

TUP-1 Repeat Survey 2008

Third round of the CFPR/TUP I evaluation study is underway. Field level data collection for this phase is now completed. These sample households, both beneficiaries non-beneficiaries, are being interviewed every third year since 2002. The main focus of the study in this phase is on the issue of sustainability in livelihood gain among the targeted ultra poor households.

Case Studies on BRAC Bank SME Borrowers

Case studies on BRAC Bank small business borrowers have been completed. Fourteen case studies were conducted in Dhaka, Gajipur and Cox's Bazar in order to obtain in-depth knowledge of the changes in the employment patterns over time, skill and gender profile of employees, and wages/salary received by employees of BRAC Bank small business borrowers to infer their poverty outreach over time. This will supplement the employee survey that has been conducted on employees of 1500 enterprises who took loan from BRAC Bank SME scheme. This study has been commissioned to RED by Shore cap Exchange.

Performance and Retention of Urban *Shasthya Shebikas*

Data collection on the study "Performance and Retention of Urban *Shasthya Shebikas*" has started. This study will explore factors affecting performance and retention of urban *Shasthya Shebikas*.

A preliminary draft report on impact assessment of BRAC Afghanistan microfinance

A preliminary draft on Impact Assessment of BRAC Afghanistan microfinance has been completed and circulated for comments. The study found that microfinance has positive impacts on per capita expenditure and food security, indicating programme participation reduces poverty in the client households. The study also reveals that microfinance participation helped the client households to accumulate assets and diversify income sources. It was also found that the programme has positive impact on empowerment of the client women.

Baseline survey of Other Targeted Ultra Poor completed

The baseline survey of the Other Targeted Ultra Poor (OTUP) of CFPR phase II has been completed. In the survey 4000 households were interviewed. This baseline will be used for a propensity score matched treatment comparison analysis for impact evaluation.

Study on evaluation of the 100 day employment generation programme initiated

RED has been requested to partner with NFPCSP/FAO to provide evaluation support for GoB's "100 day employment generation programme." A baseline survey of the programme is expected.

Study on ITN/LLINs in 13 endemic districts

A study on 'Distribution and utilization of ITN/LLINs among rural people in malaria endemic districts of Bangladesh: are we doing enough?' has been completed recently where we looked at the coverage and use of insecticide treated nets in BRAC malaria programme areas in 13 endemic districts of Bangladesh. The study concluded that the programme is on right track, but needs some strategic adjustments for better impact. As a follow on, RED is developing a proposal for a similar kind of study in Uganda and Tanzania.

Study on BRAC Africa programmes

A baseline survey of the BRAC-Tanzania Essential Healthcare Programme was completed in June 2008. Based on findings, the study recommended that the EHC programme focus its activities in areas where gaps are present such as safe water supply, adoption of permanent methods of contraception and postnatal care. Also, it should strive to change 'unfelt need' for health services to 'felt-need' by promoting general health awareness in the community as revealed from no-treatment/self-treatment for illnesses in past 15 days.

Study on VO members

A study entitled 'How far BRAC succeeded in improving selected health indicators of its VO member households?' is recently completed which looked at current status of different health indicators such as EPI coverage, Vit A distribution, TT coverage, and use of contraceptives in these households. The findings were encouraging, with variation by age of membership and region.

Study on Impact of Food Price Inflation on Food Security and Nutritional Status'

This rapid assessment has been conducted during August 2008 in six districts (under 6 divisions) on the sub sample of Nutritional Surveillance Project (NSP), HKI/IPHN, and 2006 survey. Data analysis and reporting are underway. This study aims to see the impact of recent (in last 1 year) food price hike on the nutritional status. Findings will be used for policy level recommendations to the

Government of Bangladesh (GoB) through an advisory panel consisting of national and international experts.

Studies on Reflection of Competencies in Primary Textbooks Completed

Reflection of class-wise attainable terminal competencies in Bangla and Mathematics textbooks and teachers' guides developed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and BRAC was assessed by a team of RED researchers along with a number of experts. This is the first attempt of this kind after adoption of competency based education at primary level since 1990. Four separate reports came out from this exercise – two on Bangla (NCTB and BRAC) and two on Mathematics.

The studies recommended more attention of the concerned textbook writers and the authorities in reflection of the competencies in the textbooks.

Two Studies on Education in Progress

School management and community participation are two important indicators regarding quality of education. Two studies on these two issues in respect to BRAC primary schools (BPS) were undertaken simultaneously. Qualitative investigation techniques were adopted to collect information for the studies. Data have already been collected and are being analyzed. Reports are expected in October.

Education Watch Overseas

Education Watch, a civil society initiative to monitor education was initiated in Bangladesh 10 years back is now adopted by nine other countries of South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific regions. The countries are India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, The Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The Bangladesh Education Watch has provided technical support to these countries as per need. A regional evaluation conference was held recently in Bangkok on 16-19 September 2008, where the researchers from all these countries participated. Samir Ranjan Nath of RED participated in this conference and gave two presentations – one on sampling designs and the other on data analysis and presentation.

The 9th Education Watch Initiated

Proposal for the 9th Education Watch, Bangladesh was presented on 23 September 2008 in a joint meeting of the Advisory Board, Working Group and Technical Team of Watch. The theme of this Watch is Quality of Primary Education. Activities under the theme include review of competencies, com-

petency based test of students, educational institution survey and household survey. It is a revisit of the Education Watch activities done in 2000-01. The fieldwork for this study would be done from mid October to mid December 2008 and the report is expected in April 2009.

Study on selected hygiene indicators and hygiene practices

This study has been initiated in WASH phase I areas and used different research techniques including survey, scoring, FGD, observation, pocket voting. Data collection has been completed and quantitative data analysis is under process.

Assessing the progress in sanitary latrine installation in educational institutions of WASH programme

In addition to achieving 100% sanitation coverage, WASH programme intends to reduce drop out of school going girls due to problem in accessing proper sanitation facilities during menstruation period. Field observation suggests that educational institutions show different levels of progress in installing sanitary latrines. This research effort will focus on assessing the factors responsible for uneven progress in sanitary latrine installation.

Reaching the milestone: Unveiling success stories of BRAC WASH Programme

This study has been initiated to explore different case studies relevant to the programme objective of WASH. This study will aim at highlighting people who have been benefited by programme initiatives or have been inspired and contributed towards the programme.

Evaluation of the poverty dimensions of WASH programme

The recognition of the presence of an Ultra Poor segment in the society, consequently formulating specially targeted policies towards them has been a major component of the WASH programme. The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the level at which WASH interventions are reaching the poor. This implies looking at the selection process of ultra poor households and the nature and success of the different policies geared towards selected ultra poor households.

Residential Semester of BRAC University: Rapid assessment of the current state of affairs and road map to future

This rapid assessment on the Residential Semester (RS) of BRAC University at Savar was carried out to explore the current state of affairs and suggest measures for improving its effectiveness, if necessary.

Women's Participation in WASH at Community Level

The WASH programme has been working to create an enabling environment so that

women can take part in the decision making process at different levels of programme implementation. In this purview, this research initiative aims to assess that state of women's participation in real terms and to identify the challenges (if exist) and overcoming mechanism. This research is currently running and will be finished by January 2009.

Environmental surveillance system as an adaptation strategy for climate change

The goal of the project is to create a database on microclimatic variables by installing eight weather stations at BRAC office premises in areas of the country where BMD (Bangladesh Meteorological Department) has no weather stations. The generated data (i.e. temperature, rainfall and humidity) may assist to understand more clearly the agricultural potential, the dynamics of environmental (e.g. soil and water) and ecological (e.g. biodiversity, microclimate) processes, assessment of disease prevalence in the current context of climate change.

Environmental performance evaluation of BRAC Microfinance Programme

A study was conducted in randomly selected 28 *upazilas* during June-July 2008 to analyze the status of environmental concerns and possible negative impacts of microenterprises under BRAC microfinance programme with a view to developing environment friendly microfinance programme. The results suggest that some enterprises are doing well in terms of environmental sustenance, while some areas need improvements.

Academic Attainment

Chowdhury SB Jalal has been conferred PhD on International Nutrition from Cornell University, USA on August 2008. His Dissertation topic was "Effect of BRAC's poverty reduction program targeting the Ultra-Poor in rural Bangladesh". He joined Research and Evaluation Division as a Senior Research Fellow from September 5, 2008.

Md. Abdul Quaiyum Sarkar has been selected in Masters Programme in Disaster Management, BRAC University for a period of 15 months started from 14 September 2008.

New Members of RED

Farzana Aktar Misha joined as a Research Associate-II in the Economic Research Unit of RED on 21 September 2008.

Mohammed Junaed Shahid joined as a Research Assistant in the Economic Research Unit of RED.

Presentation in Workshop and Seminar

Md. Abdul Quaiyum Sarkar, attended the fifth regional stakeholders cum regional coordination meeting for Male' Declaration on control and prevention of air pollution and its likely trans- boundary effects for South

Asia on 19-20 August 2008 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Mirja Mohammad Shahjamal, Goutam Roy and Gazi Mahabubul Alam presented a paper titled '*Return from the school system in Bangladesh*' at the *Twelfth Educational Researchers' Conference*, organized by UNESCO and BAFED, on 3 August 2008 in Dhaka.

Dr. Syed Masud Ahmed attended INDEPTH Network 'Workshop on Non Communicable Disease Risk factor Surveillance, Bangkok, Thailand 4-7 August, 2008. In the workshop he presented a paper on 'Clustering of NCD risk factors among selected Asian populations: levels and determinants'. The workshop discussed and finalized eight papers originating from NCD Risk factor Surveillance Study in Eight In-depth DSS sites conducted in 2005.

Dr. Syed Masud Ahmed attended a workshop on 'Knowledge partnership in Development, Hotel Radisson, Dhaka, 25-26 June, 2008 organized by UNICEF. The workshop aimed to take a stock of KM experiences, initiate a collaborative KM system for and by the development practitioners in Bangladesh. In the workshop, he presented a paper on 'Managing knowledge with a mission: An introduction to BRAC's Research and Evaluation Division'.

Recent Publications

(Arranged alphabetically)

Book

Rafi M, Alim MA and Kundu DK. *Bangladesher Vari janbahon chalak*. Dhaka: BRAC and Sangbed.

WASH Programme of BRAC: towards attaining the MDG targets baseline findings. Dhaka: BRAC, 2008. 124p.

Research Monograph Series

Small scale old age and widow allowance for the poor in rural Bangladesh, Dhaka: BRAC, 2008. vi, 36p. (Research monograph series no. 36)

Sarkar MAQ, Akter N. Environmental, health, and safety guidelines for small and medium enterprises of BRAC Bank Limited. Dhaka: BRAC, 2007. iv, 52p (Research Monograph series No. 37)

RED working paper

Shahnaz R, Karim R. Providing microfinance and social space to empower adolescent girls: an evaluation of BRAC's ELA centres. Dhaka: BRAC, 2008. 38p.

Newspaper article

Naomi SS. The story of an exemplary judgment. *Daily Star*. 13 Sept 2008.

Roy G. *Genderer Alope Bangladesher Shikhhachitra: Ekti Bishleshan* (In Bangla). *Nari O Progoti, year 4 (January-June 2008), Vol. 7, pp. 27-32.*

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