

Aga Khan Foundation Canada

The BRAC-AKFC LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

For Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction

PROJECT PROPOSAL



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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

All over the world, tremendous efforts have been made to reduce poverty in the developing world. Commitments have been made, resources invested, and new strategies tested. And yet, after decades of effort, the depth and breadth of poverty still has the power to shock. One in five of the world's population, or 1.2 billion people—two thirds of them women—live in abject poverty. Few organizations have been able to develop or implement a holistic approach to poverty alleviation and fewer still have been able to reach the poorest segments of society. Today, there is a growing realization that, to foster real change, the development community needs to rethink its assumptions about the causes and effects of poverty, and about the remedies to these problems.

In order to deepen the impact of its poverty reduction programming, BRAC has developed *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction* (CFPR), a five-year (2002-2006), US\$53 million project that is designed to extend BRAC's ability to reach wider and deeper into poverty.¹ CFPR will combine some of the successful ingredients of BRAC's Rural Development Program with several pioneering elements that will enable BRAC to test the limits of existing poverty reduction paradigms. In contrast to most conventional poverty reduction interventions, the CFPR approach both 'pushes down' to strengthen the livelihood base of the ultra poor and 'pushes out' to address some of the beyond household level and non-income determinants of extreme poverty.

Experimental and iterative in design, CFPR is at its heart a learning initiative. BRAC and its partners expect the project to produce a number of important research-based outcomes. Chief among these is an expanded reservoir of applied knowledge about innovative poverty reduction strategies and, more particularly, about how development organizations such as BRAC can target the ultra poor. Another is the development of a replicable poverty reduction model based on the CFPR approach. In this way, the project will generate knowledge and tools that are critical not only to BRAC's efforts to reach the ultra poor in Bangladesh, but also in furthering the global poverty reduction agenda.

By drawing on the respective strengths of each organization, and by building on AKFC's long history of fruitful collaboration with BRAC, the BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership will ensure that the learning potential of CFPR is maximized and that the knowledge so eagerly anticipated from the project reaches the widest possible audience.

1.2 THE CFPR APPROACH TO POVERTY REDUCTION

As an agent of poverty reduction, BRAC has already achieved remarkable poverty reduction results in the villages of rural Bangladesh. BRAC has nevertheless been unable to reach the most deeply impoverished sections of the country. This is also true of other Bangladeshi development organizations such as the Grameen Bank and Proshika, despite the success of their microfinance programs overall. CFPR will draw on the lessons from these initiatives while at the same time trying to extend them. As BRAC proposes, this will involve 'pushing down' to reach the ultra poor and 'pushing out' to address the wider environment and non-income determinants of extreme poverty.

The pushing down strategy to reach the ultra poor is a radical departure from conventional poverty reduction interventions in Bangladesh, of which there are two main types: safety nets (e.g., Food for Work schemes) and service delivery activities (e.g., microfinance services). The former are livelihood *protection* activities wherein household food security is supported during periods of vulnerability. Livelihood protection does not typically result in sustained strengthening of the household livelihood strategy. Service delivery activities, on the other hand, are designed for livelihood *promotion*, helping a household strengthen its livelihood strategy through asset building. By contrast, CFPR, in its attempt

¹ BRAC Proposal: *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction: Targeting the Ultra Poor, Targeting Social Constraints*, August 7, 2001.

to strengthen the livelihood base of the ultra poor, makes an explicit attempt to link livelihood *protection* and *promotion* with four integrated project components: a special investment program, employment and enterprise development training, social development and essential health care.

The pushing out strategy to address the socio-political frontiers of poverty reduction departs from conventional approaches that focus primarily on material poverty. BRAC's experiences have shown that there are multiple dimensions of poverty; in addition to material poverty, poor people also define poverty in terms of gender inequalities, powerlessness and injustice. As well, it is well established that poor health is the most common cause of household crisis and livelihood vulnerability in rural Bangladesh. Addressing these dimensions in a poverty reduction strategy requires quite different interventions; hence, through CFPR, BRAC will provide its existing microfinance clients with essential health care, such as immunization and prenatal care, as well as social development services that include the development of advocacy institutions for the poor. BRAC's pushing out strategy also seeks to intervene in poverty domains beyond the household level, including important and exciting issues such as organizational culture, the politics of strategic partnerships, rural power structures, and influencing local governance for accountability.

CFPR comprises four closely linked components designed to address the two concerns of pushing down and pushing out the frontiers of poverty reduction. Each of the four CFPR components contains innovative elements that raise a number of pressing research questions. Table 1 provides a brief description of the four CFPR components, highlights the innovative elements of each component, and draws out possible research questions for each component.²

Besides the immediate task of implementation of the four components, the overall objective of CFPR is to ensure the replication of successful livelihoods model for the extreme poor both nationally and internationally through research dissemination and advocacy. It is hoped that ultimately many more than the 70,000 beneficiaries stipulated in the CFPR project proposal will be benefited from the programme innovations. Moreover, for each of the four components, any pressing issues that cannot be directly addressed or resolved by BRAC will be taken up as advocacy issues.

From the point of view of research and learning potential, in addition to the four CFPR program components, there is an overarching fifth component that focuses on the synergies of the four CFPR components and directly addresses the two frontiers that CFPR is attempting to push forward. As with the four CFPR components, there are key research questions that relate to the pushing down and the pushing out of frontiers. These are also highlighted in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Key CFPR Components

CFPR Components	Innovative Elements	Possible Research Questions
1. Special Investment Program: This component stems from the recognition that traditional development strategies do not reach the ultra poor and that a more tailored approach is needed to effectively reach them. By providing stipend support and asset transfers to help the ultra poor start their own income generating activities, this component aims to build the physical asset base of the ultra poor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stipend support • Asset transfers • Contingency fund to accommodate risk of asset loss due to natural disasters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what currency, cash versus wheat, would the stipend produce the highest utility? • How does one inculcate ideas of asset building when current consumption needs are so great among the ultra poor? • How does one safeguard transferred productive assets from being sold/consumed? • How effective are income support initiatives such as asset transfers and insurance schemes to sustainability graduate the ultra poor out of poverty? • At the proposed per unit cost, what is the feasibility of replicating this component? • Would a hybrid of the CFPR and IGVD programs produce a model that produce high returns yet keep the per unit cost down?
2. Employment and Enterprise Development Training: This component complements the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated training designed for the ultra poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of business development services are most appropriate for the ultra poor? How should they be delivered, given the ultra poor's tendency to respond

² These possible research questions were identified by AKFC.

<p>Special Investment Program by providing training and follow-up services on employment and enterprise development tailored to the specific needs of the ultra poor. It aims to build the financial asset base of the ultra poor to the point where they can 'graduate' to BRAC's core microfinance program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option of second round of training if CFPR member does not graduate • Land for agriculture and agroforestry leased by BRAC; aims to improve women's economic position to the point where they can lease or buy their own land. 	<p>better to experiential, aural, tactile and visual methods?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors contribute to failure to operate an IGA successfully and hence to graduate? What special support may be required for non-graduates? • Are there potential benefits for the ultra poor to operate co-operatives versus individual enterprises (e.g., added support, risk sharing, motivation)? • What factors, other than economic position, contribute to the ultra poor's ability to negotiate for and secure their own land (e.g., literacy skills, confidence level, support group)?
<p>3. Social Development Program: This component focuses on building the socio-political assets of the poor and changing structures and processes. The component comprises a range of activities including institution building, awareness raising training, social action and advocacy. It involves individual and group work with the ultra poor, providing support and counselling on development of their livelihood strategies and helping them to cope with crises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes beyond the traditional indicator of poverty to include poverty of gender discrimination, powerlessness, etc. • Development of civil society organizations to represent interests of the poor at village, ward, union and upazila levels • 'Social safety net' work for the ultra poor to include awareness raising, confidence building, back up support, and participatory poverty assessment with ultra poor women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role can/should the village organization play to serve the needs of the ultra poor? Can it be both a social development forum and a microfinance delivery mechanism at the same time? Are there inherent conflicts in playing both roles? With the ultra poor, will greater attention be needed to foster group cohesion and discipline? • How can one coordinate advocacy at the proposed four levels--village, ward, union, upazila--to maximize returns? • How can negotiation/advocacy skills be effectively developed among the ultra poor? • What factors contribute to making polli shomajs, union associations and upazila associations self-operating and sustainable? • What are strategies to redress the tendency of the ultra poor, especially women, to be silenced in mixed-class groupings? • What constitutes a minimum 'fall back position' in order for the ultra poor to challenge injustices and maltreatment? • What are the pros and cons of the various ways in which NGOs can interact (e.g., compete, coordinate, cooperate) on social development? • What are the most effective strategies for civil society organizations to influence policies? • What are effective strategies to gain the support of traditional rural elites for the ultra poor? • Do social development interventions change community attitudes, gender relations? How?
<p>4. Essential Health Care Program: This component seeks to build the human asset of the poor by providing a package of essential health care services. The component supports the government's Health and Population Strategy Program (HPSP) through a rights-based approach to essential health care services and targets new priorities in the national health strategy. For the ultra poor, it provides subsidized health care services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes beyond the traditional indicator of poverty that focuses on income • Rights-based approach to provision of health services • Collaboration with the government on HPSP • New interventions include HIV/AIDS, health insurance and arsenic mitigation • Health subsidy for the ultra poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do factors of access, affordability, information and understanding interplay to improve or undermine the poor's capability to adopt effective health seeking behaviour? • How can the objectives of supporting the government's program and advocating for improved pro-poor policies be achieved simultaneously and effectively? • Who gains and who loses from the government's shift from household level care to static clinic care? • How effective and sustainable is partially subsidized health insurance for the 'apparently healthy ultra poor'? Can moral hazard be a particular problem among this group? • How effective are village health workers to address the specific needs of the ultra poor?
<p>5. Pushing the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction:</p> <p>The <u>pushing down</u> strategy aims to reach the ultra poor with all four CFPR components.</p> <p>The <u>pushing out</u> strategy addresses the non-income determinants of poverty through the Social Development and the Essential Health Care components.</p>	<p><u>Pushing Down</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly links livelihood protection and livelihood promotion activities. • Designing new modes to reach the extreme poor that can be replicated and ensuring other development agencies both nationally and internationally know about this model. 	<p><u>Pushing Down:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What interventions will increase the ultra poor's ability to transform existing assets—human, physical, financial, socio-political—into secure means of livelihood? • As the ultra poor move out of poverty, how do their livelihood strategies and risk tolerance change? • Is the process of graduation linear or erratic? How to increase the chance of sustainable graduation? What factors contribute to non-graduation? • Are all four types of assets equally important, or is one more important than the others at some stage? • With the proposed mix of interventions, are there dangers of creating dependency among the ultra poor? Are there disincentives embedded in the program design?

	<p><u>Pushing Out</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a livelihoods approach to poverty reduction that goes beyond the traditional focus on material poverty. • Interventions in poverty domains that are beyond the household level. • Strong advocacy component to push for policy level changes at the national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is pride/stigma an obstacle to program participation? • Where are the areas for NGOs and government to collaborate to reduce deep poverty? What role can the community play to help the ultra poor? <p><u>Pushing Out:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the livelihoods approach to tackling poverty more effective? Does building all four assets produce results greater than the sum of its parts? • Do economic development and social development work in conjunction, or can one be economically progressing yet socially regressing (or stagnant), or vice versa? Is one a pre-requisite of the other? • What is the 'right' mix of social and economic development? Is there an economic level below which social development is not 'affordable'? • Are there any (unintended) effects of the program on education-seeking behaviour within the household, the community? • What is the dynamic between poverty reduction and such external factors as organizational culture, strategic partnerships and rural power structures?
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CFPR will unfold in two phases. The first phase, in Year 1 and Year 2, is conceived as a pilot phase in which many of the key elements of the CFPR model of poverty reduction will be tested. This critical phase of the project will shape the second phase of work, which is focused on scaling up and the on-going generation, documentation, and dissemination of learning.

PART 2: THE BRAC-AKFC LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

2.1 RATIONALE AND VALUE-ADDED

In the last decade, the concept of 'knowledge for development' has become a locus of innovation and creativity within the global development community. Development agencies in the north and south increasingly recognize that a systematic and mutual capacity to generate, utilize, and share knowledge effectively is needed in order to challenge the frontiers of poverty reduction. In this sense, knowledge management has itself become a powerful poverty reduction strategy. The immediate task for development organizations today, and most especially for indigenous NGOs focused on programmatic details, is to develop mechanisms by which knowledge can be distilled from field-based initiatives and used to inform both policy and practice. North-south learning partnerships are one such mechanism.

The idea of partnership is central to AKFC's approach to development in general and to its work with BRAC in particular. AKFC believes that development entails more than handing out aid, an act that presumes the challenge of development is simply one of lack of resources. As experience worldwide has shown, the challenges of development are much more complex and require concerted effort to address multiple dimensions of poverty. Indeed, development is a process that requires, among other inputs, partnership building, mutual learning, networking, capacity building, awareness-raising and advocacy. This philosophy has underwritten AKFC's relationship with BRAC over the last decade.

AKFC's commitment to adding value to BRAC initiatives is consistent with BRAC's own approach to working with partners. BRAC views AKFC not simply as a donor, or as a project 'executing agency'. As partner, AKFC has collaborated with BRAC on numerous initiatives, ranging from cutting-edge research studies to professional internships.³ The synergy between AKFC's commitment to adding value and BRAC's approach to learning *with* its partners has fostered a deep and lasting relationship between the

³ See Annex A for a full list of past BRAC-AKFC collaborations.

two organizations, one that not only has benefited BRAC and AKFC, but also the development community in Canada and abroad.

The BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership for CFPR will build on and benefit from this history of fruitful collaboration. The potential benefits of the Learning Partnership initiative are manifold. First and foremost, the Partnership will help BRAC and its donors *deepen* and *extend* the CFPR learning about reaching the ultra poor. To *deepen* the learning, the Learning Partnership will situate CFPR within a wider frame of reference. BRAC's CFPR proposal outlines a research and advocacy agenda that is comprehensive but essentially focuses on the Bangladesh context; the Learning Partnership, on the other hand, will broaden the research agenda beyond the country level to the regional and international levels, allowing cross-fertilization of experiences and ideas between CFPR/Bangladesh and other poverty reduction programs, approaches and organizations. This will be accomplished through a series of activities, including a comparative South Asian research study, on-going sector scans, and the formation of linkages with international organizations and institutions. As well, Canadian 'Research/Advocacy Associates' will be placed with BRAC for an extended period of time to provide critical research, analytical, technical, documentation and dissemination support. In essence, the Learning Partnership will seek to promote policy-oriented research that cuts across geographical boundaries.

To *extend* CFPR learning, the Learning Partnership will help BRAC collate and disseminate the key lessons from the experiences of CFPR. While initially BRAC's own dissemination efforts for CFPR will target principally the national audience (i.e., the central and local governments, civil society, other NGOs, and the private sector) through the work of its newly formed Advocacy Unit, the Learning Partnership can assist the Advocacy Unit with its dissemination efforts by targeting an international audience, primarily South Asian and Canadian, through policy dialogue events, journal articles, presentations at international conferences and seminars, and a series of publications designed for international audiences. Moreover, the Learning Partnership will add to BRAC's effort to disseminate CFPR lessons to the broader development community through international networks and, in particular, through the Internet.

To help deepen and extend the CFPR learning, the Learning Partnership will provide support to build BRAC's capacity to achieve its research and advocacy priorities. This will be achieved through various staff development initiatives and learning exchanges.

The Learning Partnership's objective of deepening and extending learning from CFPR ultimately contributes to CFPR's overarching goal of developing a poverty reduction model that can be replicated in and/or adapted to other countries. For the CFPR model to be relevant for other countries, it is important to broaden, as much as possible and as early as possible, its research scope beyond the borders of Bangladesh so that learning from CFPR can be placed in a wider context. This approach will facilitate the identification of the replicable elements and results of CFPR.

In addition to the primary value-added of deepening and extending the CFPR learning, the Learning Partnership will contribute practical insights into the dynamics and impact of north-south learning partnerships and joint advocacy initiatives that may help CIDA and the wider development community further the 'knowledge for development' agenda. There are also clear benefits for Canada from the BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership. By involving Canadians in this innovative and exciting work, the Learning Partnership will offer unparalleled opportunities for exchange and mutual learning among Canadian and Bangladeshi researchers and development advocates. The direct broadcast of CFPR learning through Canadian as well as Bangladeshi channels will also help CIDA push out and push down Canada's own approach to the persistent and pressing problem of global poverty.

In summary, the value-added elements of the Learning Partnership are:

- Deeper learning by situating CFPR within a broader regional and international frame of reference;
- Wider learning as a result of the dissemination of CFPR lessons internationally, particularly in South Asia and Canada;

- Support to build BRAC’s capacity to achieve its research, learning and advocacy priorities related to poverty reduction;
- Practical insights into north-south learning partnerships.

2.2 OBJECTIVE

BRAC has already defined an ambitious research agenda for CFPR that includes the production of baseline data for project evaluation and a number of field-based studies that address specific technical questions related to the project’s four major components: special investment program, employment and enterprise development training, social development program, and essential health care program.⁴ This research will be used to inform larger CFPR project outcomes as well. The production of a replicable poverty reduction model that captures and disseminates the learning generated by BRAC through CFPR is an explicit and critical objective of the CFPR project. **The overarching objective of the BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership is to facilitate the development of a systemic approach to project learning and knowledge dissemination that will support BRAC’s own efforts to produce a replicable poverty reduction model based on CFPR lessons and best practices.**

The BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership will ensure that the CFPR approach to learning is as holistic and innovative as the project itself. This will mean ‘pushing down’ to deepen the level of analysis of CFPR results and ‘pushing out’ to expand the impact of project learning within the wider development community. By working with BRAC to augment its capacity, first, to generate knowledge about pushing the frontiers of poverty reduction and, second, to reinvest and disseminate this knowledge in order to maximize project results, the Learning Partnership will contribute significantly to the success of CFPR.

The Learning Partnership will be one of mutual benefit to BRAC, AKFC and CIDA. It will help BRAC maximize the learning potential of CFPR and ensure that the results of its ambitious learning agenda reach the widest possible audience, both in and outside of Bangladesh. The important lessons expected to emerge from CFPR and the Learning Partnership will benefit AKFC and CIDA at the policy and planning levels and in the field level where creative solutions to alleviate poverty are much needed. Moreover, as one of the chief aims of the Learning Partnership will be to disseminate lessons from the project as widely as possible, development practitioners and policymakers in other countries will also benefit from its results.

2.3 PLANNED RESULTS

The expected results of the BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership are as follows:

Outputs

- Knowledge about poverty reduction strategies generated and documented in readily applicable forms;
- Poverty reduction lessons and best practices from CFPR effectively disseminated to other development agencies and practitioners (including other NGOs, development partners, academics, governments, etc.);
- Increased research and pro-poor advocacy capacity within BRAC; and
- The process of learning and knowledge dissemination in a project context is documented.

Outcomes

- Increased understanding of poverty reduction strategies and approaches, as applicable in a practical context.
- Increased understanding of the process of learning and knowledge dissemination in a project context.

⁴ See Annex B for a copy of CFPR’s research agenda.

Impact

- Replicable model of poverty reduction developed by BRAC adopted and/or adapted by other development agencies, NGOs, governments, etc., in other contexts.

Gender: The wider CFPR project has a definitive gender focus in that its interventions are geared exclusively towards ultra-poor women. Therefore, the learning that emerges from CFPR will necessarily focus on poverty reduction strategies targeted towards women. However, due to the nature of the Learning Partnership, it is impossible for BRAC and AKFC to predict how many of the publications generated by the project will have a strong gender dimension. It is also impossible to include gender disaggregated performance indicators on dissemination, capacity-building (number of female staff members trained depends on the number of female staff members available at BRAC), and knowledge documentation. However, every effort will be made during the implementation of the Learning Partnership to ensure that the gender dimension remains a focal point of the project.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for the Learning Partnership mirrors the structure of the CFPR project itself, as outlined in Table 1 above. The Learning Partnership will focus on deepening and expanding learning in each of CFPR's key areas of work: special investment program; employment and enterprise development training; social development; and essential health care. The fifth pillar of the Learning Partnership will support BRAC's efforts to draw out and document key lessons and best practices from the project as a whole and disseminate them effectively. This will entail developing a holistic analysis of project learning that is greater than the sum of its parts. The aim here will be to push the frontiers of knowledge within BRAC, South Asia and the wider development community about poverty reduction strategies. A major concern of this work will be to ensure that the replicable livelihood model that BRAC will create fully captures and reflects this learning.

As detailed in Section 2.6 Core Activities, this conceptual framework of five knowledge pillars will guide the direction and implementation of the Learning Partnership.

2.5 THE PARTNERS

BRAC

Over the past 30 years, BRAC has proven to be an organization with might. It has grown quickly, evolving from a relief operation into a comprehensive, multifaceted development organization for the rural poor, with a particular focus on the development and empowerment of poor women. Today, BRAC programs have reached all parts of the country—over 67 million people in over 56,000 villages—making it the world's largest indigenous NGO. Its capacity to scale up and to make a significant impact on Bangladesh's development is recognized worldwide, and has inspired numerous countries to follow in its footsteps.

If any organization can develop successful programming to truly reduce the depth and breadth of poverty, it will be BRAC, which has an enviable track record as both an innovator of effective and efficient grassroots development programs and as a research-based learning organization. BRAC has many of the ingredients to make CFPR work. The CFPR Appraisal Mission Report states that, with its motivation and financial standing, BRAC has the best chance at succeeding. It also added that, with its past experience with and strong interest in working with the ultra poor, BRAC is suited to undertake a new project with a focus on expanding services to the ultra poor.⁵

BRAC is committed to ongoing learning and has a core team of staff devoted to research and evaluation. Over the years, it has conducted numerous and a variety of studies, and, along the way, has increased its capacity to conduct sophisticated studies. BRAC's strength is in the field, where

⁵ *Appraisal Report: BRAC Proposal on Targeting the Ultra Poor*, September 2000, pages vi and ii.

action-oriented research takes place. BRAC is very good at learning from its own experiences and applies these lessons to its own work.

BRAC is also committed to sharing its experiences and lessons with other organizations, government agencies and donors. It has always maintained an 'open-door' policy, welcoming visitors and researchers. In addition, with both its Rural Development Program and the Non-Formal Primary Education Program, BRAC has successfully developed models that could be adapted by other organizations in Bangladesh and abroad.⁶ Indeed, in the global development community, people pay attention to BRAC because BRAC has earned a reputation for having important lessons to share based on its own work and experiences.

This commitment to sharing its experiences and the realization that much of its knowledge and standing in the development community could be leveraged to push for pro-poor agendas and policies both nationally and internationally has recently led to the formation of an Advocacy Unit. BRAC has been advocating on behalf of the poor on various issues such as education, health or micro-finance for many years, but such work will now be given increasing importance and be taken up in a more systematic manner.

BRAC fully endorses the proposed BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership. In a recent letter to the CEO of AKFC, Mr. F. H. Abed, Chairperson of BRAC, states "I know that the development of this proposal has been a collaborative effort of AKFC and BRAC staff and we confirm our willingness to act as AKFC's partner in this important understanding."⁷

AKFC

AKFC's particular value-added to the learning component of CFPR is twofold. First, it has a proven track-record as a learning organization that invests in long-term north-south collaborations and, second, it is a well-known knowledge innovator in the area of gender and economic empowerment - an issue that is at the very heart of the CFPR project.

AKFC has a well-justified reputation as an effective catalyst of north-south learning. Past north-south collaborations fostered by AKFC have resulted in a series of major published studies, including most recently *Managing for Change: Leadership, Strategy and Management in Asian NGOs* (2001). AKFC has also used a range of media to 'market' the results of its research programming among policymakers (e.g., briefing notes, roundtables, seminars) and practitioners (e.g., workshops, publications, learning tools) in Canada and the countries where it works. To strengthen its own research capacity, AKFC participates in a number of important global networks, including the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), and the Small Enterprise and Education Development Network (SEEP), all of which give AKFC access to additional technical resources and create new channels for disseminating research results.

Since 1987, when AKFC sponsored the first of a series of high-level policy workshops on gender issues in development practice, gender and economic empowerment has been a core focus of AKFC research programming. AKFC publications in this area include *Speaking Out: Women's Economic Empowerment in South Asia* (1996), *Beyond Credit: A Sub-sector Approach to Promoting Women's Enterprises* (1996), and *Reaching the Poor through Social Intermediation: Microfinance and the Building of Social Capital* (forthcoming 2002). The Foundation's sound base of knowledge in gender-based development issues and approaches will make a particularly important contribution to CFPR, whose target group is exclusively female, and to BRAC.

In all of these research initiatives, AKFC has forged partnerships with some of the world's leading research institutions and researchers based both in academia and the development sector. Their participation helps to ensure that the knowledge created through north-south research collaborations

⁶ For example, the NFPE model has been adapted in Eastern and Southern Africa. Some organizations in South Asia, West Africa and Central America have restructured their primary education systems based on the BRAC experience.

⁷ See Annex C for a copy of F.H. Abed's letter.

has a wide audience in Canada and internationally. It also offers additional avenues for sharing research results. To increase access to this work in the global south the Foundation always distributes its publications free of charge to southern organizations. Through this distribution program, AKFC has spread its knowledge and experience, and that of its partners, well beyond the geographic and human limits of its own programming.

AKFC is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)⁸, a non-denominational group of agencies established by His Highness the Aga Khan, the 49th Imam of the Ismaili Muslims, which is dedicated to improving living conditions in the developing world. All members of the Network share a common objective: to empower people to take charge of their own lives and environment. AKDN's development programs emphasize community participation, the creation and use of local expertise, rigorous management of resources, the use of appropriate technology and ultimate self-sufficiency. To achieve the results of the Learning Partnership, AKFC will draw upon the resources of the Network. In particular, it will collaborate most closely with AKF Bangladesh, but also with AKF India, AKF Pakistan and AKF Geneva.

2.6 CORE ACTIVITIES

Table 2 summarizes the core activities of the BRAC-AKFC Learning Partnership according to its four expected outputs. The principal activities of each output are elaborated upon below.

TABLE 2: Core Activities by Output

Output		Activity
1	Knowledge about poverty reduction strategies generated and documented in readily applicable forms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 sector scans conducted ▪ 1 comparative analysis conducted ▪ A number of publications (e.g., case studies, process documentations, manuals/handbooks, educational materials, policy briefs, research studies, etc.) generated ▪ 6 research/advocacy associates placed at BRAC
2	Poverty reduction lessons and best practices from CFPR are effectively disseminated to other development agencies and practitioners (including other NGOs, development partners, academics, governments, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A dissemination strategy developed ▪ Key documents posted on CIDA, AKFC and BRAC websites ▪ Presentation of findings by BRAC staff at 4 international conferences ▪ 2 journal articles written by BRAC staff on CFPR ▪ 2 policy dialogues held, one in Canada and one in South Asia ▪ Linkages formed with other organizations and institutions
3	Increased research and pro-poor advocacy capacity within BRAC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 learning exchanges undertaken ▪ A number of staff development activities undertaken
4	The process of learning and knowledge dissemination in a project context is documented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing documentation of lessons learned about the Learning Partnership ▪ End-of-Project evaluation on the effectiveness and usefulness of the approach and results of the Learning Partnership

⁸ See Annex D for more information on the AKDN.

Output 1: Knowledge about poverty reduction strategies generated and documented in readily applicable forms.

Activity A - Sector Scans

AKFC will support BRAC to thoroughly and periodically scan the sector related to each major component of CFPR in order to ensure that project innovations are informed by and built on the existing and growing body of knowledge on poverty reduction strategies. The first sector scan will be particularly important, as it will help to identify the broad and specific research questions that the Learning Partnership will address. Through the first four years of the Learning Partnership, BRAC will conduct literature reviews on an on-going basis, using the Internet extensively for this purpose.

Activity B - Comparative Analysis

Comparative studies, where more than one subject of analysis is used, will help BRAC generate lessons from CFPR that are more widely applicable. This approach is particularly appropriate given that the goal of CFPR is to develop a replicable model of poverty reduction. By comparing and contrasting the CFPR approach to work being done by other NGOs outside of Bangladesh, the Learning Partnership will help BRAC produce a richer and wider base of knowledge on which to resolve its program design issues and develop its model.⁹ With BRAC leading the process, the Learning Partnership will conduct a comparative study beginning in Year 3, involving two other South Asian organizations, most likely one in Pakistan and one in India. In the first year of the Learning Partnership, particularly during the initial sector scans, both AKFC and BRAC will try to identify suitable organizations. Selection criteria for comparator organizations will include, among other characteristics: a reputable organization with a good track-record in poverty reduction work; located in South Asia; doing field-level work that will present a good contrast to BRAC's work on poverty reduction (i.e., an approach that is different from CFPR); willing to give considerable staff time and resources to the project; willing to engage in the process beyond that of research (i.e., lending support to post-research publication, dissemination and policy dialogue activities); etc. Although one of the comparator organizations *may* be affiliated with the AKDN, the final choice will be made by BRAC, according to the selection criteria outlined above. In Year 2, BRAC will begin to dialogue with the potential organizations on participating in the research study. Once the two comparator organizations have been selected, a research consultant will be identified by AKFC and BRAC jointly, and BRAC's Research and Evaluation Division (RED) will work closely with the consultant in developing a Research Plan for the comparative analysis. The actual research study, which will be undertaken by the research consultant, will take place in Year 3, and documentation and dissemination of the study will occur in Year 4.

Activity C - Document Lessons

AKFC will work closely with BRAC to document the key lessons and best practices that emerge from CFPR. For example, answers to some of the research questions in Table 1 may be documented for broad dissemination. In addition, the CFPR proposal lists over 25 (indicative) case studies to conduct during Phase I (pilot phase) and Phase II (scale-up phase) of the project.¹⁰ Some of these case studies could be documented and 'packaged' explicitly for wider dissemination. It is anticipated that each component of CFPR will generate one publication (for a total of four during the life of the project), in addition to two publications that will look at the findings of the project as a whole. These publications will take the form of short booklets of approximately 32 pages each. Based on the specific type of knowledge and learning that emerges out of CFPR, the Learning Partnership will also produce other publications of value to policymakers and practitioners. These publications may take the form of research reports, policy briefs, case studies, process documentation, manuals/handbooks, and educational products, depending on the specific issue being studied and on the audience being targeted. For the most part, the actual research for the publication will be conducted by BRAC, with AKFC taking the lead in the publication and dissemination process. In all cases, care will be taken to

⁹ In its proposal, BRAC suggested a few program design issues to investigate. BRAC Proposal: *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction*, September 2001, page 16.

¹⁰ BRAC Proposal: *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction*, September 2001, pages 18-19.

ensure that the lessons and best practices that emerge through this process of analysis and documentation are reinvested into the work of CFPR.

Activity D - Research/Advocacy Associates

BRAC and AKFC have been collaborating on the Fellowship in International Development Management (IDM) Program for 14 years. Through this program, 25 Canadian graduates have been placed with BRAC for eight months each to provide program and research support to BRAC's activities. As attested to by BRAC senior managers, some of these highly qualified young Canadians have contributed significantly to BRAC's work and a few have even been requested by BRAC to extend their placements at BRAC's expense. The Canadians have also benefited from the placements as they learn a great deal from working with one of the most dynamic development organizations in the world. Upon their return to Canada, many of these Canadians have become 'ambassadors' for BRAC, helping to disseminate BRAC's lessons and achievements to other Canadians.

AKFC will adapt this model for the Learning Partnership in order to support CFPR research and advocacy initiatives, promote cross-learning between BRAC and Canada, and develop additional long-term channels for disseminating CFPR lessons within Canada. To augment BRAC research and advocacy capacity, the Learning Partnership will place a total of six Canadian Research/Advocacy Associates (RA/AAs) with BRAC for eight months each.

Research Associates will work with BRAC researchers to (1) scan their assigned sector to ensure that CFPR research engages with wider debates within the poverty reduction literature; (2) document the larger lessons emerging from research on their assigned sector; (3) identify policy issues and opportunities for policy dialogue within Bangladesh and Canada; (4) identify the replicable elements of CFPR approaches and results with their assigned sector; and (5) work in a collaborative and constructive manner with BRAC researchers in order to build Canadian and Bangladeshi research capacity.

Advocacy Associates will work with members from BRAC's Advocacy Unit (AU). They will work to (1) get publications ready for a general audience, ensuring dissemination of the most relevant messages from the research carried out under CFPR; (2) help develop the BRAC website to ensure that all updated CFPR information can be found on the BRAC website (a technically qualified Associate would need to be found); (3) scan their sector to ensure that CFPR advocacy engages with wider debates on poverty reduction; (4) explore policy issues relevant to CFPR and assist in conducting policy dialogue within Bangladesh and in Canada; (5) explore the best ways to disseminate the replicable elements identified from CFPR approaches; and (6) work in a collaborative manner with BRAC Advocacy staff in order to build Canadian and Bangladeshi advocacy capacity.

To ensure value-added, both the Research and Advocacy Associates will have the skills requested by BRAC and will ultimately be chosen by BRAC¹¹.

Output 2: Poverty reduction lessons and best practices from CFPR are effectively disseminated to other development agencies and practitioners (including other NGOs, development partners, academics, governments, etc.).

Activity A - Disseminate Lessons and Best Practices

One of the aims of CFPR is to share the results of BRAC's learning about CFPR with other development agencies and practitioners. These include other NGOs working to alleviate poverty in Bangladesh and throughout the world. BRAC and AKFC will develop a dissemination strategy to ensure that the lessons and best practices emerging from CFPR are disseminated as widely as possible in order to increase the project's impact on poverty reduction practices. AKFC and BRAC will use the publications developed through the Learning Partnership (see Output 1 - Activity C) to reach a variety of specific audiences within the development community. The Internet will also be used strategically as a key dissemination tool. For example, key publications and research results emerging from CFPR and the Learning

¹¹ Unlike the IDM fellows, these Research Associates will be either Master's or Ph.D. level students with advanced research skills.

Partnership will be posted on the BRAC and AKFC websites (and, potentially, on the CIDA website). CFPR experiences and lessons will also be presented by BRAC at four international conferences and/or seminars. These conferences will be identified during the sector scanning process, and will have a strong poverty reduction or research/advocacy methods for poverty reduction focus.¹² In all cases, requests for conference participation by BRAC staff will be made to CIDA for approval in advance of the event. The use of academic and practitioner-focused journals such as *World Development* and *SEEDS* as dissemination tools will also be explored, as will formal and informal linkages with other organizations and institutions concerned with poverty reduction (e.g., The Chronic Poverty Research Centre; The Comparative Research Program on Poverty, etc.).

The Advocacy Unit could assist with the production and publication of materials for circulation among the general public rather than a more specialized research/academic audience. It could also help produce a synthesis of 'key' lessons for development practitioners in conjunction with RED.

Activity B - Policy Dialogues

BRAC's new Advocacy Unit was specifically set up to ensure that BRAC's experiences in developing effective models to reach the extreme poor could be shared and disseminated with all concerned stakeholders. Given AKFC's wide networks in the South Asian region and in Canada, it seems appropriate that AKFC and the AU work together to develop an effective international dissemination and advocacy strategy. As part of this strategy, the Learning Partnership will support two high-level policy dialogues, one in South Asia and the other in Canada, both jointly organized by BRAC and AKFC. In South Asia, the policy implications of project learning will be discussed with policymakers, academics, researchers, and other interested stakeholders. The policy dialogue with BRAC in Canada will help Canadian policymakers and researchers identify and assimilate the implications of CFPR learning for Canadian development policy and practice. These policy dialogues will be held in Years 4 and 5, and the resulting recommendations will be documented and disseminated as widely as possible in Year 5.

Output 3: Increased research and pro-poor advocacy capacity within BRAC.

Activity A - Learning Exchanges

From experience, BRAC has found that a great deal of learning can take place by visiting other projects and having face-to-face dialogues with other practitioners working in similar fields.¹³ The same is also true for other organizations that have visited BRAC. Learning exchanges are particularly effective when visits are made in different countries where promising approaches and best practices are adaptable to one's own context. The Learning Partnership will promote cross-fertilization of poverty reduction strategies and tools by organizing learning exchanges—involving 15 participants, an average of 3 participants per year—between BRAC and other organizations in South Asia. This will help BRAC situate CFPR within the broader South Asian context and thus facilitate learning about the wider applicability of the CFPR approach to poverty reduction.

The learning exchanges will have clear and focused learning objectives that contribute directly to the implementation of CFPR; they will *not* be 'exposure visits' that aim at stimulating a basic level of understanding. For example, BRAC has identified two leading NGOs in India from which they want to learn specific development approaches that they are keen to apply to CFPR. One NGO has expertise in participatory visual diary, an impact monitoring technique that involves both the NGO and the participant. The other NGO specializes in a rights-based approach to poverty reduction; this approach would be particularly applicable to CFPR's social development component. Learning these approaches by engaging the two Indian NGOs—through dialogue, field observation, training workshops, participant interviews, shadowing—would be much more effective than by reading about them in a report. Visits

¹² The types of conferences/seminars chosen will also depend to a large extent on the type of findings BRAC has ready to present at the time. In addition, many conferences are not annual events; therefore, it is difficult to predict in advance what the possibilities may be. However, Annex E contains some information on the general types of conferences/seminars BRAC staff may attend.

¹³ For example, the mutual learning exchanges supported by the RDP and NFPE Contribution Agreements have been highly beneficial for BRAC.

could also be arranged to Indian advocacy organisations to learn about their campaign strategies and techniques and potentially develop links/networks with other organisations working on the same issues.

The partner organizations to be visited will be selected by BRAC, and a formal request for approval will be made to CIDA prior to each exchange.

Activity B - Staff Development

Given that CFPR is experimental in nature, increased *research and advocacy capacity* on the part of key BRAC staff will increase the impact of the project considerably. It will also have spillover effects on other BRAC programs and initiatives. Capacity building is at the heart of sustainability, ensuring that BRAC has the 'tools' to carry forward its poverty reduction agenda long after the project ends.¹⁴ This conviction has been recognized in the CFPR proposal itself, where provision has been made for three RED staff members and five Advocacy Unit staff members to receive long-term international training. While the Learning Partnership does not want to duplicate these efforts, both AKFC and BRAC strongly feel that additional staff capacity building is needed for both RED and the Advocacy Unit. To cater to these needs, the Learning Partnership will support on-site staff training. This would involve bringing a specialist into Dhaka to give customized, module-type courses to a number of BRAC staff at one time. The modular form of these courses would ensure that staff members have time between modules to put their new skills and knowledge into practice¹⁵. One of the key benefits of this type of training is that it will be needs-based, and that it will ensure that a 'critical mass' of staff receives training simultaneously, thereby significantly increasing the chances of the training being used and of it enhancing the capacity of the unit or department as a whole. A formal request for approval will be made to CIDA prior to the activity.

Output 4: The process of learning and knowledge dissemination in a project context is documented.

Activity A - Ongoing Documentation

As part of the reporting mechanism for the project, AKFC and BRAC will work together to document the ongoing issues, challenges, and lessons that emerge out of the Learning Partnership itself. These issues may be related to the working relationships, communications, logistics, priorities and planning, and capacities of the partners.

Activity B - End-of-Project Evaluation

Towards the end of the project (Year 5), AKFC and BRAC will work together to consider some of the more generic issues emanating from the Learning Partnership itself, including the relationship of research to policy and practice and how learning and knowledge can be used as a poverty reduction strategy by southern and northern NGOs. This learning will be captured in a project evaluation, which will also gauge the effectiveness and usefulness of the approach and results of the Learning Partnership, as well as their implications for future north-south partnerships.

PART 3: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The Learning Partnership will be implemented in conjunction with BRAC's implementation of CFPR and its research and advocacy agenda. The work of the Learning Partnership will echo BRAC plans to adopt a measured and phased approach to CFPR implementation, which includes an emphasis on learning and testing in the pilot phase of CFPR, followed by scaling up of activities in the latter part of the project. During the first two years, the Learning Partnership will work with BRAC to distill the larger results of

¹⁴ Under a separate initiative, BRAC and the University of Toronto are exploring the possibility of having Canadians study at BRAC University and to learn about the cutting edge work that BRAC is undertaking. This initiative promotes mutual learning, a principle that is at the heart of BRAC's relationship with its partners.

¹⁵ This method has been used successfully for a number of years by BRAC's NFPE, where Professor William Gibbs has been working with the mathematics team on a modular basis in developing textbooks and curriculum.

its research agenda in each of CFPR's four components and help draw out the larger lessons emerging from the project as a whole. In the latter part of the project, the Partnership will begin to shift focus toward the dissemination of learning through publications and policy dialogue, although research and documentation activities will continue. Table 3 highlights the key activities during each of the five years of the project, as well as the partner(s) responsible for carrying out the activities.

The Learning Partnership is projected to begin in April 2003, sixteen months after the start of CFPR, and will officially end in March 2008¹⁶, sixteen months after the end of CFPR. This staggered timeframe will accommodate the expected lag in the learning process, which will require that CFPR itself be set up and well on course before learning begins to emerge and before research and its dissemination can begin. It will also accommodate the fact that many of the key longer-term results of CFPR will not begin to surface until six months to one year after the project has ended, allowing the Learning Partnership to capture these as well. In addition, the five-year timeframe of the Partnership is important to the main objective of the project, which is to conduct research and disseminate the findings. The full five years are necessary in order for the research, publication and dissemination process to take place in a methodical manner, and to produce quality results.

3.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Learning Partnership will consist of a three-way relationship among BRAC, AKFC and CIDA. Generally, BRAC will be the main implementer of the project in Bangladesh; AKFC will be responsible for coordinating and managing the project, as well as for reporting on the project to CIDA; AKFC and CIDA will co-fund the project on a 10% to 90% basis.

BRAC

The Learning Partnership will involve BRAC's Research and Evaluation Division (RED), BRAC's new Advocacy Unit (AU) and, to a lesser extent, the BRAC CFPR Programming Section. The main person responsible for the project at BRAC will be the Coordinator of Research for CFPR (CRC) in RED. The CRC will be responsible for ensuring effective communication and coordination among the three BRAC units involved in the project, as well as between BRAC and AKFC. In conjunction with AKFC's Program Coordinator (PC), the CRC will also be responsible for ensuring that the results of the project are achieved. In addition, the CRC will be ultimately responsible for the supervision of the Canadian Research Associates placed at BRAC.

In order to ease the burden of work on the CRC, whose primary responsibility is towards the larger CFPR project, the Learning Partnership will pay for an assistant for the CRC. The position will primarily entail performing coordination, communications and administrative tasks. A job description for the Assistant will be drawn up by the CRC in consultation with the AKFC PC, and BRAC will directly hire the person in the field.

AKFC

The AKFC PC will be chiefly responsible for coordinating the project with the BRAC CRC, for providing management support to the project, for ensuring that the results of the project are achieved, and for ensuring that reports to CIDA are timely and satisfactory. The AKFC PC will work closely with AKFC's Field Program Officer (FPO), based in Dhaka, to make sure that monitoring and evaluation of the project at field level is satisfactory. The AKFC PC will also be responsible for making certain that the CFPR Donor Consortium (DC) is kept abreast of the developments taking place in the project, as well as of key findings and lessons. The AKFC PC will coordinate closely with the CIDA Project Manager (PM) to ensure that the project is progressing satisfactorily, and to obtain approvals for certain activities of the project. The BRAC Financial Controller (FC), the AKF Bangladesh Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the AKFC Financial Controller (FC) will work together to provide CIDA with timely financial information, as required by the Contribution Agreement, so that funds may be released.

CIDA

¹⁶ Pending approval from CIDA.

The CIDA PM will have the overall responsibility for controlling and monitoring disbursements of CIDA funds to BRAC. The CIDA PM will be accountable for confirming that CIDA funds are used to meet the goal and objectives of the project, and for approving any design modifications with a view to achieving project purpose. The CIDA PM will also be responsible for approving certain activities of the project before they are undertaken. Both the CIDA PM and the CIDA Officer at the Canadian High Commission in Dhaka will participate in project monitoring activities.

CFPR Donor Consortium and Donor Liaison Office

At the November 2002 Donor Consortium Meeting (DCM) for CFPR, AKF obtained approval from DC members to participate in the Donor Consortium (DC) for CFPR. AKF's formal participation in the DC for CFPR will afford AKF a formal channel of communication with the CFPR donors, allowing AKF to inform the DC of developments and key findings of the Learning Partnership, as well as to be kept informed of key developments within CFPR. The AKF(B) CEO, AKFC PC and AKFC FPO will participate in future CFPR DC meetings. As a participant in the CFPR DC, AKFC will use the resources of the BRAC Donor Liaison Office (DLO) as necessary.

AKF/AKDN

Whenever possible and/or necessary, AKFC will use the considerable knowledge and networking resources of the Aga Khan Foundation's other units (e.g., Bangladesh, Geneva, India, and Pakistan, among others) and of the Aga Khan Development Network to enhance and contribute to the results of the Learning Partnership. In exchange, AKFC will also make a particular effort to share the findings and lessons of the Learning Partnership with AKF's other units and with the AKDN.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships among the key players in the project.

PART 4: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 Logframe Analysis¹⁷

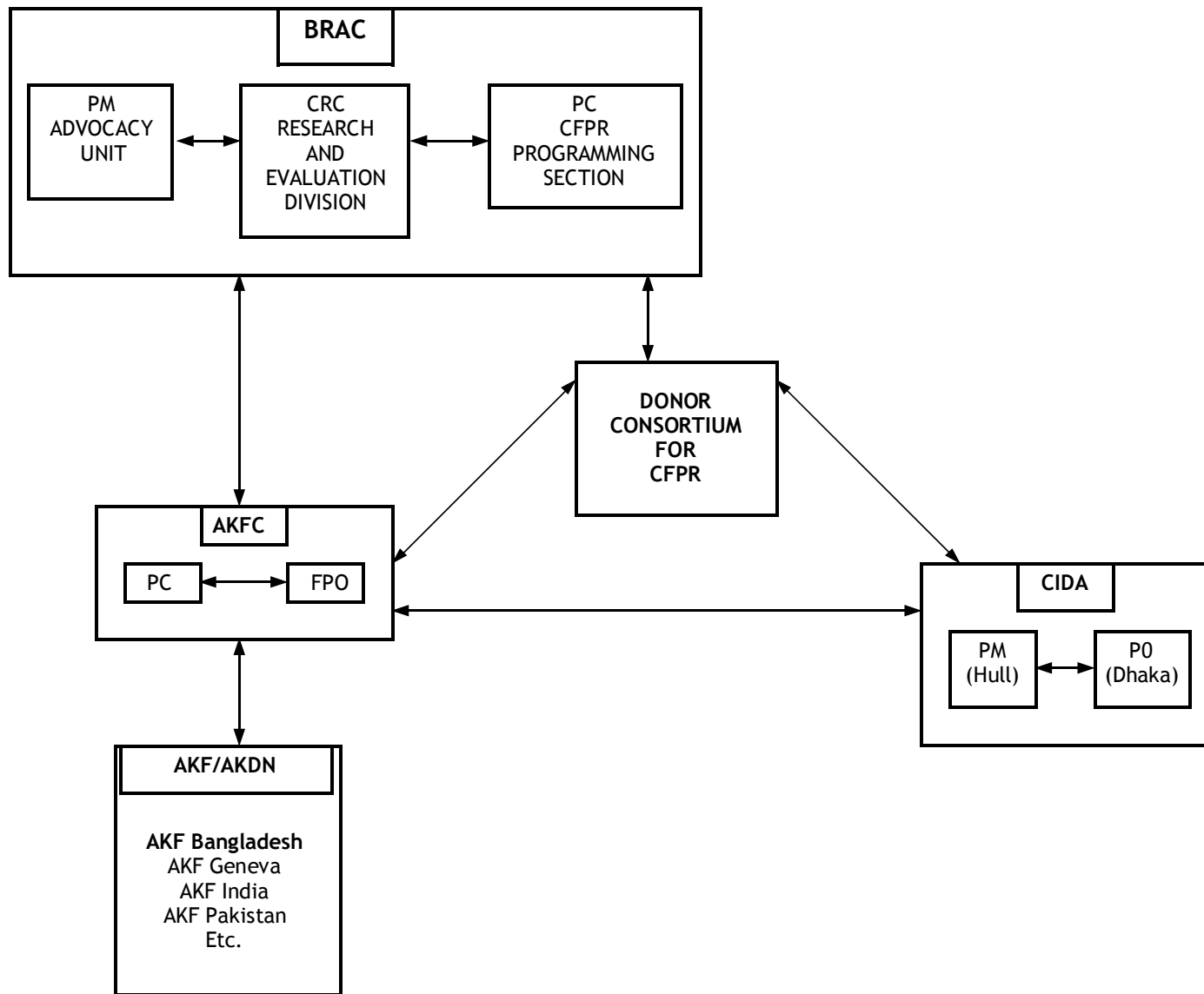
An LFA, drafted according to the format requested by CIDA, is attached as Annex F. This LFA outlines the project goal and impact, purposes and outcomes, and outputs. The associated performance indicators, assumptions and risks have also been included in the LFA.

4.2 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

The project will be monitored informally by both BRAC and AKFC on an ongoing basis. For formal reporting purposes, the AKFC FPO will be responsible for collecting information at the field level, including liaising with BRAC (CRC; PM-AU; as well as various BRAC RED and AU staff members) to prepare short activity requests and conduct post-activity evaluations. The FPO will prepare the first draft of the Semi-Annual Progress Reports, which will be finalized by the PC, approved by an AKFC Project Manager, and submitted to the CIDA PM. For ongoing documentation (Output 4 - Activity A), the CRC will coordinate a documentation process at BRAC, and the PC and FPO will coordinate the process at AKFC. The End-of-Project Evaluation (Output 4 - Activity B) will be conducted by an external evaluator with expertise on knowledge management and its implications on projects and policies; the evaluator's services have been accounted for in the budget.

¹⁷ The LFA was developed with the assistance of a CIDA consultant, Ms. Frederique Laliberte. It is upon Ms. Laliberte's advice that AKFC has included two project purposes in the LFA.

FIGURE 1: Relationships among Partners



ANNEX A: Selected AKFC-BRAC Collaborations

- *Managing for Change: Leadership, Strategy & Management in Asian NGOs.* Published by Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2001. An initiative of AKFC, this comparative study addresses the key operational issues facing NGO managers, drawing lessons from the reality of southern NGOs. BRAC is one of the nine NGOs profiled in this book.
- *Internships.* BRAC and AKFC have been collaborating on the Fellowship in International Development Management Program for 14 years. Through this program, 25 Canadian graduates have been placed with BRAC for eight months to provide program and research support to BRAC's activities. The Canadians have also benefited from the internships as they learn a great deal from working with one of the most dynamic organizations in the world.
- *Development Education.* The remarkable story of BRAC that has been told through AKFC's development education activities ranging from *Maclean's/L'actualité* magazine supplements to public service announcements, to millions of Canadians in the past ten years.
- *Whatever Happened to Bangladesh?* Produced by AKFC, December 1999. This documentary video features insights from leading Canadian foreign correspondents, news executives, media critics, foreign policy experts and development practitioners, and explores whether Canadians get the information they deserve and need about the development work they are supporting around the world. BRAC features in the video as an example of successful development work.
- *Vanishing Voices Seminar Series.* The seminars, narrated by Ann Medina, were held in five cities across Canada in May 2000. They explored why Canada's development assistance success stories, such as the achievements of BRAC in reducing poverty through primary education and economic empowerment, have been virtually absent from Canadian media coverage, the main source of information for most Canadians, and challenged conventional thinking on how international news should be reported. By drawing on the thinking of some of Canada's top journalists, academics and newsmakers, the goal was to explore creative ways of improving the quality of information Canadians receive about the rest of the world. The video, *Whatever Happened to Bangladesh?*, was used as a catalyst for discussion.
- *Speaking Out: Women's economic empowerment in South Asia.* Published by Intermediate Technology Publications for AKFC and UNIFEM, 1996. Through a series of case studies, the book examines the economic empowerment strategies pursued by seven organizations, including BRAC, working with women. Dissemination and policy workshops were held in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Pakistan and India.
- *Beyond Credit: A subsector approach to promoting women's enterprises.* Book and video published by AKFC in cooperation with Harvard Institute for International Development and UNIFEM, 1996. Based largely on analysis of success of BRAC and SEWA in India.
- *Going to Scale: the BRAC experience 1972 - 1992 and beyond.* Published by NOVIB in association with AKFC, April 1993. Publication analyzing lessons learned from BRAC's first 20 years.
- *Mutual Exchanges.* Over the past decade, numerous mutual learning exchanges have taken place between BRAC and other NGOs in the region.

Annex E: Types of Conferences and Seminars to be Supported by the Learning Partnership

INTRAC's Fifth Evaluation Conference: 'Measurement, Management and Accountability?'

Location: Kontakt Der Kontinenten, The Netherlands

Dates: Monday 31st March – Friday 4th April 2003

Fees: Euro 720

Final Registration Deadline: 14th February 2003!

The overall objective of the conference is to examine the tensions created by the pursuit of performance assessments and the encouragement of beneficiary based evaluations. On the one hand there is a strong effort to enhance performance and impact measurement of outcomes that are difficult to measure, on the other hand is the desire to enhance participatory processes that call for multiple voices to be taken into account.

We are concerned to provide a forum in which policy and practice can be examined together, and to commission contributions that reflect on real examples of both the tensions created and solutions found. The conference will provide an opportunity to share understanding about the role of measurement in management as the importance of both is evolving.

WIDER International Conference on Inequality, Poverty and Human Well-Being

Marina Congress Centre, Helsinki, May 30-31, 2003

With more than a billion people living on less than one dollar per day and with gaps in living conditions growing within and between countries, inequality, poverty and human well-being remain core issues for researchers and policy-makers alike. WIDER's international conference will provide an opportunity to review recent advances in analytical concepts and methods and identify ways in which future research on inequality, poverty and human well-being can make best use of these advances.

The wide range of topics to be covered include:

- Measuring Human Well-being
- Spatial Inequality
- Global Trends in Inequality and Poverty
- Micro Simulation Studies
- Modelling Approaches (Dynamic, CGE etc.)

The conference will cater primarily for researchers from the academic, government and development communities.

Call for Papers

The WIDER conference will consist of a mix of invited and contributed papers. Papers on topics other than those mentioned are most welcome, provided they relate directly to the overall conference themes. Contributions from early career, developing country and transitional country researchers are especially encouraged. Those wishing to present contributed papers should submit a paper title and abstract of no more than 200 words, using this [application form](#). The deadline for submissions is January 15, 2003. Full papers are required by April 15. It is anticipated that selected conference papers will be published in a WIDER edited volume or special journal issue.