sup>4</sup> Details on these programme can be found in NFPE Project Proposal, 29 September 1998, pp. 111-113.

in the formal system. The programme was started in 1987 when BRAC operated 10 schools. By 2001, BRAC is expected to operate 2000 schools. The teachers salaries are paid by the community. This programme is an important link between BRAC and the GoB education system, it provides further evidence of BRAC's complementarity vis-a-vis the GoB.

At field level, BRAC NFPE team has also informal contacts with GoB education institutions. The nature of these contacts is as follows:

- In order to avoid overlap between GoB school and BRAC's, the Thana Education Officer (TEO) is informed about location of the school and is given the list of potential students. This is checked against Government lists.
- District Coordination Meeting (Education) with Government and BRAC are being held every month, when possible. This is perhaps the most formal scheduled contact with the GoB representatives BRAC has in education. At these meetings the BRAC Local Representative (BLR) meets with the TNO, TEO and sometimes, albeit not frequently, the meeting can be presided by the Assistant District Commissioner.
- Some TEOs and ATEOs every month organise meeting with teachers and head teachers to which NGOs are sometimes invited. Whenever possible BRAC attends. During these meetings, discussions centre on overlapping problems, e.g. school attendance problems in GoB schools and ways to solve them, curriculum. BRAC staff is often asked for their opinion on these matters.
- BRAC is sometimes invited to cluster meetings with ATEO and 5-8 head teachers. These meeting are similar to refreshers' courses. BRAC is often asked how they run BRAC's refreshers.

A more general point is that these informal contacts are not in any way institutionalised, but depend upon individuals own initiatives. In this respect BRAC has taken an initiative to organise an annual meeting with Head Teachers and Assistant Head Teachers in BRAC's offices to discuss BRAC's programme and related complementarity issues (e.g. how to improve a smooth transition for BRAC students into the GoB system).

At the moment BRAC staff<sup>5</sup> feels that these informal interactions with GoB help in the following ways:

- To smooth working relationships;
- Prevent tension;
- Help in changing GoB's perceptions on BRAC as a competitor. Slowly GoB at field level appears to realise that BRAC and GoB share the same goals.
- BRAC's graduate from primary school, when they join the GoB's secondary education contribute to the performance of the schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Meetings with BRAC NFPE Regional Managers on 23/01 and 24/01/2001.

Although collaborative programmes with DNFE and informal attendance to meetings at field level will be continued, BRAC in his short-term strategy will identify specific objectives and activities.

The objectives and activities will aim at reaching the ultimate goal of the strategy, which is:

*To reduce poverty by the provision of improved quality of primary education in the sector as a whole through transferring BRAC's knowledge and best practices acquired in its NFPE programme to the GoB's primary education system*

Activities will be directed at several levels, e.g. field level as well as central level. They will include activities aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of the GoB to deliver high quality primary education, activities aimed at informing MPs on education, development of programme on education for TV and radio, collaborative research with civil society and GoB and dissemination of results, and activities aimed at the donor community.

#### **Result/Activity A.**

In order to transfer the knowledge acquired (in curriculum development, teaching methodology and management and supervision) in running the NFPE programme to the GoB system, BRAC would need an institutional set up. The first thought was to set up Thana Resource Centres (TRC)<sup>6</sup>, managed by BRAC, located near the TEO office, providing training courses for government teachers, and other facilities aimed at social mobilisation. In doing so, BRAC would have fallen into the 'parallel system' trap. The idea was then dropped in favour of strengthening the capacity of existing TRCs.

From initial consultations with UNICEF it emerged that some 96 TRCs have been built in the 96 respective Thanas. These centres should cater for an average of 400 teachers.<sup>7</sup> At the moment, each TRC has 4 staff: the ATEO, a TRC instructor, a data entry operator and a guard. Teachers' trainers will be recruited from a pool of trainers who will have received training by GoB education institutes. It was thought that each TRC should ideally have a 20-member resource pool of trainers. At the moment, none of the existing TRC is optimally operational. UNICEF and NORAD are the two agencies assisting the GoB in the providing funding for the manpower of each TRCs. BRAC intervention will be coordinated with GoB and the other concerned agencies.

Thus, BRAC will assist in:

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<sup>6</sup> The GoB is changing the name from Thana to Upazila. Thus, TRC will become URC.

<sup>7</sup> It is worth pointing out that these TRCs are meant for every teachers and not just Government's.

- ❖ Strengthening the capacity of the existing TRCs by:
  - Providing additional staff with a team of 6 plus a monitor. Of these, 5 will be trainers (one for each subject) and one will be in charge of social mobilisation. The BRAC team will be monitored by an additional staff who will look after 2-3 TRCs.<sup>8</sup>
  - Running workshops with TEOs, ATEOs, UP Chairs, Community leaders, Head Teachers and teachers, with facilitation by BRAC. These workshops will have the purpose to draw the attention to primary education issues and the local challenges facing the system.
  - Improving training and library materials.
  - Setting up a small IT facility in every TRC with 2 computers and educational CD-ROMs.

These activities are designed to meet the scope of the TRCs, which is to provide

*"professional training for improving the quality of primary education in general, and quality of teaching and learning, classroom and school environment ... [TRCs] act as a demonstration centre for modern equipment and techniques used in primary education".<sup>9</sup>*

For an NGO working with GoB is a sensitive matter. BRAC realises that a substantial consensus building will be required, and the pace of its involvement will have to be limited at first. For these reasons, BRAC will target initially a maximum of 30 Thanas. The targeting will be done in consultation with the GoB, UNICEF, and NORAD.

BRAC will not be responsible for the management of the TRCs. The management of the TRC will follow the prescribed model by the GoB, i.e. it would be vested in the TRC Committee headed by Superintendent of the PTI of the district while the District Primary Education Officer, respective TEO and Model School Head Teacher will be members. TRC Instructor will act as a Member Secretary of the Committee.

The relationship between these sets of activities at Thana level and the BRAC's EDU will have to be established. BRAC proposes to increase the staff of Head Office (HO) by 5-6 specialists so as to form a new team called *Support Team* under the responsibility of the Director for BEP.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Result/Activity B.**

BRAC intervention will not be confined to the TRCs. BRAC believes that there is a need for the political hierarchy to better understand the situation in the field, so as to design better policies and GoB intervention in this sector. Secondly there is

<sup>8</sup> This is part of BRAC's commitment to approach to quality control.

<sup>9</sup> Leaflet by Directorate of Primary Education, PMED, GoB (2000), *Upazila Resource Centre of Primary Education in Bangladesh*, UNICEF, Dhaka.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to Appendix 1: BEP Organogram.



a need for the political leaders to better understand the relationship between GoB and NGOs and how they could interact as partners instead of being perceived as competitors.

In order to achieve that, BRAC proposes to set up a number of initiatives with Members of Parliament, GoB officials and community leaders. Involvement with MPs may be even more sensitive than working with the GoB at field level. The risk of entering into political campaign for one or the other party will be present.

Thus, BRAC proposes:

- ❖ To organise structured workshops (introductory workshops and follow-ups) with Union Parishad Chairs at thana level and community leaders, during which education issues related to the particular Thana will be discussed. The group will be a political party mixture to avoid political polarization. BRAC will be in charge of structuring and facilitating these meetings.
- ❖ To organise structured workshop at District level with DC and MPs and other dignitaries. The District effectively is where the Government is more powerful. These meetings will build on the experience by BRAC with District Coordination Meeting for Education.
- ❖ After the above workshops, BRAC will organise a one-day fieldtrip for the Parliamentary Standing Committee (Education). The visit will take place outside Dhaka, and will consist of a visit to schools – GoB's and BRAC's; education issues will be tabled.

With these activities BRAC aims at achieving greater understanding by the elected leaders of the situation in the primary education sector, a better understanding of the role of NGOs and other actors. Due to the sensitive nature of these activities, BRAC senior management will be responsible for the organisation and implementation.

As far as activities with the GoB, in the short-term, BRAC will not envisage any additional ones. The proposed ones will have to be considered as tests; BRAC intends to periodically review these interventions and strategy.

### **Result/Activity C.**

The second actor in the primary education sector in Bangladesh is the Donor community. Development partners (DPs), who constitute the Donor community, heavily sponsored the primary education sector in Bangladesh. The financing of the sector is done through a vast number of discrete projects which make-up almost 50% of the total budget for primary education (ADP budget). Most of these projects constitute what the GoB and the DPs call the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), which is not to be interpreted as a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) programme, but merely as a list of projects in a particular sector. NGOs, such as BRAC, are not included in the PEDP.



Some DPs are involved with NGOs, notably the Donor Consortium for BRAC and the one for Proshika, which provide these two NGOs funds to carry out large programmes. BRAC has the largest education programme in Bangladesh.

DPs in Bangladesh have developed a mechanism for coordination called the Local Consultative Group (LCG). The LCG has subsequently formed sub-groups according to issues, like LCG Sub-groups on Education. The Sub-groups are forums for DPs to discuss issues, policies, share information about project financing, organise collective actions etc.

Recently a welcomed reform was initiated, to look at the role of the Sub-groups, their usefulness, and their constituencies. Although full membership is strictly a donor prerogative, on an *ad hoc* basis NGOs and Government are invited to discuss certain issues.

BRAC proposes to use this set-up to inform, influence, table alternative views and steer collective actions towards better understanding and interactions between stakeholders within the education sectors.

Thus, BRAC proposes:

- ❖ To organise twice a year, discussion/conferences with the LCG Sub-group on Education at the BRAC Centre for Development and Management, Rajendrapur. Presentations on collaborative research results will be presented, issues to do with the coordination of different actors in the sector will be discussed etc.
- ❖ At one of the two conferences, the GoB will be invited to attend and present.

The Chair of the LCG Sub-group on Education could be used in order to inform all DPs about these initiatives.<sup>11</sup> Members of the existing Donor Consortium should also play a role in publicizing these events.

#### **Result/Activity D.**

The third actor playing an important role in the sector is the civil society. Collaborative research, e.g. like the Education Watch, will be taken up with network of NGOs involved in Education like the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), with NGOs, and with established well-renown research centres.

BRAC will aim at providing results of research in two formats: the first format will be for dissemination in public fora, where academic rigor will not overshadow the message; and the second format will be more rigorous and will target the academic world and government research institutions.

Results from these researches will be presented in conferences and fora specified in the previous sections, will be disseminated to other NGOs and civil society organisations.

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<sup>11</sup> The current chair of the PCG Sub-group on Education has already been approached by BRAC and he has expressed his willingness to cooperate.

Thus, BRAC proposes:

- ❖ To formulate a research workplan in the first six months of the strategy to identified issues and collaborative research centres.
- ❖ To present the first piece of research after 18 months from the start. The research should be in the appropriate format depending on the audience.
- ❖ Further research results will provide the raw materials for workshops with Government and other actors in the education sector.

BRAC has already experience in these kinds of activities, namely with its involvement in the Education Watch. Another possible and at the moment unexplored area will be a poverty focus analysis of the Public Expenditure Review (PER) in Education; no agency or the GoB is doing a PER for the Education sector only. A PER for the Health sector has provided very valuable lessons especially for targeting the ultra poor in Bangladesh.

In order to both to explore issues and to carry out research BRAC will propose a budget to employ internationally renowned consultants within the first six months of implementation.

The last but not least area of intervention in the BRAC's strategy is its involvement in Media programmes covering education topics. Radio and Television will be the main medium to be used. Already BRAC has been approached by ETV (the new TV channel is accessible by everyone).

Activities related to BRAC's involvement in the media will be detailed in the workplan.

As stated before, BRAC short-term strategy will be considered as a first phase of a longer term strategy; the second phase of such strategy will be for the period 2004-2009. Reviews will be conducted at appropriate interval to provide feedback for fine-tuning, changes and re-direction.

### 3.3. Medium Term Strategy (2004-2009)

BRAC 's involvement in the Education sector in the five years after May 2004 will be characterised by similar areas of interventions. BRAC will continue to run a sizeable number of NFPE schools; since the demand for such institutions will not be lower. BRAC believes that, gradually its interventions with the main actors in the primary education system, i.e. GoB, DPs and civil society will be augmented and its interventions in provision of NFPE in a large scale gradually decreasing.

A point worth noting is that although the provision of mainstream education is a prerogative of the any government, and despite BRAC's efforts in assisting the GoB in improving the quality of education, BRAC as an NGO will need to keep its independence from the GoB. This will allow BRAC to remain (i) a source of

independent innovations in the field of education and (ii) independent from political party polarisation.

It is envisaged that by 2009, BRAC will have shifted its target group exclusively to the Hard To Reach (HTR) and/or ultra poor children, and BRAC's interventions vis-a-vis the GoB will be intensified (provided the first period, i.e. 2001-2004, will have yielded encouraging results).

During the 2004-2009 period, BRAC will propose a similar level of commitment to its NFPE programme to the existing DPs and seek perhaps new DPs. BRAC is of the firm opinion that commitment to social sector development must be seen as a long-term commitment.

Starting from June 2004 upto 2009, BRAC will be shifting its emphasis for the provision of NFPE based onto two overarching criteria:

- Children from ultra poor households.
- Hard to reach and not well served areas of Bangladesh.

This will result in a natural scaling down of the NFPE programme to lower levels than the present one.

Scaling down necessarily means fewer teachers required. In this respect BRAC intends to make use of its own recently approved University<sup>12</sup> for accreditation of BRAC teachers for the GoB education system. This will ensure that BRAC teachers will be able to join as teachers in the GoB system.

BRAC's involvement in the capacity building of the TRCs will be expanded in consultation with GoB to cover most of the remaining TRCs. Activities will have been reviewed from the previous phase, and lessons will have been internalised.

The period 2004-2009 will also be a period of consolidation of relations with the GoB in general and with MPs, DCs, and UP Chairs in particular. A review will be carried out at the end of the current phase (2004), to highlight the lessons learned in the activities related to BRAC engagement with MPs, GoB officials and community leaders. This will allow for the planning of the next phase.

Activities with DPs will continue, and BRAC will use the LCG Sub-group Education for dissemination of issues arising in the sector. BRAC may be facing a very different DPs scenario, as both the DPs and the GoB move towards a SWAp. BRAC will have taken into account the changes in these scenarios.

Dissemination and collaborative research will continue and strengthening of GoB existing research institutions in education will be envisaged.

Since this strategy is still at an embryonic stage, it will be very difficult and inaccurate to go into more details than the ones provided.

### **BRAC's Current Move Towards Financial Sustainability**

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<sup>12</sup> BRAC received the approval from the GoB for BRAC University during March 2001.

Sustainability is a key word in development, and a very important issue for NGOs. It needs though to be separated into two aspects: sustainability of impact and financial sustainability of the programme and the organisation.

This section is concerned with the financial sustainability of the NFPE programme and of BRAC as a whole. The NFPE programme is currently receiving funding from international donors to cover approximately 98% of the total programme costs.

In addition to the new strategy, designed to strengthened BRAC's linkages with GoB, BRAC has embarked on a consultation process with the GoB aiming at convincing the latter to cover part of BRAC's NFPE programme running costs<sup>13</sup>; existing NFPE donors are also encouraged to support BRAC's in this effort. Due to the upcoming national elections, the GoB will unlikely take a position on this issue.

Realistically, BRAC's strategy with the GoB aims at the following programme financing distribution: the GoB contributing to approximately 50% of the costs, BRAC's own internal resources another 30% and the remaining 20% from the community.

Overall, BRAC is moving towards financial sustainability; its total annual expenditure is being financed as follows (updated March 2001):

Sources of Finance	Proportion of Total Annual Expenditure (%)	Cumulative proportion
<b>Internal:</b>		
- Project Income	4	46
- Savings and Investment	14	60
Concessional Loans	21 (54% of this from PKSF)	81
International Donors	19	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

As it can be seen from the table, 81% of BRAC expenditure is being financed from internal and market sources, and 19% from international donors. BRAC is moving towards reducing the dependency on international donors even further during the period 2004-2009, as the NFPE programme scales down (the NFPE programme accounts for approximately 14% of the total annual expenditure).

<sup>13</sup> BRAC's letter to Minister of Education dated 29/05/2000.

#### 4. LFA for the Short-term Strategy.

The following LFA will be added to the NFPE programme LFA.<sup>14</sup>

Most of the OVIs are qualitative in nature, hence it is difficult to associate "quantity" to them.

INTERVENTION LOGIC	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVIs)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
<p><b>Overall Objective:</b></p> <p>Quality of Primary Education Improved through BRAC's involvement with main actors in the primary education sector.</p>	Retention rate in primary schools under programme increasing by 5%	School record monitoring data Education Watch	
<p><b>Project Purpose:</b></p> <p>A. GoB TRCs capacity strengthened in 30 Thanas.</p> <p>B. Local Government representatives, MPs, DCs, community leaders sensitized on primary education issues.</p> <p>C. Information dissemination on primary education amongst DPs and civil society achieved.</p> <p>D. Collaborative research with GoB institutions and other research centres established.</p>	<p>TRCs fully staffed and operational. 6 new BRAC personnel in place.</p> <p>IT facilities and libraries operational and in use.</p> <p>By Jan-03, TEOs and ATEOs fully engaged in the TRC.</p> <p>8 workshops organized from June 2001 to May 2004.</p> <p>75% dissemination coverage amongst DPs.</p> <p>75% dissemination of findings/results to civil society on education.</p> <p>2 major research work undertaken: Education Watch and PER for education</p>	<p>6-monthly progress reports, annual monitoring mission, MTR, Feedback from TEOs and ATEOs.</p> <p>Distribution lists Meetings Attendance lists Workshop reports</p> <p>RED progress reports.</p>	<p>GoB commitment to improving quality of education.</p> <p>Absence of hostile behaviour towards NGOs' provision of social services.</p> <p>Political stability to allow discussions to take place.</p> <p>DPs interest in primary education sector in Bangladesh.</p> <p>Relevant institutions willing to participate</p>

<sup>14</sup> BRAC's NFPE Phase III programme document (April 1999- March 2004), final version, 29 Sept. 1998.



Results			
A.1 – TRC fully staffed and operational	<p>6 BRAC personnel trained and deployed in each TRC by Jan-2002.</p> <p>Social mobilization specialist catchment area 100% covered by Jun-02.</p> <p>Library for each TRC fully stocked by Jun-02.</p> <p>IT facilities in place by Jun-02.</p> <p>4 annual workshops with TEO and ATEO organized at TRC level.</p>	6-monthly progress reports.	Existing TRC managers receptive to new model of management and training.
A.2 – Primary school teachers trained	By May-04, at least 50% of teachers (formal primary teachers) received training by TRCs. On average 50% of teachers including head teachers shared experience and participated in workshops	Ditto	Willingness of teachers to receive training.
B.1 – Workshops, with UPs, DCs, and community leaders organised	By May-04 all workshops organized: With UPs and community leaders:	Post-workshop Reports	Support by community leaders, UP chairs and DCs to open discussions on education issues
B.2 – Fieldtrip with Parliamentary Standing Committee MPs organised	70% of the MPs of the Standing committee participated in the annual field visit.	Fieldtrip Reports by BRAC Senior Management	Non-partisan attitude of MPs.
C – Relationship between BRAC, DPs and civil society on current education issues enhanced.	Bi-annual conference in Rajendrapur held with DPs and one with DPs and GoB.	6-monthly Progress Reports Conference proceedings with DPs	Civil society and NGOs sharing same agenda as BRAC on education.
D – Collaborative research outputs produced by BRAC and GoB/Non-Gov institutions on education issues.	Two research works completed by May 2004. Research works published into academic and non-academic press. Findings disseminated among DPs and GoB.	RED progress reports on education	

Activities:			
<p>A.1 – For each TRC (30) a team of 6, i.e. five trainers and one for social mobilization to be trained and deployed;</p> <p>5-6 education specialists will be employed at BRAC's HO (EDU) to coordinate activities at TRC level;</p> <p>Training materials produced for teachers training workshops;</p> <p>Develop methodology for TEOs, ATEOs, head teachers workshops.</p>	<p>By Jan-02:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 30 thanas identified and selected for this purpose.</li> <li>➤ 1 Team Leader with a team of 5 staff deployed in every thana.</li> <li>➤ HO staffing needs to be assessed and specialists appointed by Nov. 2001</li> <li>➤ TEO's, ATEO's workshop designed on quality supervision and management</li> <li>➤ Methodology design and materials developed for TEO's and Teachers workshop.</li> <li>➤ Links between Thana level BRAC team and existing TRC operational by 2002.</li> </ul>	<p>6-monthly Progress Report</p>	<p>Ability to find appropriate personnel for the job.</p> <p>Low turn over of staff at HO NFPE to ensure stability in the programme.</p>

<p>A.2 – Training workshops/courses for teachers organized per each Thana at each TRC. <u>NB: teachers training needs for each TRC will be based on local demand. Needs will be assessed before activities start.</u></p>	<p>During the first year of implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Training material related to classroom teaching based on GO-NGO experiences developed.</li> <li>➤ Training material related to quality education components based on GO-NGO experiences developed.</li> <li>➤ Teachers', Head teachers' experience and skills related to subject teaching, new developments in the teaching of important subjects shared during refreshers and workshops.</li> <li>➤ Teachers' experiences and skills on material production related to important subjects shared</li> </ul>	<p>Ditto</p>	
<p>B.1 – Initial contacts with UP Chairmen, and community leaders will be organized by BRAC Regional Management in order to plan for subsequent workshops.</p> <p>Workshop on understanding of primary education local needs/issues will be organized and facilitated by BRAC. They may include: discussions, and visit to schools (GoB's and BRAC's).</p> <p>BRAC's Senior Management will be in charge of contacting DCs.</p> <p>Workshop will DCs will be facilitated by BRAC's Senior Management and will be a forum for sharing findings from workshop with community leaders.</p>	<p>Qualitative Indicators on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Whether workshop took place</li> <li>➤ Assessment of participation and discussions</li> <li>➤ Attendance and interests in workshops</li> </ul>	<p>6-monthly progress reports Workshops reports/ proceedings</p>	<p>Acceptance by communities of BRAC's facilitation of workshops.</p>

<p><b>B.2 – One-day fieldtrip with Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education organized. Visit to schools and TRCs will be included.</b></p>	<p>Assessment of Standing Committee interest in fieldtrip Assessment of discussions</p>	<p>6-monthly Progress Reports Fieldtrip proceedings</p>	<p>Parliamentary Standing Committee willing to engage in discussion and fieldtrip</p>
<p><b>C – Conferences (twice a year) at BRAC's Centre for Development and Management, Rajendrapur with the LCG Sub-group on Education, civil society and Government (the latter to be invited to one only) organized.</b>  A typical conference will include presentation by BRAC on its experience in Education, papers by educationalist will also be presented. DPs will be encouraged to make their own presentations.</p>	<p>Qualitative Indicators:                  &gt; Whether conference took place                  &gt; Attendance                  &gt; Assessment of interest of DPs                  &gt; Publication and dissemination of proceedings</p>	<p>6-monthly Progress Reports Conference proceedings</p>	<p>Widespread interest by DPs to attend conferences in order to share ideas, problems, issues, etc.</p>
<p><b>D – Identification of: research centers or institutions, and issues. Develop Workplan. Publication and dissemination of research outputs/results tailored for different audiences.</b></p>	<p>Identification of research institutions by Nov-01 Workplan developed by Dec-01  By May-04 two main research works undertaken.</p>	<p>RED progress report 6-monthly progress report research output and publications</p>	<p>Low turn over of staff in BRAC in the RED Education section.  RED able to establish contacts with research institutions</p>
<p>Part of the dissemination of research outputs, and of the results of these new components will be carried out through programmes in the media, i.e. TV and radio.</p>	<p>Media programmes (TV and radio) workplan developed by Jan-02.  Programme completed by May-04</p>	<p>6-monthly progress report</p>	<p>No GoB restrictions for NGOs to produce programmes in the media</p>

## 5. NFPE Financial Summary and Budget.

The financial summary section is divided into two parts: the first will look at the cash flow for the NFPE programme. Whereas the second part will provide the detailed budget for the new strategy component for the period June 2001 to May 2004.

Both BRAC and the existing Donor Consortium have expressed their commitment to keep the number of schools to a constant number of 34,000. DFID and DGIS have already arranged for their financial contributions to be frontloaded, CIDA through AKF is planning to increase its overall contribution with an additional CAN\$ 15 million until the end of the current NFPE phase III, i.e. May 2004.

Table 1A, B and C display in details the cash flow of the NFPE programme phase III for the past period of June 1999 – Dec. 2000, the projected cash flow for the period January 2001 – May 2004, and the total summary situation is depicted in Table 1C.

As it can be seen from Table 1A and B, during the period January 2000 – May 2001 because of funds shortfall the NFPE programme scaled down its number of school to 31,000. With the additional commitment by CIDA and the European Community the programme is expected to be back to its original number of school of 34,000 by June 2001.

The additional EC funds required to cover the US\$16.17 million shortfall, will have to be scheduled so as to ensure BRAC's ability to keep 34,000 schools open until the end of the current phase.

Table 2 shows the budget for the implementation of the BRAC's education strategy for the period June 2001 – May 2004. The activities are being entered as per Logical –Framework. A number of points need explaining:

- The first 6-7 months of the first year of implementation of the new strategy, i.e. June 2001 – December 2001 will be spent in discussions and negotiations with GoB on how to carry out activity A, i.e. TRCs capacity building. As stated above, this period will also be spent in preparing the detailed workplan for the rest of the activities to be carried out between January 2002 to May 2004.
- In Table 2, values/costs are entered in thousands.
- Point E. in the budget refers to the employment of 5-6 education specialists at Head Office (HO) to exclusively follow the new programme components.
- The Budget for Collaborative Research has been calculated at approximately 4% of the sub-total of all activities.



**TABLE 2 – BUDGET FOR SHORT-TERM STRATEGY NEW COMPONENTS**

ACTIVITIES	Unit Cost	Jan-01	Jun-02	Jan-03	Jun-03	Jan-02	Jun-02	Jan-03	Total Cost
		May-02	May-03	May-04	May-02	May-03	May-04		
<b>A TRC Capacity Building</b>		Quantity			Value ('000)				
Salary and benefits of Team Leader	10	30	30	30	1,800	3,600	3,600	9,000	
Salary and benefits of Trainer and Social Mobiliser	8	150	150	150	7,200	14,400	14,400	36,000	
Salary and benefits of Monitoring staff	10	30	30	30	1,800	3,600	3,600	9,000	
Workshops for TEO and ATEOs. Head Teachers	20	60	120	120	1,200	2,400	2,400	6,000	
Ed. Material Dev. Costs	200	30	0	0	6,000	-	-	6,000	
IT Facilities	100	30	0	0	3,000	-	-	3,000	
Rent and Utilities	10	30	30	30	1,800	3,600	3,600	9,000	
Furniture and fixtures	50	30	0	0	1,500	-	-	1,500	
Training and Refreshers	10	0	3,000	3,000	-	30,000	30,000	60,000	
<b>B Sensitisation of Loc. Govt MPs, DCs, etc...</b>								-	
Workshops & Follow-up with UP Chairs, etc...	50	30	30	30	1,500	1,500	1,500	4,500	
Workshop with DCs and other District officials	100	0	10	10	-	1,000	1,000	2,000	
Fieldtrip with Parliamentary Standing Committee	50	0	1	1	-	50	50	100	
<b>C Activities with LCG Sub-Group on Education</b>								-	
Conferences at BCDM	1,500	1	2	2	1,500	3,000	3,000	7,500	
<b>Sub-Total</b>					27,300	63,150	63,150	153,600	
<b>D Collaborative Research</b>					1,092	2,526	2,526	6,144	
Media Coverage (TV/Radio)					1,000	2,000	2,000	5,000	
<b>Sub-Total</b>					29,392	67,676	67,676	164,744	
<b>E Management and Logistics</b>					3,233	7,444	7,444	18,122	
<b>TOTAL (Tk.)</b>					32,625.12	75,120.36	75,120.36	182,865.84	
<b>TOTAL (EURO)</b>					660.16	1,520.04	1,520.04	3,700.24	

Exchange Rate used; Euro 1 = Tk 49.42

Table 3 provides a summary of the existing EC contribution and the amount to be requested by BRAC for the funding shortfall for the NFPE programme phase III and the new strategy aimed at improving primary education quality in the Government system.

**Table 3 – Summary of EC contribution (existing and requested) to BRAC NFPE Phase III**

	<b>Contract Value (Euro)</b>
BRAC NFPE Phase III BGD/87-3000/99/0015-01	36.7 million
Additional Funding for NFPE Phase III Main programme	17.6million
Funding for New Strategy	3.7million
<b>TOTAL Additional Funding to BRAC's NFPE</b>	<b>21.3million</b>

Exchange rate EURO1 = Tk 49.42.

Table 1A: Cash Flow Jun-99 - Dec-00

## BRAC Non-Formal Primary Education Program Phase III

Number of Schools: Jun-99 - Dec99 = 34,000 Jan-00 - Dec-00 = 31,082	(Currency in Million)					
	Actual					Projection
	Jun-99 Aug-99	Sep-99 Nov-99	Dec-99 Feb-00	Mar-00 May-00	Jun-00 Sep-00	Oct-00 Dec-00
<b>Cash inflow:</b>						
A. Opening balance	-	(68.25)	(302.29)	(526.66)	(483.70)	(91.23)
B. Grants from Donors						
- CIDA			5.55	16.47	0.71	17.40
DFID	187.50			236.28		
NOVA	23.86		11.50	30.73		
EC					313.95	
DGIS					345.26	
UNICEF						
Other (Total)	0.00					
Grants from Donors	211.11	-	57.03	283.48	659.94	17.40
C. Project Income	2.20	2.23	2.10	(4.23)	8.20	(6.35)
D. BRAC Contribution						
<b>Total inflow</b>	<b>213.31</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>59.13</b>	<b>279.25</b>	<b>668.14</b>	<b>11.05</b>
<b>Cash outflow:</b>						
A. Schools Cost	260.50	222.35	261.94	224.23	265.72	235.80
B. Library Program	17.55	12.29	12.98	8.64	5.80	14.57
C. Incentive Program and Maj. Dev.	3.31	1.05	2.34	3.12	0.65	2.32
D. Education Development Unit	-	-	6.54	1.30	3.70	4.30
E. BRAC Core Strategy Components						
<b>Total Outflow</b>	<b>281.36</b>	<b>235.69</b>	<b>283.80</b>	<b>237.29</b>	<b>275.87</b>	<b>257.02</b>
<b>Closing Balance/(Over draft) Taka</b>	<b>(68.25)</b>	<b>(302.29)</b>	<b>(526.66)</b>	<b>(483.70)</b>	<b>(91.23)</b>	<b>(336.73)</b>
<b>Closing Balance/(Over draft) in EURO</b>	<b>(1.36)</b>	<b>(6.12)</b>	<b>(10.66)</b>	<b>(9.79)</b>	<b>(1.85)</b>	<b>(6.81)</b>

Table 1B: Cash Flow Projection Jan-01 - May-04

## BRAC NonFormal Primary Education Program Phase III

Number of Schools

Jan01 - May01 = 31000

Jun01 - Dec01 = 34000

Jan02 - Dec02 = 34000

Jan03 - Dec03 = 34000

Jan04 - May04 = 34000

(Currency in Million)

## Projections

	Jan-01	Apr-01	Jul-01	Oct-01	Jan-02	Apr-02	Jul-02	Oct-02	Jan-03	Apr-03	Jul-03	Oct-03	Jan-04	Apr-04
	Mar-01	Jun-01	Sep-01	Dec-01	Mar-02	Jun-02	Sep-02	Dec-02	Mar-03	Jun-03	Sep-03	Dec-03	Mar-04	May-04
<b>Cash inflow:</b>														
<b>A. Opening balance</b>	(336.73)	(181.43)	(431.52)	49.07	(174.54)	(216.91)	(294.47)	277.35	48.78	(76.28)	(224.25)	332.99	89.84	(117.09)
<b>B. Grants from Donors</b>														
AKS/CIDA	17.95	17.95	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70	56.70
DFID	155.46	-	77.73	-	155.46	-	77.73	-	77.73	-	77.73	-	-	-
NOVE	5.73	-	5.73	-	5.73	-	5.73	-	5.73	-	5.73	-	-	-
EC	-	-	605.62	-	-	-	782.00	-	-	-	782.00	-	-	281.70
DCIS	138.80	-	-	-	-	147.76	-	-	-	34.40	-	-	-	-
UNICEF	43.05	-	37.70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26.22	-
Others (Local)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants from Donors	401.07	17.95	793.53	56.70	227.94	204.40	932.21	56.70	150.21	141.10	932.21	56.70	82.92	338.40
<b>C. Project Income</b>	0.78	2.09	4.70	4.70	4.70	5.12	5.95	5.95	5.95	6.79	8.45	8.45	8.45	5.64
<b>D. BRAC Contribution</b>	10.00	-	-	-	10.00	-	-	-	10.00	-	-	-	10.00	-
<b>Total Inflow</b>	411.85	20.04	798.23	61.40	242.64	209.52	938.16	62.65	166.16	147.89	940.66	65.15	101.37	344.04
<b>Cash outflow:</b>														
A. School cost	235.30	247.44	259.45	259.45	259.45	261.95	263.94	266.94	266.94	270.66	281.90	281.90	281.90	189.99
B. Library Program	14.57	15.70	17.97	17.97	17.97	18.12	18.44	18.44	18.44	19.05	20.28	20.28	20.28	14.73
C. Innov. Program & Mat. Dev.	2.35	2.51	2.77	2.77	2.77	2.90	2.65	2.65	2.35	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.35	1.96
D. Education Development Unit	4.30	4.48	4.82	4.82	4.82	4.21	2.99	2.99	2.99	3.04	3.14	3.14	3.14	2.09
E. New Strategy Components	-	-	32.61	-	-	-	75.12	-	-	-	75.12	-	-	-
<b>Total Outflow</b>	256.55	270.13	317.64	285.02	285.02	267.03	306.34	291.22	291.22	295.85	383.43	308.31	308.31	203.81
<b>Closing Bal/(Over draft) Taka</b>	(181.43)	(431.52)	49.07	(174.54)	(216.91)	(294.47)	277.35	48.78	(76.28)	(224.25)	332.99	89.84	(117.09)	18.13
<b>Closing Bal/(Over draft) in EURO</b>	(3.67)	(8.73)	0.99	(3.53)	(4.39)	(5.96)	5.61	0.99	(1.54)	(4.54)	6.74	1.82	(2.37)	0.37

**Table 1C. Summary Cash Flow**  
**BRAC**  
**Non-Formal Primary Education Program Phas**

**Number of Schools**

Jun-99 - Dec-99 = 34,000

Jan-00 - Dec-00 = 31,082

Jan-01 - May-01 = 31000

Jun-01 - Dec-01 = 34000

Jan-02 - Dec-02 = 34000

Jan-03 - Dec-03 = 34000

Jan-04 - May-04 = 34000

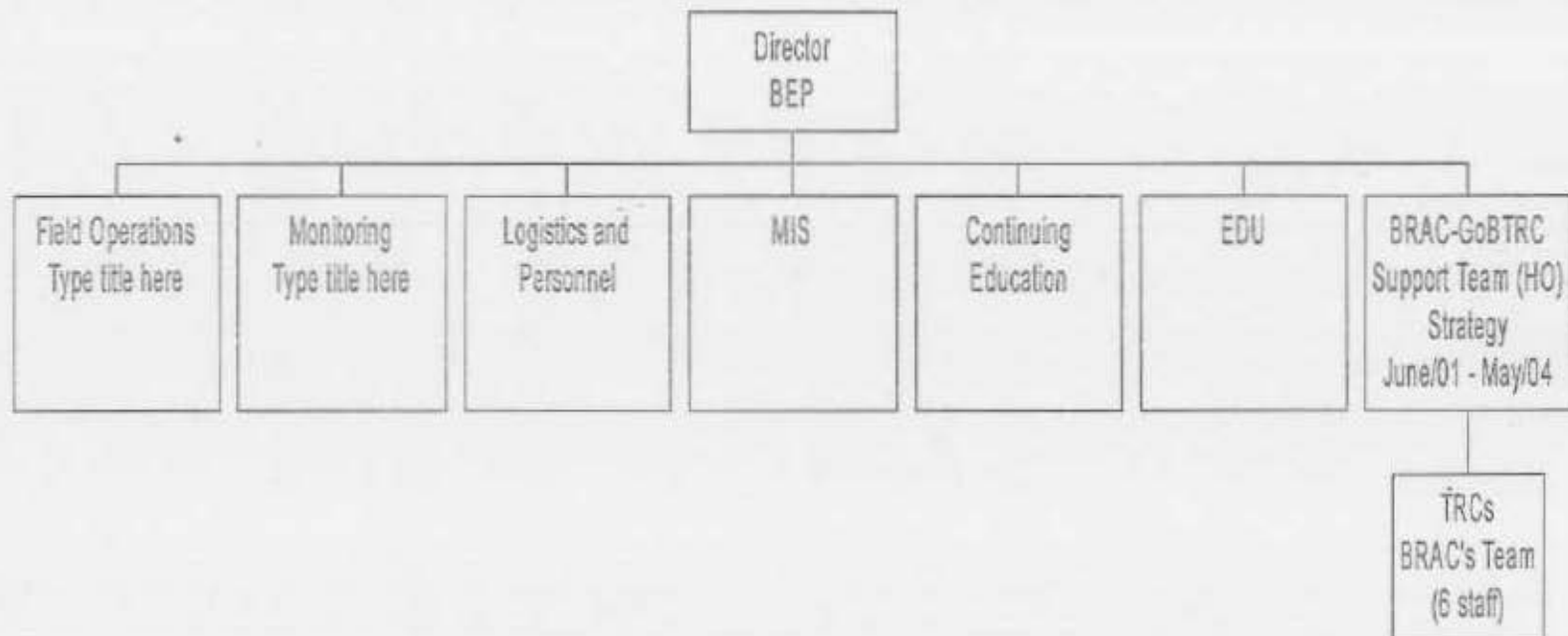
(Currency in Mill)

<b>Cash inflow:</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Grants from Donors</b>	
AKF/CIDA	793.41
DFID	1,045.62
NOVIB	180.47
EC	2,765.27
DGIB	746.18
UNICEF	107.00
Others (Local)	0.05
<b>Grants from Donors</b>	<b>5,621.00</b>
<b>Project Income</b>	<b>81.89</b>
<b>BRAC Contribution</b>	<b>40.00</b>
<b>Total Inflow</b>	<b>5,742.89</b>
<b>Cash outflow:</b>	
A. School cost	5,107.42
B. Library Program	323.58
C. Innovative Program and Mat. Dev	61.08
D. Education Development Unit	66.51
E. New Strategy Components	137.27
<b>Total Outflow</b>	<b>5,724.78</b>
<b>Closing Bal/(Over draft) Taka</b>	<b>18.13</b>
<b>Closing Bal/(Over draft) In EURO</b>	<b>0.37</b>



## Appendix 1

BEP Organogram



## **Appendix 2: Consultation process for preparation of proposal**

The preparation for this proposal started in November 2000 with meetings between BRAC and the European Commission both at Delegation and Head Quarters levels.

Brainstorming sessions were organised between the NFPE team and Senior Management of BRAC, and between NFPE team and BRAC Regional Managers. Meetings were also held with UNICEF Education section at the Dhaka Offices.

The process of consultation and drafting took approximately 5 months from November 2000 to March 2001.

During this period several visits to the EC HQs in Brussels were arranged.