



BRAC WASH ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING 2014

BRAC Centre
for Development Management
Savar, Bangladesh 26-28 March, 2014



in association with



Present at the Annual Review

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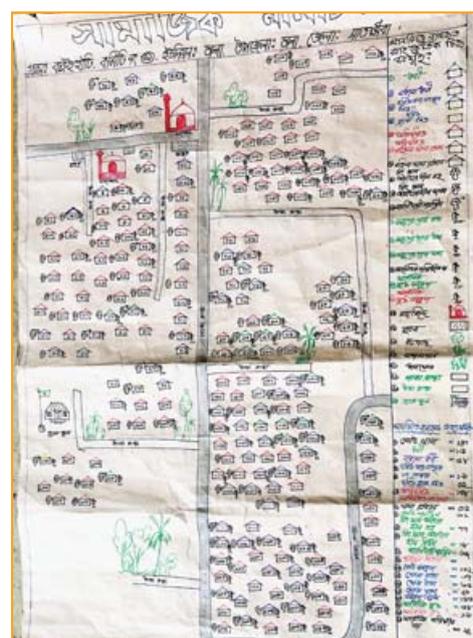
For pictures from the annual meeting and community visits see
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bracglobal/sets/72157644759261902/>

Village WASH Committee meeting in Tuka village, Tala upazila, Khulna district, and (below, right) the Tuka village WASH map



Acronyms used in this report

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development <i>(now integrated into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)</i>
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
BRAC	Development organisation dedicated to alleviate poverty by empowering the poor
BRAC WASH I	First phase of BRAC WASH programme in Bangladesh 2006-2011
BRAC WASH II	Second phase of BRAC WASH programme in Bangladesh 2011-2015
BRAC WASH III	Third phase of BRAC WASH programme in Bangladesh 2013-2015
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
IRC	Knowledge partner based in Netherlands working to deliver systems and services that last
JMP	WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme
ICDDR,B	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research
ICT	Information and communication technology
LCCA	Life-cycle costs approach
M&QC	Monitoring and Quality Control ()
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management information system
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
PaCT	Partnership for Cleaner Textiles
QIS	Qualitative information system
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
SWF	Sustainable Water Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VWC	Village WASH Committee
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene





Women from Mollahat, Bagerhat meeting BRAC WASH staff and donors in March 2014. BRAC first supported the community to establish a WASH committee to address sanitation and hygiene. Today, the 23-kilometre Garfa Rural Safe Water Supply Project supplies 3,100 people in 520 households in three villages to replace groundwater affected by arsenic and iron.

BRAC WASH Annual Review Meeting

Executive summary

Over eight years from 2006 to 2014 the BRAC WASH programme has made a sustained contribution to changing conditions and attitudes to hygiene and sanitation in rural Bangladesh, pioneering an approach that is making a difference to the lives of many millions of people with a special emphasis on poor and ultra-poor households.

Hygiene promotion is delivered by 8,000 staff to 65 million people, reaching around half of the rural population of Bangladesh. Since 2006, more than 30 million people have gained access to hygienic sanitation with the support of BRAC WASH, an unparalleled achievement by any NGO. The programme has developed and supported Village WASH Committees in every community where it works, designed to sustain and extend gains when the BRAC WASH programme is over.

BRAC WASH has set new standards for large scale interventions in low income rural communities. The methodology it has introduced has been shown to work; however the scale of the programme poses a challenge for the future. Progress in Bangladesh has depended on sustained intervention, flexibility and speed of response, with regular cluster meetings for different sections of the rural population and long-term support for community organisations. BRAC has used loans and subsidies to ensure that services reach the poor and ultra-poor in communities. This has been made possible through funding from official development assistance (ODA) and philanthropic foundations. The question arises as to how this work can be sustained when the funding streams diminish.

The BRAC WASH Annual Review Meeting held in Savar, Bangladesh from 26-28 March 2014 marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of the programme. The BRAC team reported impressive results and significant developments but also highlighted the work that remains to be done to sustain gains, complete innovations and close gap in “the final mile” particularly in on hard to-reach populations. There are unmet

challenges in providing water in areas affected by salinisation and arsenic, and unmet needs in schools to ensure safe water supplies and to extend gains for girls and for boys. Ensuring that communities sustain gains in hygiene and sanitation and do not “slip back” is a constant concern.

Monitoring shows that the greatest improvements in sanitation, hygiene practices and school sanitation have occurred in areas where BRAC WASH has worked for longest. More than twice as many households in WASH I areas (where work began in 2006) have sanitary latrines compared with WASH II (which began in 2011) and three times as many WASH I households have provision for washing hands after defecation compared with those in WASH II areas. This suggests a strong benefit from long exposure to the programme.

Avijit Poddar director of research at the Human Development Research Centre in Bangladesh, reported on an unpublished study (2013 and 2014) which found that Village WASH Committees (VWCs) were well trained and sustainable. He concluded that the programme should increase the number of front line staff and adopt a longer time frame. In his opinion, ten years constituted the shortest viable period for sustainability with an ideal of 20 to 25 years to embed new practices.

“Donors praised the success that BRAC WASH has achieved, but made it clear that funding cannot continue at its current level”

The changing donor landscape

A significant mismatch became apparent between the remaining agenda and likely future funding. Because this programme is unique on a global scale, there is as little experience of how to move from a donor funded pattern of interventions to a programme that can be sustained by governmental or other long-term funding.

Donors praised the success that BRAC WASH has achieved in water and sanitation at scale, but they made it clear that their funding cannot continue at its current level when the BRAC WASH II and III come to an end in 2015. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), reported that their budget for the water sector would reduce by 30% next year as the national strategy moves from traditional aid towards trade, with only €3-4 million available for WASH related support in Bangladesh. Carel de Groot, First Secretary of the EKN Water Section, offered to work with BRAC to leverage funds from public-private instruments such as the Sustainable Water Fund. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has supported BRAC WASH to extend the programme into hard-to-reach areas and populations, and backed innovation and research. However, the Foundation is now focusing on urban sanitation, working with partners in cities, to develop technologies and business models around the sanitation chain. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is also looking at an increasing role for the private sector and paying more attention to the urban challenge. While none of these donors ruled out further support for BRAC WASH, it was clear that this would be at much lower levels or for specific initiatives.

The meeting heard from a new donor, Splash, which is offering support for BRAC WASH over three years to bring safe water to urban schools. Donors who were not present at the meeting included AusAID and Charity: Water, a US based trust that is supporting BRAC WASH on work in rural schools.

The meeting discussed how BRAC could address this changing donor landscape strategically. In the short term this could involve seeking alternative sources of funding



Babar Kabir, Senior Director of the BRAC WASH Programme, discusses future strategy with donors and senior staff - seen left is Eric Stowe, Chief Executive of Splash.

to consolidate existing work, while looking at ways for communities to take a greater responsibility for mainstreaming the BRAC WASH interventions. In the medium term, sharing BRAC knowledge and capacity building can support governmental and non-governmental implementers to do similar work. In the longer term, BRAC could consider new programmatic approaches – for example in schools and urban areas.

Donors recommended greater integration between BRAC programmes so that different programmes at community level (WASH, health, microcredit, education etc.) share resources and be delivered with a smaller number of staff. Some work could be funded by revenue generated by BRAC’s social enterprise schemes. Greater responsibility for cluster meetings and household level hygiene promotion could be undertaken by Village WASH Committees and community members and the current intensity of cluster meetings every two months could be reduced.

BRAC undertook to step up documentation of the programme and to work with other providers on sharing key lessons. However, Babar Kabir, senior director of BRAC and the BRAC WASH programme, expressed concern that public-private partnerships lack the flexibility and speed of decision making that has helped BRAC to succeed, and that resources would not be sufficient to work at scale. BRAC had a vision of becoming self-financing by 2030 but could not currently finance staff for the WASH initiative through its own resources. If others were to undertake this work, finance for their programmes would still be required.

There was a concern that gains could be lost if the programme ended prematurely. Patrick Moriarty, chief executive officer of BRAC’s knowledge partner, IRC, said: “BRAC is demonstrating a model for how to do hygiene work at scale. They are showing that you need an army of workers in the field, not just today and tomorrow but for a generation, and that needs to be financed somehow. We need to think hard about how to find the money.”

Donors pledged to help BRAC to work on a strategy for the future. Babar Kabir welcomed their support. “We are a very resilient organisation. We will manage and continue the work that is a promise. Maybe the focus will change. I am sure that over the next months we will be able to come up with something.”

Monitoring and the use of data

The annual review meeting demonstrated how BRAC WASH uses monitoring to ensure that subsidies go to the right families, the programme is delivered as planned and that managers respond to problems. Innovations include a tool to provide direct visual access between staff collecting data in the field and staff at the BRAC centre. The results of a survey showed how a qualitative information system (QIS) is being used to improve self-monitoring by field staff and quality control. The BMGF has commissioned a verification study of BRAC results which will also assess how accurately QIS can assess progress.

Planning is under way to integrate data from different BRAC programmes into a joint database. Such data would be of great benefit to BRAC and valuable to government agencies, donors and researchers. There was a call from donors for anonymised data to be shared more widely and made available online as a public resource.

A demand and supply study for sanitation parts has identified the need to ensure quality and choice and to encourage rural sanitation centres to diversify so that they remain sustainable.

A demonstration was given of a WASHCost tool that highlights the long term costs of WASH services, and can potentially help with decisions on service levels.

Putting BRAC successes on display

A poster display illustrated the main elements of the programme, and programme staff were on hand to answer donor questions. Following the meeting donors and programme staff visited communities in Jessore and Khulna to see the programme in action.

As well as programme staff from head office, donors and partners from IRC, the meeting included 15 senior regional managers, each responsible for delivering BRAC services for 5-6 million people. As director of the BRAC WASH programme, Babar Kabir, pointed out that it was staff on the ground should take the credit for the achievements. “All the success of BRAC WASH is down to them.” ■



Rezaul Karim, Senior Programme Manager, discusses poster contents with Carel de Groot, First Secretary of the EKN Water Section, and BRAC WASH regional managers.

BRAC WASH Annual Review Meeting

**BRAC Centre for Development and Management,
Savar, 26-28 March 2014**

Eight years of sustained intervention

The BRAC WASH programme began in May 2006 in 152 upazilas (sub districts) of Bangladesh, to expand integrated water services, sanitation and hygiene promotion for underserved populations in rural areas, in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In total, BRAC WASH has worked in 250 upazilas covering almost 40% of the population of Bangladesh.

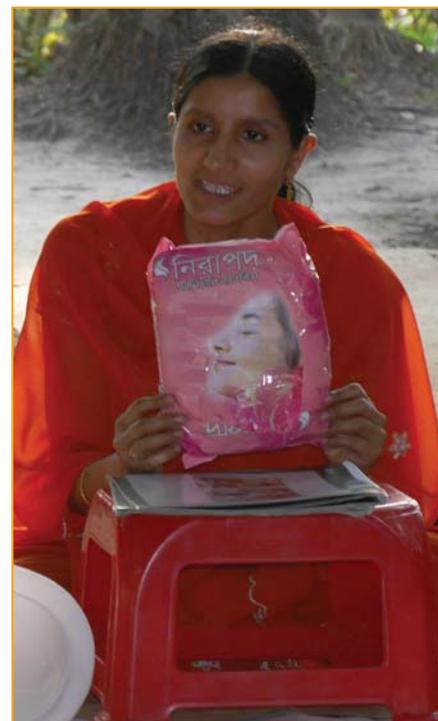
BRAC WASH I (May 2006-September 2011), supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), reached 28.8 million people with holistic hygiene promotion and education. Over the five years, 25.9 million people gained access to hygienic sanitation and 1.8 million people achieved safe water.

BRAC WASH II (October 2011- April 2015) has continued to work in the original 152 upazilas (with continued support from EKN) and extended the programme into 25 hard-to-reach areas with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). BRAC WASH II is designed to endure sustainability and build capacity, networking and collaboration with governmental, private and NGO sectors. Action research was introduced to address challenges as part of a package of innovation.

BRAC WASH III (July 2012-December 2015) is funded through the BRAC Strategic Partnership Arrangement, comprising BRAC, DFID and AusAID. Support from DFID was used to extend the programme to 73 more upazilas and to support learning, innovation and best practice.

In 2014, Splash NGO has begun to work in urban schools in Bangladesh with BRAC WASH. In addition, Charity: Water has agreed to fund work in schools in the 25 hard-to-reach upazilas on BRAC WASH II.

Over the past eight years, the BRAC WASH programme has made a sustained intervention at community level with a special emphasis on poor and ultra-poor households. Hygiene promotion is being delivered by 8,000 staff to 65 million people, reaching almost 40% of the population and supporting Village WASH Committees that provide an opportunity to sustain the work when the programme is over. This has been an unparalleled achievement by any WASH programme managed by an NGO anywhere in the world; it sets a standard that poses a challenge for the future. Changes in rural communities are profound and the BRAC WASH programme has played a role in raising expectations. The challenge is to find a way to sustain these gains as external support diminishes. Because the programme is unique on a global scale, there is little experience of how to move from a donor funded pattern of interventions to something that can be sustained by governmental or other long-term funding. This was one of the major questions addressed in the annual review meeting.



BRAC WASH programme assistant Flama Katun talks about menstrual hygiene with adolescent girls in Fultola Village, Khulna district.

Meeting challenges with fewer resources

BRAC WASH programme donors made it clear that the current scale of finance from external sources cannot continue in future programme phases. In part, this reflects the pressures on official development assistance (ODA) and in part the changing priorities of the funders and their desire to continue to innovate. However, as discussed in greater detail at the end of this report, the donors also expressed continuing support for the programme and a commitment to helping it to explore its way forward.

Carel de Groot, First Secretary, Water Section, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, said that while the first stage of EKN support for BRAC WASH had been about achieving coverage, and the second stage about ensuring sustainability, the third stage was unclear. “It is still open but what we do know is we will have a lot less money for it.” Netherlands national policy has shifted from traditional aid to “responsible trade”, with a single minister now responsible for both and the focus is on a joint vision for the water sector. The Embassy budget for water will reduce by 30% over the next year from €33 million to €21. The Embassy has decided to continue support for the water management sub-sector (an area of special expertise) at its current level, leaving only €3-4 million for WASH. “We have to think very hard how to use the €3-4 million that we still have. I imagine that we will have to look at strategic partnerships. Coverage obviously is out of the question – for that you need a lot of money.”

EKN would like to make more use of centrally funded instruments – mixed credit funds, grants funds, loan funds, such as the Sustainable Water Fund (a public-private partnership facility), using its own funds to leverage such funds and private funds. “We all realise that the water sector can never sustain itself with public funds only. We will have to find means of more and more mobilising private funds.” He gave as an example the PaCT Partnership for Cleaner Textiles with buyers of ready-made garments, 50% funded by EKN and 50% by corporate responsibility programmes with the objective of using less water and polluting less water. “It is this kind of programme we are looking for and I really hope that you will collaborate in doing this thinking so that we can use those three or four million that we still have for very good purposes.”

Jan Willem Rosenboom, Senior Program Officer for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recalled that they started to work with BRAC WASH II to look at how to reach the ultra-poor with sanitation and to address other challenges, particularly the options for pit emptying processing and reuse of the waste. There was not yet clarity about what would happen after the end of this programme in April 2015. However, the focus of the Foundation’s sanitation strategy was the urban chain: disposal, emptying, transport, treatment. Progress had been made on the development of a range of technologies and business models around faecal sludge management, treatment and the whole value chain. These models had generated excitement by cities around the world and were being tested in India and Africa. A project with Khulna City Corporation in Bangladesh was being launched the following week. The Foundation was working with DFID on city sanitation partnerships to identify areas where more planning or regulation is needed and where engagement with the private sector could make a difference. “We are at the very beginning of a transition from development to testing and figuring out what works.”



Carel de Groot



Jan Willem Rosenboom

Brian Arbogast, Director of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program at the Foundation, said that the move towards the urban agenda was not only about technology, but about innovations that can be scaled up in dense populations. This was his first visit to Bangladesh and he saw it as an opportunity to learn. “BRAC is really unique around the world. You have been able to deliver services at scale in a way that I have not seen anywhere else so I am very much also looking at what to take away from the approach that BRAC has across the country.”



Brian Arbogast

Jane Crowder, water and sanitation adviser at the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), explained that the UK was focused on achieving its 2010 commitment to reaching 60 million more people with support for the water and sanitation MDGs, with sanitation and hygiene as two key areas. DFID is working with 17 country programmes, many of which are being scaled up by the countries themselves. The BRAC WASH III programme is part of that strategy, looking at innovation, and focusing on the hard to reach, the ultra-poor, and reaching women and girls.



Jane Crowder

The development of the private sector in WASH programmes is going to have a greater footprint in future, and there is a move from a rural to an urban focus. DFID has initiated global partnership programmes with organisations like UNICEF, and with consortia comprising the private sector, NGOs and governments. This will include work in Bangladesh with a range of organisations as DFID works to build evidence of value for money, delivery models and innovation. The ten cities programme with the Gates Foundation is about delivering innovation in the way that services are delivered around urban sanitation.

DFID has a strong presence in global institutions, such as Sanitation and Water for All and in global monitoring mechanisms, such as the Joint Monitoring Programme, contributing to the post-2015 agenda.

The latest donor to support the BRAC WASH programme, the non-profit US based Splash, also has an urban focus and in particular, water for urban children. Chief Executive **Eric Stowe** said that they had decided that the quickest way to cover those most in need and the fastest way to long-term solutions was to work with schools, orphanages, food shelters and feeding centres, especially in mega-metropolises. In each case they aim for 100 per cent coverage: in China they work in orphanages in 900 cities across 31 provinces; in Nepal, every public school in Kathmandu; in Kolkata in 3,000 children’s institutions covering 750,000 children. In Dhaka the focus is 70 schools in year one with predictions of 300 schools in year two and 1,000 in year three. “BRAC can scale faster than anyone we have ever seen. They are far more efficient and productive and I think their products are more sustainable than almost anyone else in the sector.” If BRAC could shift from 1% to 5% of its WASH portfolio to looking at the urban poor, they could do more in five years than other organisations could do in 15 years. “To me it is as audacious as hell – our organisation has never worked that fast a clip but we also know we are travelling in BRAC’s wake.”



Eric Stowe



Michiel Slotema

Michiel Slotema Policy Advisor to EKN, was looking forward to seeing how the programme had evolved over the previous year. “You have such a wealth of knowledge in this room; it is good to be able to talk to the people who are busy with the programme. I am looking forward to hearing about the partnership between IRC and BRAC. I think it is quite a unique approach and how that feeds into BRAC’s programme.” He was also looking forward to the community visits following the meeting. “I always learn a lot when I go to the field. Speaking with people who are receiving services creates a clearer picture.”



Radu Ban

Radu Ban, Program Officer for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was interested to see if monitoring could be improved or the methodology strengthened. The Foundation had commissioned an independent verification of the BRAC monitoring data to verify the outcomes.



Patrick Moriarty

Patrick Moriarty, chief executive of IRC, said it was clear that donor funds would diminish but he was doubtful that the private sector could replace them. “You hear quite often that there is not enough money in the world to tackle the challenge of WASH and we need to look to the private sector. I would switch it around. There is not a country in the world including all the developed countries where public money is not the main driver of ensuring that services go to the poorest of the poor.” BRAC’s work showed the need for cross-subsidies and other support to reach the ultra-poor. “I don’t think we can let governments off the hook. There is plenty of public money and the amounts that are needed to reach the ultra-poor are typically very small.” Smart, focused subsidies were increasingly shown to be effective. “If we are dedicated to universal coverage, more effectively used public finances are absolutely critical, as well as bringing in the private sector.”



Babar Kabir

Babar Kabir, Senior director of the BRAC WASH programme, understood that funds would be tighter. However, it was not easy for a large organisation like BRAC to meet the requirements of public-private partnerships to partner with governmental organisations and still work flexibly and with speed. “We are a very resilient organisation. We will manage and continue the work that is a promise. Maybe the focus will change. I am sure that over the next months we will be able to come up with something.”

BRAC WASH achievements, challenges and plans

Hygiene promotion requires sustained effort over time

The BRAC programme shows the benefits of integrating hygiene promotion into sanitation and water programmes, and of the sustained contact which ensures that each household is visited four times a year: hygiene promotion works but it takes time. Mizanur Rahman reported that over the previous year the BRAC programme had adopted:

- a sharper focus on having and using a latrine; washing hands after defecation and before eating; safe water handling
- a better way of communicating with more than 8,000 staff trained to improve communication skills
- smarter outreach as tea-stall sessions for men were developed, tested and scaled up.

Changes in sanitation and hygiene behaviours and practices are more advanced in areas where BRAC WASH has intervened for longer. More than twice as many households in WASH I areas have sanitary latrines compared with households in WASH II areas (where work began in 2012) and 78% of WASH I households have made provision for washing hands after defecation compared with 25% in WASH II.

The main challenges are to sustain hygienic behaviours and practices, particularly in water scarce areas. Large numbers of field staff are required along with effective communication skills and the ability to retain staff in hard-to-reach areas.

Eric Stowe (Splash) observed that human resources are at the core of the BRAC WASH programme. “If you lost 20% of staff levels how would you replace their impact and how would you replicate the approach.” However, Michiel Slotema (EKN) warned of the danger of dependency and diminishing returns if community members heard the same messages every month. There should come a point where VWCs were strong enough to take over.

Donors asked whether BRAC WASH could be better aligned with other programmes, such as health or education, or use the media to help promote messages. BRAC was also asked how their programmatic approach was being shared with other implementers inside Bangladesh.

Babar Kabir said that BRAC WASH was working to strengthen documentation and



Md. Mizanur Rahman, BRAC WASH Programme Manager, reported on hygiene promotion



Adolescent boys in Fultola village, in Khulna district demonstrate good handwashing practice

find ways to tell the programme story in a way that was easy to grasp. BRAC WASH had traditionally had a low profile but was adopting a more visible presence. The programme will co-host the World Toilet Summit with the Bangladesh government in November and consider hosting practitioner workshops with other providers.

Ensuring access to safe and sustainable sanitation

Since 2006, 30.7 million people have gained access to hygienic sanitation in BRAC WASH areas, with the greatest improvement in areas where BRAC has worked longest. In Phase I upazilas, the proportion of households with hygienic sanitation has risen from 32% to 85%, compared with 40% in WASH II households where work began in 2012. In WASH I areas 86% of households with hygienic latrines are safely emptying

their pits compared with 42% in WASH II. A life cycle costs study in Bagherpara upazila revealed a rapid rise in latrine construction by ultra-poor households in 2009 and 2010, after the introduction of BRAC subsidies in 2008.

The most significant challenge is the need to sustain sanitation facilities and behaviours. About 7% of households that achieved hygienic latrines have ‘slipped’ back. Maintaining water seals is critical to hygiene, but these are often broken to save water and work has to be done to explain to families why the seal is important. SaTo pans which require less water have been introduced with mixed results.

Lack of land is a constraint for the ultra-poor that often leads to latrines being built too close to water points. Efforts are made to persuade better off people to offer space for latrines to poorer neighbours. Community toilets do not qualify as “coverage” in national statistics or JMP definitions.

Loans are made to the poor to help them construct latrines. The system is based on trust and about 98% of loans are indeed repaid.

In BRAC WASH I it had proved difficult to reach the poorest of the poor and donors asked about progress over the past year. Milan Kanti Barua, Advisor to BRAC WASH, said that the “last mile” was proving difficult gap to close and they could not guarantee to reach 100% in the WASH II areas hard-to-reach areas. Babar Kabir explained that the entry point in communities was hygiene promotion to stimulate demand. No grants were given to the ultra-poor until coverage reaches 60% (demonstrating community commitment) and the BRAC target is 90%. The final 10% range from ultra-poor to non-poor, so it is not all to do with money. “There are groups of people think it is the job of BRAC or the government to give them a free toilet and they hold out.” The dignity, privacy and security of having a latrine at home were all significant drivers of motivation for good hygiene.



Rezaul Karim, Senior Programme Manager, reported on progress towards securing access to hygienic sanitation



Ruby Begum, Faruq Biswas and three-year-old Toma with the family latrine in Tuka village, Tala upazila, Khulna.

Strengthening supply chains

A strategy to strengthen the sanitation supply chain is being developed following a study in 16 unions in eight upazilas that showed mismatches between supply and demand. One major issue was the need to raise design and production standards, especially siphons, many of which fail to provide a functioning water seal.

There are also concerns over the long term viability of rural sanitation centres (RSCs). In areas where BRAC has been working since 2007, the initial demand has largely been met many RSCs had gone out of business. BRAC was working on a strategy to help RSCs to diversify, especially in remote rural areas where their long-term future was essential for repairs and to meet demand for upgrading. The challenge was to compete for the business from the non-poor who have money and demand but who generally buy their infrastructure elsewhere.

Even with BRAC subsidies, latrines are still too expensive for many of the ultra-poor, especially as the subsidy level has not increased in line with costs. Alternative designs are being researched to find appropriate technologies for households in hard-to-reach areas.



Above: making reinforced slabs at the rural sanitation centre. Below a SaTo pan designed to use less water. Bottom, water seals on sale.



Shadat Husain, owner of a rural sanitation centre in Tala upazila, showing a twin-pit offset latrine similar to those supplied to ultra poor families, but with a ceramic squatting pan. He sells about 100 toilet sets a month – 80% of them to BRAC assisted families.



There was a suggestion that latrine infrastructure funded by BRAC for ultra-poor was too expensive. Carel de Groot (EKN) said that he saw in villages that the poorest of the poor had twin-pits latrines provided through a BRAC subsidy and wondered if they also had the highest maintenance costs. “Perhaps we should be a little more modest in the kind of toilets we are giving the hard core poor.” However, Eric Stowe (Splash) found the concept of donors promoting lower standards for the poor troubling. Carel de Groot said he was not advocating sub-standard latrines, but it would be irresponsible to give people latrines they found unaffordable.

Sanitation in schools

BRAC WASH has installed toilets and menstrual hygiene facilities for girls at 4,658 secondary schools and madrasa, and provided hygiene education with capacity building for students and teachers at every secondary school in 250 Upazilas. Senior sector specialist, Taleb Biswas, said that BRAC had succeeded in breaking the silence on menstrual hygiene and girls’ absenteeism had reduced. BRAC is now focusing on healthy school environments,



Abu Taleb Biswas

training student brigades and training two teachers in every secondary school in programme areas. School WASH committees and student brigades are responsible for ensuring that toilets are kept clean, although schools generally employ cleaners. Sanitary napkins are binned and burnt.

As in other areas of the programme, results are better where BRAC has worked longer: 92% of school brigades in WASH I are performing at or above the benchmark compared with 42% in WASH II. School WASH committees also perform better.

There were still challenges. Costs for latrines are split 50/50 with the school and some schools lack sufficient interest or money to invest and maintain hygiene promotion lessons. There is also a need to ensure that schools have a safe drinking water supply and meet Governmental norms (one toilet for 50 students).

In response to questions, BRAC reported that they could show a drop in absenteeism, but could not demonstrate that this was due to the WASH programme. It was felt that young people influenced their families with good hygiene practices learned at school, but there was no data on this.

Research on life cycle costs (LCCA) in 117 schools showed that 80% were clean and most school student brigades functioned well. However, some boys complained that BRAC focused only on girls and wanted better toilets for boys too. Athoye Sharif pointed out that service levels monitored by LCCA provide an incentive for head teachers. “If they realise that by spending a certain amount they raise the service level from basic to improved, that is a motivation to finance improvements.”



Members of the student WASH Brigade at KCNG Secondary School, Dumuria, Khulna, Bangladesh. Students have to be in the top six of their class to qualify to join and they see it as a badge of honour an prestige. The job of the brigade is to improve health and hygiene in the school.



One of the toilets provided for girls at KCNG Secondary School. BRAC WASH installed and met half the cost of twin pit offset latrines for girls with a washbasin and running water for handwashing and sanitary towel facilities. The school has two latrines for 370 female students and four latrines for 504 male students.



*Sharmin Farhat Ubaid,
BRAC WASH focal lead for
faecal sludge
management*

Pit emptying and faecal sludge management

Promoting safe and hygienic pit emptying and small-scale and large-scale faecal sludge management is an area of continuing development. Faecal sludge research has been carried out on material from double-pit latrines. The sludge meets WHO standards and BRAC has applied for a licence to develop a market. Separate research is being led by a team at the University of Leeds into the potential for converting sludge from single pit latrines to fertiliser. This poses a bigger challenge as dual pit latrines have greater potential to start the composting process before emptying. Single pit latrines are not considered to be sustainable over the long term. For large scale management of faecal material a feasibility study is under way. Babar Kabir said that while

organic fertiliser was unlikely to replace chemical fertiliser, it could become a significant supplementary fertiliser that could help to restore the balance of the soil, especially as the pressure on land is high and growing.



*Nur Mohammed
empties a pit
in Dhamrai
near Dhakar.*



*Reshman Khatun
and Babu Rahman
successfully used
organic fertiliser
made from faecal
sludge on their
paddy farm in
Shaymoghachi village,
Sharsha upazila,
Jessor District .*

These are stills from a BRAC video Faecal Sludge Management available on You Tube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKCwtCIIHhY&feature=youtu.be>

Water supply – complex problems

Complex water supply issues cannot always be addressed with simple solutions. After Bangladesh reached 97% water coverage in the early 1990s, a quarter of the estimated 10 million handpump tube wells were found to be affected by arsenic. In 2006, BRAC started providing deep tube wells and pond sand filters and then piped water, solar desalination, rainwater harvesting and the Sono filter. Through such schemes, motivating people to repair broken platforms, and loans BRAC enabled 1.9 million people to achieve a safe water supply.

However, arsenic contamination is still a major problem, Mofazzal Hoque, BRAC WASH adviser on water, reported. Salinity is getting worse and water is affected by other contaminants such as iron and manganese. There are challenges in rocky areas where drilling bore wells is not possible. There are no facilities for communities to monitor water quality and limited access to laboratory facilities. Mofazzal Hoque outlined three strategies in areas of arsenic contamination:

- abstraction from deeper aquifers;
- use of surface sources;
- treatment of arsenic-contaminated water

For saline intrusion the solutions are

- deep tube wells (300m);
- pond sand filters;
- solar desalination and rainwater harvesting;
- piped water

In stony or rocky areas piped water supplies are sometimes the only option. BRAC WASH has demonstrated that piped supplies are suitable and sustainable in this context. In one such scheme, each household pays 90 taka (US\$ 1.15) a month for a yard tap and the community has accumulated 650,000 taka (US\$ 8,400) in reserves.

BRAC is developing an exit strategy by linking schemes to hygiene promotion and involving other BRAC programmes that will continue to have a community presence. Babar Kabir reported that the government is still in the process of approving household arsenic removal filters. BRAC is examining carbon market schemes that may offer payments where people no longer have to boil water.



Mofazzal Hoque



Top left, solar desalination and rainwater harvesting in the southwestern coastal zone. Bottom left and above, Barobaria village in Chitalmari, Bagerhat, receives water from a pond sand filter installed by BRAC to replace supplies affected by arsenic.

Life cycle costs approach (LCCA)

A BRAC WASH video outlines the benefits of life-cycle costing in assessing the long-term recurrent costs of programmes and projects. This can help BRAC to focus on the whole cost of technologies, including the recurrent costs of repairs and improvements, rather than only considering capital costs.

Nicholas Dickinson (IRC) demonstrated a WASHCost web tool to create a report on costs and services.

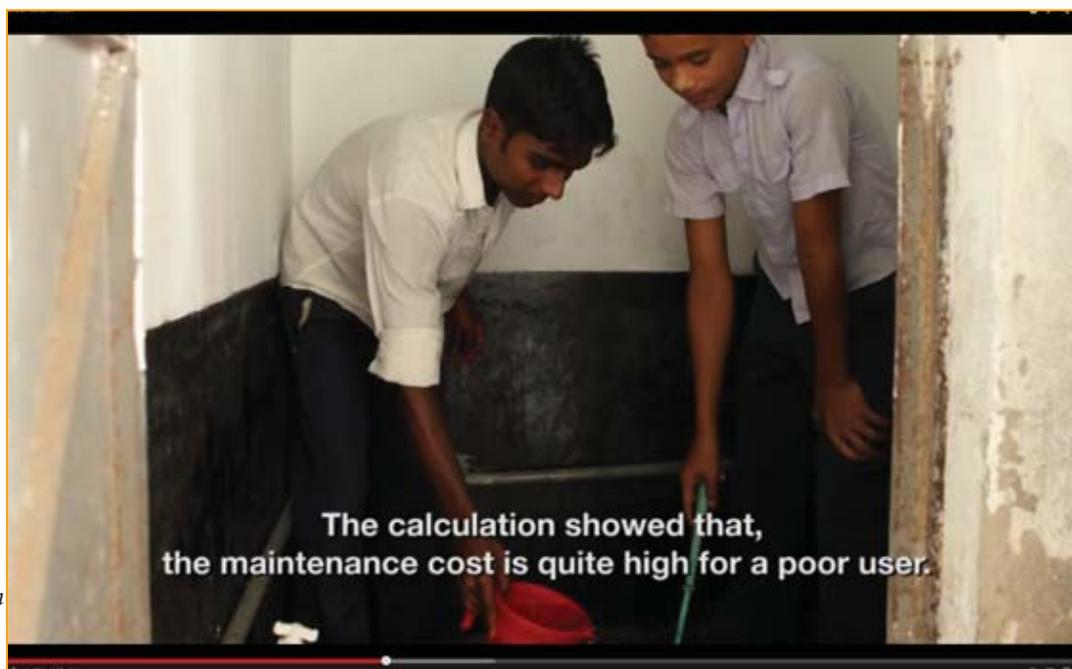
In its simple form, this tool is valuable for advocacy and learning and can be used to assess the likely pressure points on life-cycle costs over a period of time and to share data on costs and service levels. Tested on 30 households (17 of them ultra-poor) in Bangladesh, it suggested that the ten year costs to achieve a basic level of service for an average household were approximately US\$ 125 per household, including the cost of BRAC's hygiene promotion support. Ten year costs would be affected by how often the pit would need to be emptied. Non-poor households spent more than US\$ 720 per household



Nick Dickinson

on higher quality latrine construction. However, service levels remained the same as for poorer households as they used the same technology. This pilot supported the findings of a larger (1,000 household) study in Bagherpara upazila that showed that when families have well-functioning toilets the ultra-poor keep them just as clean as the poor and the non-poor.

An advanced version of the tool is being developed to enable users to compare the costs of different levels of service.



Still from the BRAC WASH life-cycle costs approach video which can be accessed at <http://youtu.be/LIALQbPz3io>

A check list on financial sustainability and value for money

WASHCost calculator
Dynamic tool to check affordability

The Life Cycle Costs Approach (LCCA) addresses two key questions:

- What services do people get, at what cost?
- Are the costs of maintaining adequate services being met?

What LCCA measures:

- LCCA delivers a check list on sustainability and value for money, assessing the key costs of providing and maintaining a service.
- Service levels are measured against agreed standards.
- LCCA identifies one-time costs, e.g. capital expenditure, and recurrent costs, e.g. operating and minor maintenance, and larger repairs and replacements (capital expenditure). If recurrent costs are neglected, service levels fall and investment is wasted.

Households

BRAC WASH has had a transformative effect on latrine construction – especially for the ultra-poor who cannot afford to construct latrines. BRAC WASH grants ensure that the group have latrines that are more robust, don't need emptying so often and have the potential to produce organic compost.

By international and Bangladesh standards both the poor and ultra-poor are below the lower regional poverty lines.

Money spent by BRAC WASH on hygiene promotion – “direct support costs” – proves its value. When families have well-functioning latrines, the ultra-poor keep them just as clean as the poor and non-poor.

The costs of long-term maintenance are as high as the cost of construction. The full impact of these costs will be felt in the future.

The cost of emptying pits is beginning to be felt by the poor as they have more single pit latrines, but not yet by the ultra-poor who have double pit latrines.

Challenges

1. Is there a way to support the high number of poor to improve service levels? Would small grants have a multiplier effect on quality?
2. Will the ultra-poor be able to meet the costs of repairs, replacements and pit emptying?
3. Meeting Bangladesh's national standards for providing an adequate number of toilets for both girls and boys.

A poster on display at the annual review meeting explained how the life-cycle costs approach is used to check financial sustainability.

According to Patrick Moriarty the tool is equally useful for choosing service levels as for assessing costs. LCCA allows BRAC and others to say to government “If you spend this much this is what we can deliver.” It highlighted the need for continuing support for communities, and helps to explain why single initiatives on hygiene promotion do not last. LCCA also highlights the balance between costs and service levels. “As a sector we are making blind investments without any real idea about technology and service choices. Sometimes the service level is so low that you end up paying more for a lousy service that nobody wants.”

There was interest from donors in whether the tool could be adapted to work for other services, such as health or education. Nick Dickinson said that it was currently set up to assess household sanitation, school WASH and public water systems. However, the tool is flexible and in principle it should be possible to adapt it. Part of the vision was that BRAC ICT could add new features.

Integrated monitoring

Mahidul Islam, regional manager in the BRAC WASH monitoring and quality control unit, explained how integrated monitoring and evaluation helps management and ensures transparency and accountability to ensure that households can access the services they are promised.

The community is the main source for data from three systems.

- Management Information System (MIS)
- Monitoring and Quality Control (M&QC) and
- Qualitative Information System (QIS)

The management information system (MIS) collects community data every month to inform programme performance.



Mahidul Islam

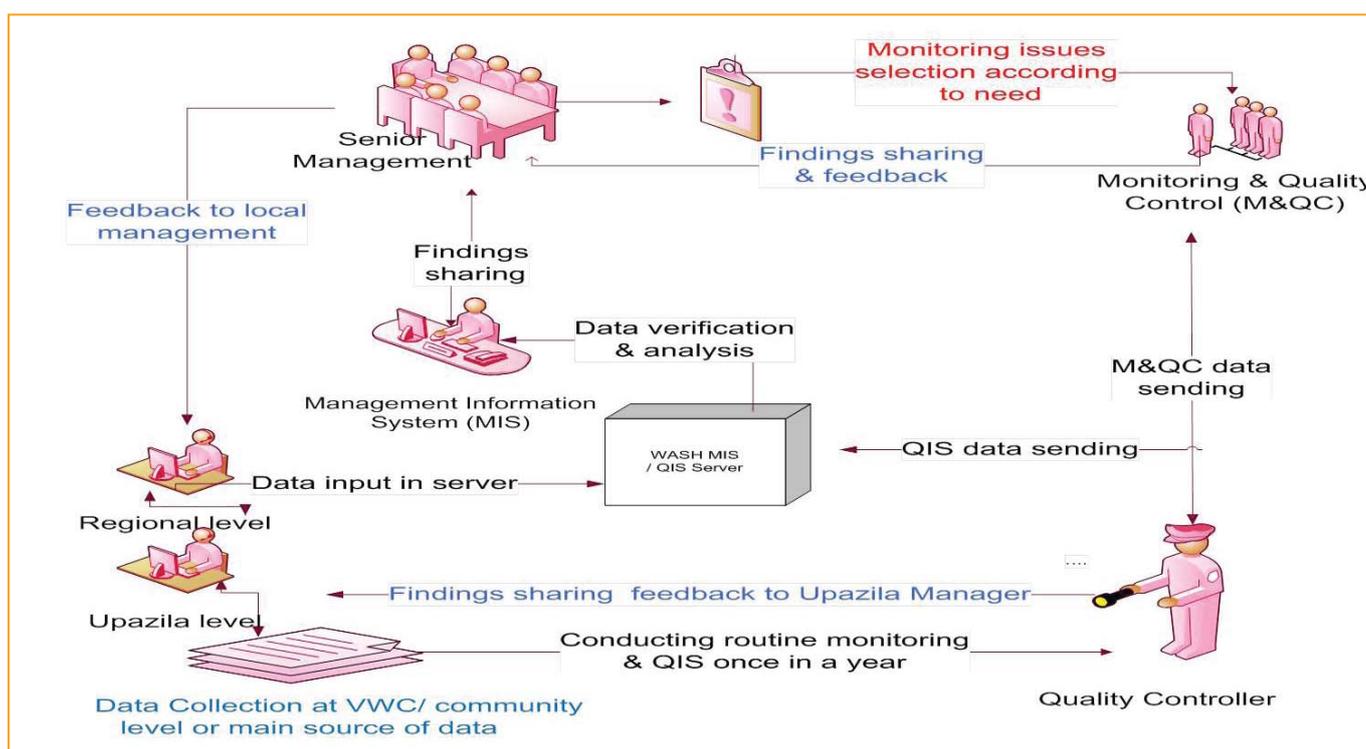
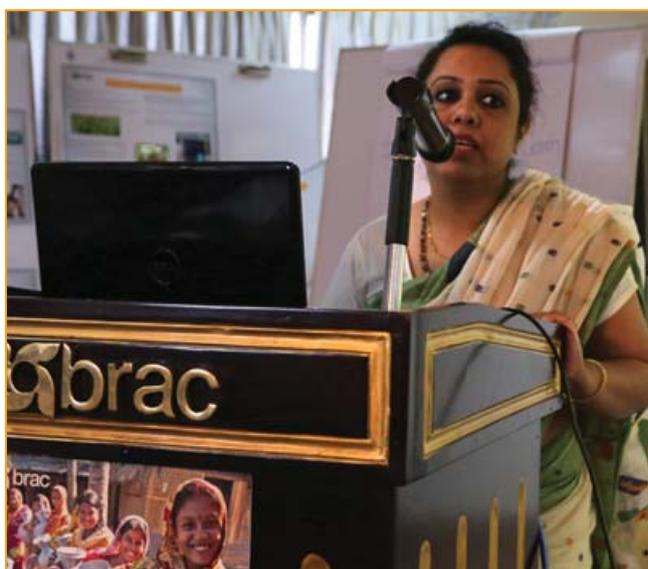


Figure 1: How MIS monitoring data informs programme decisions

As Figure 1 shows, information from the monthly Village WASH Committee register goes to the upazila manager and to the regional manager. There are 52 quality controllers of M&QC unit who verify MIS data, justify its reliability, and ensure the quality of services by visiting every household that has received a subsidy and checking they have received services. They also check the quality of water seals to ensure that latrines remain in a hygienic condition.

Senior sector specialist, Mahjabeen Ahmed explained that the qualitative information system (QIS) was introduced in 2012 as an additional tool to add to data collected in the management information system (MIS). QIS provides qualitative information on results to go beyond “bean counting” and focus on the quality of the intervention and the impact of the programme on people’s lives.



Mahjabeen Ahmed

QIS is conducted in two ways: by field staff and Village WASH Committees as a form of monitoring and promotion at community level and by BRAC quality control staff in an independent random sample survey. Staff checked the use and hygienic conditions of 8,000 latrines and collected information from 200 village WASH committees and 400 schools.

Ingeborg Krukkert (IRC) reported on a review carried out by Christine Sijbesma, who had conducted semi-structured interviews with 35 quality control staff and 20 programme assistants and programme officers to assess how they were using the QIS methodology and to compare results. Sijbesma concluded:

- QIS is implemented as planned: those conducting QIS observe and score conditions and practices before they ask questions. Observation takes priority.
- Data on hygienic conditions and service levels appears to be valid. Staff understand the criteria and VWCs use local knowledge to ensure that subsidies and loans go to the right households. Sijbesma recommended adjusting the scoring system to eliminate anomalies – for example, someone living alone cannot reach the highest score, while households in flood and cyclone areas are also unlikely to do so.
- Data is reliable: most indicators, such as the presence of soap, are objective and observable. The QC team was observed to look around the yard for the presence of faeces from young children. Female PAs play an important role in creating a relaxed atmosphere. Sijbesma stressed the need to use validation techniques to check answers.
- Data is complete and accurate: it is entered and uploaded to an electronic database in real time using a smart phone, and each entry has a unique bar code. QC staff and PAs cross-check written scores with those entered on the phone.
- The process is participatory: households, VWCs and schools understand and agree their scores and know what they need to do to climb the ladder. “Everybody wants to be on the highest score.” Participation can be improved by using pictorial scale to illustrate levels, by ensuring “equitable seating” (not standing over someone), and by inviting households to summarise strengths, weaknesses and intended improvements.

- **An animated video explaining the use of QIS in BRAC WASH can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iIPgXKoCd8>**



Ingeborg Krukkert



QIS monitoring in action - a programme assistant uses a mobile phone to collect data

Research team will check data to validate findings

Amal Halder from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research (ICDDR) presented the design for a study to validate BRAC findings on monitoring that have emerged through QIS. This study, on behalf of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will look at the accuracy of the QIS findings on latrine provision and use, analyse latrine costs and look at whether the intervention with poor and ultra-poor households matches the intervention strategy. His team will also look for an association between coverage, use and diarrhoeal outcomes.

The study will compare sample Village WASH Committee areas where QIS was conducted with a comparison group. The total sample will be 966 households within 46 VWC clusters. ICDDR is collaborating with Emory University on the study design and analysis and BRAC will train the study investigators in QIS monitoring. Three months of data collection begins in May, followed by three months of analysis with a report due in October 2014.

Radu Ban (BMGF) believed that lessons from the verification would be valuable for the whole donor community. There was a high level of enthusiasm to work with one of the largest NGOs in the world, but donors want to know that they get their money's worth and that requires verification. Although validation is part of BMGF grant conditions, the study is also designed for the Foundation and BRAC to learn from results. The Foundation explained that a verification study does not need to assess every outcome: coverage and use are sufficient markers for the accuracy of QIS. Jan Willem Rosenboom said that QIS specifically looks at the kind of issues the Foundation is interested in, such as latrine use and whether it is kept in a hygienic condition. If QIS is shown to be accurate that suggests it can be used for sample in future rather than having to monitor every household. Babar Kabir also welcomed the study. "The fact that we have been independently verified through a rigorous process is useful for us. However, he doubted whether ICDDR would be able to show an impact on health and specifically a correlation between toilet use and acute respiratory infections (ARI)."



Amal Halder

How new practices can be embedded within communities

Avijit Poddar director of research at the Human Development Research Centre in Bangladesh reported observations and findings from an unpublished study conducted in 2013 and 2014, comparing BRAC WASH with other WASH programmes in Bangladesh. His team found a well-balanced approach between hardware and software. More than 150,881 loans had been extended for latrines, and Village WASH Committees (VWCs) were well trained and sustainable. "We expect that when BRAC WASH is no longer in the field most of these village committees will continue their activities."

The programmes adopted an innovative and effective approach to communication, for example, through demonstrations of good hand-washing practices, and by training religious leaders.

"We expect that when BRAC WASH is no longer in the field, most of these village committees will continue their activities."

The BRAC approach motivated the better off to buy latrines and enhance the capacity of local entrepreneurs to improve quality. Perhaps a different approach—such as offering credit facilities—is needed for households that have not improved latrines so far.

Testing water quality is a major issue. Avijit Poddar recommended a demand creation programme to encourage the purchase of Sono arsenic filters at household level and then follow up with subsidies for ultra-poor families.

His overall recommendation was for the programme to increase the number of front line staff and adopt a longer time frame so that new practices would become embedded in the next generation. It would be of programmatic and academic interest to see the result of a long-term WASH programme, ideally 20 to 25 years to cover two or three generations and embed good practices. Ten years was the minimum period as the results of shorter projects rarely survive. A value for money study could be done to for the benefit of international development partners.

Jan Willem Rosenboom (BMGF) observed that these recommendations raise challenges for BRAC since it was clear that there would be less money. How BRAC could address this changing landscape was addressed on the final morning of the meeting.

Linking data from different BRAC programmes

Saiful Islam Raju ICT, systems analyst for BRAC, demonstrated real time monitoring using mobile phones. Raju with Md. Shahinur Islam, principal software engineer and A. F. Ahammed Gazi Shishir, MIS Officer, called up a field worker in real time using GPS and displayed their picture on screen. Those doing monitoring can upload data when they have a connection and staff in the BRAC centre can contact field workers to check results. Data can be checked in real time and staff feel safe in remote areas or during political unrest.

Raju is working on a project to ensure that different BRAC programmes (health, WASH, microfinance etc.) supporting the same families can break out of their silos and share data. Each family or individual will have a unique BRAC identifier and households will be geomapped.



Community activity during the research conducted for the HDRC study



Saiful Islam Raju (right), ICT systems analyst for BRAC, present the vision for real time monitoring and integrated data with A. F. Ahammed Gazi Shishir, MIS Officer, (left) and Md. Shahinur Islam, principal software engineer.

Babar Kabir described how BRAC needs to harmonise definitions across health, education, micro-finance and WASH to integrate systems successfully. Paper based data needs to be transferred to an electronic database and the sectors need to break through the silos that divide them.

Donors were excited by the potential uses of BRAC data about social structure, poverty levels and households. They

urged BRAC to address privacy issues and make anonymised data open source so that the social value of this data could be realised by the global research community.

Smarter software will enable BRAC WASH to combine data from different sources

The number of toilets – although huge - is relatively easy to count if you have enough field staff and the BRAC Quality Control and the Monitoring Information System (MIS). However, BRAC WASH needs to do more than count. For safe sanitation and good hygiene, toilets require a functioning water seal and no faeces visible in and around the toilet pan.

To measure this BRAC and IRC developed the QIS monitoring system with a series of mini “scenario scales” to describe different levels of performance. QIS is a valuable addition because it quantifies qualitative data on outcomes.

Project staff use smart phones to enter and upload data to a database. During the last phase, covering 3,600 households, the whole exercise from sampling to training and actual data collection by 40 teams of data collectors took 8 weeks.

The challenge for integrated monitoring is to ensure that monitoring systems mutually strengthen each other.

How do we analyse data from two different data sources and present results so that they can be used to improve the programme?

Until now, quantitative and qualitative data had to be combined manually for analysis. This required a deal of time and effort from BRAC and IRC. (It is a rule of thumb that you need three times as much time to analyse data than to collect it.)

BRAC ICT and BeDataDriven are developing and fine-tuning software to transform this. With this software – a version of ActivityInfo which was developed by BeDataDriven – it will become possible to combine different types of data sources (such as MIS and QIS), run an analysis, visualise the results and produce a basic report, integrated within BRAC ICT’s existing systems.

The way forward - issues of funding, learning and sharing

Summing up the discussions, Ingeborg Krukkert (IRC) highlighted the gap that is emerging between identified need and likely future resources. “From BRAC we heard the need to consolidate and expand, and to address issues such as sanitation slippage and completing the last mile. We also heard that BRAC should stay put for a generation. We also heard that donors will have less money and be more focused on trade and urban issues. There is clearly some mismatch between these different key messages.”

There was a need to improve learning and sharing and for BRAC to teach other NGOs the most effective approaches. Another issue that had emerged was the need to make use of the rich data and materials that the programme has generated, including data from studies on the supply chain and LCCA. “There is demand from donors to do more with the data, the tools and the approaches.”

Donors also highlighted the strengths of the BRAC WASH programme. Jan Willem Rosenboom said: “We should not forget to celebrate the enormous success that BRAC WASH has in water and sanitation at scale. There are always things we can do better, but we should say well done.” His colleague, Radu Ban, agreed: “Every year we see new things that BRAC is carrying out – the work in schools is very exciting. Faecal sludge management in rural and urban areas is music to our ears. I am looking forward to seeing what else you have on your plate for next year and the years beyond.”

These views were shared by other donors. Carel de Groot (EKN - pictured right with Michiel Slotema) emphasised the need for BRAC lessons and data to influence future work. “It is an important programme for us because BRAC is doing it so well. BRAC has a lot of data and it is also important to use it to feed improvements back into the programme.”

For DFID, the strength is that the BRAC programme delivers at significant scale. However Jane Crowder said it was important to help the Government to learn from this. “Government has 20% of the resources and we can try to take government with us. I am sure that local government especially would value finding ways to spend their money better.”

Michiel Slotema (EKN) was optimistic that BRAC would eventually not need donor funds and its work could be sustained by BRAC businesses.

Although Patrick Moriarty (IRC) agreed that the water, sanitation and hygiene programme could not be financed from ODA for ever, he was doubtful that social enterprises could fill the funding gap.



“We should not forget to celebrate the enormous success that BRAC WASH has in water and sanitation at scale.”

“BRAC has a lot of data and it is important to use it to feed improvements back into the programme.”

“You need an army of workers in the field, not just today and tomorrow, but for a generation, and that needs to be financed somehow.”

“BRAC has an army of 8,000 extension workers and if they covered the other of the country they would require another 8,000. If social enterprise funded it at that scale that would be a completely new model of social services. BRAC is demonstrating a model for how to do hygiene work at scale. They are showing that you need an army of workers in the field, not just today and tomorrow, but for a generation, and that needs to be financed somehow. We need to think hard about how to find the money. Who do we talk to next?”

Babar Kabir said that a frank discussion was needed to get a feel of what to do as the paths of funding come to the end. He pointed out that the finance would be needed regardless of who ran the programme. “When we talk about engaging with the private sector what does it mean? Should we be looking at corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds? Should we just capture what we have achieved and teach others? If others are going to do it, they still need to seek funds for their programmes.”

“We are trying to get back to the original concept of BRAC that development should be integrated.”

BRAC was aware of the need to integrate programmes such as health, WASH and education that had expanded in separate silos in response to funding streams. An integrated programme with generic development workers was being trialled in two upazilas. There was a question over whether BRAC could recruit enough high quality development workers capable of covering all the fields of work but BRAC was committed to this way forward. “We are trying to get back to the original concept of BRAC that development should be integrated.”



Senior BRAC staff are thinking about the future direction of the successful WASH programme in a changing funding environment.



Brian Arbogast (BMGF) said the BRAC experience was similar to that of the Foundation. This had expanded following large donations from Bill and Melinda Gates and from Warren Buffet, and was now also working on integration. The Foundation saw its role as developing new paths rather than those already travelled, but there were other organisations looking to fund proven routes to reduce mortality and increase livelihoods, and BRAC was in a good position to attract them. “You can use us to vouch for your success and to help you seal the deal.”

Jan Willem Rosenboom said that the institutional response of BRAC to a changing environment was the most important question, as the funding picture changed.

Three critical issues need to be addressed before WASH II comes to a close. :

- What can be done in terms of consolidating and sharing with others and seeing if there are other pathways to continue to work at scale?
- Whether and how to include urban areas and schools.
- What does BRAC not do when the funding ends?

BRAC could find new donors by knocking on doors, but charitable funding would be slow and smaller than the sums delivered so far. “Charitable funding will at some point dry up across the board and BRAC must have some answer as to how services will flow and grow without an inflow of charitable money.” It was possible that the private sector could play a role, but as a resilient organisation BRAC could not be in a position to say: ‘We did not see this coming’. The Foundation was willing to work with BRAC on some answers.

Carel de Groot (EKN) said that BRAC was doing well for the country and should complete the work that has been agreed - to achieve 90% coverage. “At the end of the programme let’s see if there are ways to continue at least part of it, but at least we achieve what we wanted to achieve. Let’s make sure that the missing 10% is not the hard core poor and the hard-to-reach.... if it is, we would have failed.”

Only just over a quarter of BRAC’s overall work was directly dependent on donor support, and it was important that the programmes that can

“Charitable funding will at some point dry up and BRAC must have some answer as to how services will flow and grow without an inflow of charitable money.”

continue with BRAC’s own funding remain relevant to the poor and hard-core poor. “We like to do business with BRAC because we assume that even if the programme stops your presence and mission and vision and drive is such that you would never let go of what was achieved in the years when the extra funding was available”. This was not just about breaking down silos within BRAC, but collaborating more closely with the government and others. Partners in the Netherlands with corporate social responsibility programmes would love to work with BRAC. “You will have to love to work with them in spite of some of the challenges you will face!”

Babar Kabir said that CSR programmes and funds such as the Dutch sponsored Sustainable Water Fund often work with Governmental institutions that have good staff but lack flexibility. “We have no problem in working with Dutch companies but we are wary of what we are getting into.”

It had taken US\$ 90 million to finance field staff for four years to achieve 80%-plus coverage. BRAC has a vision of becoming self-financing by 2030, but there was a question mark over how far BRAC could work to a commercial agenda. It might be possible to do something with revenue raised by microfinance, but would not be possible to double the workforce from social enterprise revenue.

Eric Stowe was concerned that new work being developed with BRAC should not have any detrimental impact of existing programmes. He noted that this could be a problem since new financial partners are generally more interested in expansion and growth than in consolidating existing successes.

Carel de Groot agreed that it was important to continue hygiene promotion and demand creation for many years to come. However, if health, education, WASH and other activities could be integrated, they might consider reducing the current intensity of community cluster meetings from every two months to every four or six months. This would allow progression over the course of the project, with less repetition and lower costs as more responsibility was taken by community women and organisations.

Manisha Bhinge, Senior Program Manager with BRAC USA, said the US based organisation could help with marketing to attract smaller investors, especially if BRAC could present polished packages that showed best practices. However, Brian Arbogast advised against going after public dollars directly. It was better to convince those already skilled at this (like Charity: water) to become partners. “They have figured out how to get people excited and are an ideal candidate as a donor interested in getting services to the end user efficiently.”

Jan Willem Rosenboom sketched a graphic to illustrate the short, medium and long term strategic challenges to address funding issues and respond to the changing environment.

“BRAC has a vision of becoming self-financing by 2030 ... but it would not be possible to double the workforce from social enterprise revenue.”





This should involve:

- Consolidating BRAC experiences and becoming a teacher, exploring different ways of selling and exporting BRAC skills.
- Managing the decreasing funding stream from existing donors augmented by money from other sources
- Continuing with new developments such as working in urban areas and schools, using social enterprises (BRAC resources) and other sources to drive innovation.

Babar Kabir said that BRAC was already thinking about transition and innovative ways to raise funds. However, there is a vacuum in public services and a need to protect BRAC core values to meet the needs of the poor. If the numbers of ultra-poor diminish and their needs are met, BRAC can rethink how to engage with the private sector. BRAC already generates more than a third of its funds through profits from social business, investments and market borrowing for commercial or micro finance. When you raise money on the market you have to repay it and generate enough money from services to satisfy international investors. There was interest from Governmental bodies in developing arsenic testing and in training local government, and a question as to whether BRAC should be engaging more with urban areas as the rural-urban migration increases. However, there was not currently enough finance for large scale programmes. “Clearly, it is not going to be business as usual. We are seeking advice on where we should position ourselves.”

Planning BRAC’s response to the changing donor environment

