

## Evaluation of BRAC Pre-Primary Programme Initiated

It is important to give a strong foundation at the early years of children's life because it affects their cognitive, motor and socio-emotional development. BRAC runs pre-primary education programme to create such foundation before their enrolment in primary education. It is a year-long programme for children aged 5/6 years. This year 20,140 single teacher, one-room pre-primary schools are run by BRAC throughout the country. An evaluation of this programme has been initiated to review curriculum and its implementation in the classrooms, teacher preparation, socio-economic background of the pupils, pre-primary graduates continuation, dropout, attendance and learning achievement in the formal primary schools. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques will be applied to gather data and analyze the situation. The fieldwork has already been started. The evaluation report is expected at the end of January 2008.

## Assessment of sanitation technologies available in rural Bangladesh

This study, initiated in July 2007, aims to assess the sanitation technologies available in rural Bangladesh. Specific objectives are to see available sanitation facilities in rural areas established by different organizations; identify sanitary latrines those are technically sound, safe and function at least 9 months a year; and identify low-cost but appropriate sanitation technologies for critical areas (e.g. hilly, flood prone area, etc.). Programme implications are i) micro-trials for latrine options and reduce costs, ii) viable sanitation technologies and

sanitation for critical areas, iii) provide technical support to households who are constructing a sanitary latrine (with various technical options).

## Study on Old Age and Widow Allowance Completed

The study exploring the effect of old age allowance and widow allowance on the recipients' well-being and quality of life was recently completed. The study was conducted in 10 *Watch* DSS areas across Bangladesh. The study had two parts: the governance issues of the allowances and the benefits accruing from the allowances and its socioeconomic correlates. The draft report is currently been circulated in-house for comments and feedbacks. The final report is expected by the end of October 2007.

## MNCH Repeat Survey 2007 in Progress

MNCH repeat survey started recently in six *upazilas* of Nilphamari district (Domar, Dimla, Nilphamari Sadar, Jaldhaka, Kishoreganj, and Saidpur) to compare the knowledge and practices of pregnant women, and non-pregnant mothers of under-5 children on MNCH issues with baseline information collected in 2006. Data, collected from 1,800 respondents, are being processed for analysis.

## GOAL Baseline Survey 2007 Initiated

The Gender Quality Action Learning (GQAL) programme of BRAC aims to reduce discrimination and violence against women since 1994. After implementing the programme successfully at

the village level on pilot basis in two districts the programme now plans to extend in 10 districts. Before expansion the GQAL programme, through a baseline survey, intends to see the present status of the villagers' knowledge, perception, attitudes and behaviour from a gender perspective and violence against women. A randomized control design will be used for baseline and subsequent evaluation. Data will be collected through survey, observations, and in-depth interviews.

## Baseline Survey of ELA-ADP Evaluation Begins

An evaluation of BRAC's ELA (Employment and Livelihood for Adolescents) and ADP (Adolescent Development Programme) programmes has been initiated. Baseline survey for this evaluation is underway. With a randomized control and intervention design, this study is expected to show the separate effects of microfinance and social space for adolescent girls as well as their combined effect. Delayed marriage, dowry and cognitive ability of the girls are being considered as the prime outcome variables.

## Study on Women's Work Initiated

A study on women's work has been initiated under the Pathways of Women Empowerment research programme of BRAC University's Development Studies Programme. The objectives of the study include comparing the rates of labour market engagement of women by alternative definitions and tracking how this engagement may or may not lead to enhanced empowerment. This study will be done through a survey of 5,000 women in 8 districts.

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## TUP Cost-benefit Analysis Completed

In collaboration with M-CRIL, India and supported by DFID, a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of the TUP programme has been completed. Using the information from a new round of survey, this study has updated the earlier CBA done in 2005. It has been observed that the benefit cost ratio of the programme is 5.07.

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## Sprinkle Safety Study Planned

RED is going to initiate a collaborative research project on Sprinkles with The Hospital for Sick Children, Canada. The study aims to identify the safety issue of Sprinkles for malnourished children. It will cover 240 moderate-to-severe malnourished children aged 12-24 months in Mymensingh district. Field activities will start in October 2007.

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## Preliminary Findings of Education Watch 2007 Presented

This year's *Education Watch* compares the performance of the students of three different types of secondary schools viz., government, non-government and madrasa. It also explores educational and occupational opportunities of the secondary graduates. The study showed that on average, 27% of the sampled students of class X passed in the test. The performance of the government school students was the best followed by the non-government schools and the madrasas. A quarter of the secondary graduates of 1997 did not go for further education, 31% completed higher secondary, another 31% completed bachelor and 11% completed masters level education. Half of the graduates were employed during the last 10 years, 16% were still student, 8% jobless and 22% engaged in housekeeping. A big gender gap was noticed in this case.

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## Tracer Studies on BEP Graduates Launched

A survey for the tracer study on BRAC Education Programme (BEP) graduates has begun. This study intends to look at livelihood outcome of BRAC school graduates. Three cohorts of graduates

(graduated in 1995, 2000 and 2002) are being brought under surveillance for five years. This longitudinal study would provide valuable information and analysis of expanded outcome of educational intervention.

Another tracer study on BRAC primary school graduates of 2005 collected first round data during Aug-Sep 2007. This study aims to see the continuation, dropout, attendance and performance of the BRAC school graduates in the secondary schools. Nearly 6,000 graduates from 298 BRAC schools would be traced once a year for the next 5 years.

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## BRAC Participated in IUCN 4th Asia Regional Conservation Forum

The 4<sup>th</sup> Asia Regional Conservation Forum of IUCN was held in Nepal during 10-14 September 2007. The theme of the forum was 'Synergies for a sustainable Asia'. BRAC is a member of IUCN and Dr. Nasima Akter of RED is the focal person from BRAC. Mr Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury, Chairman, bracNet also attended the forum as the Councilor of IUCN. He presented a case study on BRAC as a model of alternative development. Dr. Akter shared the real life experience of BRAC to explain what directs BRAC to work for environment and conservation? She also presented Bangladesh country situation due to climate change.

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## Samir Became a Member of the Advisory Board of Indian Educational Review

Samir R Nath has been selected as a member of the Advisory Board of the Indian Educational Review, the journal of the National Council of Educational Research and Training, India. Congratulations to Samir Nath.

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## Presentation in Workshop and Seminar

Munshi Sulaiman presented a paper titled 'Using change ranking to understand poverty dynamics: examining the impact of CFPR/TUP from community perspective' at a seminar on Qualitative and Quantitative Methods of Poverty Analysis in Decision Making held in Hanoi on 7-8 July 2007, jointly organized by the University of Toronto and

Vietnamese Academy for Social Sciences.

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## Recent Publications

(Arranged alphabetically)

### Research Monograph Series

Nasreen H, Ahmed SM, Begum HA, Afsana K. Maternal, neonatal and child health programmes in Bangladesh: review of good practices and lessons learned. Dhaka: BRAC, 2007. xvii, 109p. (Research monograph series no. 32)

### CFPR working paper series

Ahmed SM and Hossain MA. Taking doctors where the ultra poor are: assessment of the panel doctor scheme of CFPR/TUP programme. Dhaka and Ottawa: BRAC and Aga Khan Foundation Canada, 2007. vi, 22p. (CFPR/TUP working paper series no. 17).

Barua P and Sulaiman M. Is the BDP ultra poor approach working? Survey of some key issues. Dhaka and Ottawa: BRAC and Aga Khan Foundation Canada, 2007. vi, 20p. (CFPR/TUP working paper series no. 16).

### Journal article

Abed FH and Matin I. Beyond lending: how microfinance creates new forms of capital to fight poverty. *Innovations* 2007;2(1-2):1-17.

Haseen F. Home fortification with Sprinkles to address childhood anaemia in Bangladesh. *Nutr Bull* 2006;10(1):3-4.

Hyder SMZ, Haseen F, Khan M, Schaetzel T, Jalal CSB, Rahman M, Lönnnerdal B, Mannar V, Mehansho H. A multiple-micronutrient-fortified beverage affects hemoglobin, iron, and vitamin A status and growth in adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh. *J Nutr* 2007; 137:2147-53.

Karim F, Islam MA, Chowdhury AMR, Johansson E, Diwan VK. Gender differences in delays in diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis. *Health Policy Plann* 2007;22:329-34.

Karim F, Chowdhury AMR, Islam A, Weiss MG. Stigma, gender, and their impact on patients with tuberculosis in rural Bangladesh. *Anthropology Med* 2007;14(2):139-51.

Nath SR and Sylva K. Children's access to pre-school education in Bangladesh. *Int J Early Years Edu* 2007;15(3):275-95.

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