

BEP key and associate components vs. MIS

(Draft)

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Overview of current BEP-MIS

The management information system (MIS) of BEP represents a regular system of collecting, processing, storing and disseminating programme-level data on key aspects of the programme. The objective is to provide managers an insight into programme and to improve performance. MIS data are also being used for planning (e.g. whether an area is feasible for operating schools/centres), implementation (i.e. whether the right children are selected as students and the achieved gender ratio), as well as for assessing quality (i.e. results of primary completion tests and cohort completion rates). Not least important is reporting to BRAC, donors, the government and other stakeholders. The MIS indicators are sometimes also in the LFA (logical framework analysis) but also include process and activity indicators and cover all the key components of BEP

Programme Organisers in the branch office usually collect information from the community and schools through the prescribed format. It is important to note that in order to ensure quality, BEP's field monitors cross-check the data (i.e. students/members ratio, teacher's status etc). After the data has been collected, the branch staff including the Manager discusses key findings. The branch also uses the data for reporting to the government at local levels and to prepare/update branch office display boards which represent information on key indicators. Copies of data sheets are then sent to the Area Manager. Information/reports received from branch offices are checked by area office staff and then to regional offices to record electronically. Regional offices (7 out of 7) have computers and internet facilities to maintain regional-level data and to communicate with HO. A locally recruited part-time computer operator is engaged for entering data. Once entry has been completed the quality is checked, usually by the regional Manager, and then the soft copy is sent to head offices. In addition, BEP area offices (# 48) will receive computers and internet facilities (*purchasing is done and 200 Area Managers' training is continuing*) by December 2013 which not only improve better communications among AOs, ROs and HO but also strengthen MIS team to collect field- level data timely.

The MIS team at the head office has developed desktop-based appropriate software to check the quality of data and analysis and for producing the following statistical reports.

- **BEP at a Glance** - This is a monthly report produced for managers within BEP and BRAC, as well as the stakeholders. It comprises foremost and associates components of BEP. Some of the information is also used for reporting to donors. Anybody can request a copy
- **Half yearly and annual report** - These reports are prepared for BEP donors. It covers a number of outputs and outcomes level indicators such as the number of ongoing schools/centres by type (i.e. urban, ethnic minority, partner NGO operated etc.) and by grades, student gender ratio, students per school by type, teachers' training, graduates, transitions etc. Both planned and actual situations are compared while analysing data.

As pertinent, MIS helps management in planning and understanding the current state of the programme, including its coverage and quality and identifying deviations, thus allowing it to take action to improve performance. Managers at different levels have access to information and apply it regularly for quality improvement.

Major components /areas of BEP for the MIS-data coverage:

1. Pre-primary Schools

- ✓ Schools operations
- ✓ Students follow up in GPS/RNGPS

2. Primary Schools

- ✓ BRAC Primary school (BPS)
 - Urban schools
 - Ethnic schools
 - Boat/Shikka Tari schools
 - Street children schools
 - Schools for the marginal community etc.
- ✓ Education Support Programme (ESP)
 - ESP /Partner NOGs operated schools

3. Programme for Ethnic Minority (EEC) and Child with Special Needs (CSN)

- ✓ Education for Ethnic Children
- ✓ Children with Special Needs (CSN)

4. Support to formal Schooling

- 4.1. Working with mainstream primary school
 - Formal/community schools
- 4.2. Working with mainstream Secondary School (under PACE)
 - Secondary school (supported) teachers training
 - Mentoring (students)
 - Medhabikash
 - Chhatrabandhu
 - CAL (Computer Aided Learning)

5. Adolescent Development Programme (ADP)

- ✓ Adolescent Club
 - Community/Trust-managed clubs:
 - STAGE (Stimulating Theatre for Adolescent Girls' Empowerment)/ Interactive Popular Theatre (IPT)
 - Cultural Activities
 - Life skill based education (LSBE) and Livelihood skill development training
 - Community participation
 - Other developments and initiatives
- ✓ SoFEA (Social and Financial Empowerment of Adolescent)

6. Multipurpose Community Learning Centre /MCLC (under PACE)

- ✓ MCLC / Gonokendro
 - Skill training to members through GoB
 - Readers forum (students and general members)
 - Trust formed
 - Children corner
- ✓ Gonokendro with IT facilities
- ✓ Mobile Library

7. Others

- ✓ Cost Recovery Interventions
 - Shisu Niketon (Primary)
 - Shisu Kanon (Pre-school)
 - Shisu Bikash (Pre-school)
 - BRAC Secondary school
- ✓ Aflatoun

8. New Interventions

- ✓ Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- ✓ Bridge school (primary)
- ✓ Experimental Method of Learning
- ✓ School Nutrition Programme (BRAC and Govt. school)
- ✓ mEducation/Mobile Education (under PACE)
- ✓ Goal Project (ADP)
- ✓ STAR (Skills Training for Advancing Resources)

BEP Expectation beyond the present MIS

BRACs strategic approach to education has been driven first of all by BRACs overall commitment to a holistic approach to poverty reduction and empowerment of the poor. BRAC is just one of many NGOs, deeply aware of the difficulties within the education sector, which have been able to make use of donor support to provide education services. The goal of the **BRAC Education Programme (BEP-II)** is to reduce poverty in Bangladesh through enhancing access to and quality of education while the purpose is to support the Government of Bangladesh in pursuit of the Education for All Goals. BRAC intends to align its programme with the areas of NGO cooperation set out by MoPME in its National Plan of Action, 2003–15. Specifically, BEP- II (2009-2014) first and foremost addresses issues of access and quality for operating at five institutional levels – Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary, Adolescents, and Continuing Education.

- ✓ Through its pre-primary school programme BRAC has enrolled five year-old children from poor, disadvantaged families which have been recognised for its play-based learning methods and it has increased learners' retention in formal primary schools (GPS/RNGPS). In partnership with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), BRAC Pre-Primary Schools are improving access to early childhood education and quality primary education
- ✓ Another important component of the BEP is BRAC primary school (BPS) run by BRAC and its local partner NGOs under Education Support Programme (ESP), which complements the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh to achieve the national goal of universal primary education. The priority areas of BPS is to provide access to the 'missing' poor-children in remote and urban slums areas and ethnic minority groups – these are the children that are more difficult for the GoB to reach.
- ✓ Working with mainstream secondary school programme (known as Post-Primary Basic Education) was initiated in the existing non-government secondary schools in 2002 to improve school management systems and the quality of teaching-learning processes. The objective of this component is to improve the quality of education and thus to supplement the government's effort for promoting quality in education and attaining the EFA goals.
- ✓ The Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) seeks to improve the quality of life of vulnerable adolescents, especially girls, in selected intervention areas. It works to empower adolescent girls to participate in the decision-making that affect their lives and to become active agents of social change and community development. Social and Financial Empowerment of Adolescents (SoFEA) is a more recent component of BEP, and similarly to ADP, it focuses on supporting adolescent girls into becoming confident and independent individuals by empowering them socially and financially.
- ✓ Multipurpose Community Learning Centres (MCLCs) seek to create scope to continue educational opportunities to dropout children and other poor children who have little to some education in rural areas of Bangladesh. MCLCs provide access to a wide range of learning, skill development and cultural activities to cater to various needs of different members from rural communities. A MCLC mainly includes activities designed to provide access to printed, electronic and other types of continuing education materials for community people with little to some educational experience.

These are all areas where BRAC has developed considerable programme experience which have informed the development of the programme components. In four of these areas BRAC is providing direct access to services; it also has a strong focus on the quality of those services. In the secondary programme it is not a direct education service provider and is partnering government-supported schools on improving the quality of service provision. BRAC has built on this experience at secondary-level and now also has a major partnership programme at primary-level. In all programme components there are partnerships, often through training, with government programmes spread across four ministries.

Box-1: Field operation/Management

Branch Offices (BOs):

The lowest management office of BEP is branch office which consists of Branch Managers (BMs) and Programme Organisers (POs). BMs, selected from the levels of POs with necessary experience about the BEP, are responsible for the planning and implementation of school/centre openings, task distribution among POs and supervision of PO activities, regular monitoring and follow-up programme activities, and capacity development of the POs of her/his branch and teachers conducting refresher courses along with the POs.

Area Offices (AOs):

The Area Offices are the next hierarchical step of BEP comprise of Area Managers (AMs) who supervise 10–12 branch offices in their areas and are responsible for planning, overseeing finances, logistics support/purchase and delivery to the relevant branch office, supervise BMs' activities and conduct meetings with BMs and POs, staff development, coordination among stakeholders and other day-to-day management of the programme, and report to the Regional Manager.

There is a Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) in each Area Office who is selected from the best BMs and is responsible for bringing qualitative improvements to the school/centre such as ensuring students' learning outcomes, capacity development of teachers to deliver subject matter, Master Trainers (MTs) and Batch Trainers (BTs) development, and the improvement of staff skills for school supervision. QAS works closely with AMs and involve no administrative responsibility.

Regional Offices (ROs):

The last field-level hierarchical stage of BEP is Regional Offices consist of the most senior position, Regional Managers (RMs) who supervise 6–7 Area offices in their region and are responsible for coordinating all the activities of the AMs, developing plans for school/centre operation, ensuring financial discipline and schools/centres monitoring, and overseeing staff development. In addition, they supervise activities at both area and branch level, retain meetings with AMs and BMs to provide necessary guidance related to school operations. All Regional Managers of BEP report to the Senior Manager/Programme Manager (Field Operations) at Head Office (HO)

Head Office (HO):

At the head office, the Senior Manager/ PM/Senior PM/PC/PH –Field Operations is in charge of the overall field operations of the programme (i.e. BPSP, BPS, ADP, PACE etc.) who is liable to the Director, BEP who in turn reports to the Executive Director, BRAC.

In these view, **BEP-MIS unit** has been indispensable nowadays to support the management for decision making. While existing MIS maintain the foremost and associate components of BEP using desktop based software, some requirements are still missing (i.e. linkage with others BRAC programmes/ target group). While present MIS unit depends on POs at branch offices for collecting schools/individuals level data through prescribed format to make information at Head office (some in ROs), it's really difficult to produce and provide timely and knowledgeable information to the management for planning and managing of education services by establishing a set of relevant indicators for data collection and utilization because of off line system.

Ultimately, BEP is looking EMIS (Education management Information System) to be effective as a planning and management tool, BRAC needs and donor requirements, must be the primary force behind the development of new data collection system that should be structured to meet immediate need and perform as long-term data-bank of BRAC education system. BEP also requires both quantitative (i.e. students, teachers, schools etc.) and qualitative (i.e. students/members performance, feeling etc.) data for the management decision making that complement each other and together paint a more complete picture about the performance of the BRAC and partner NOGs operated schools/centres and activities.

In addition to activities based data (i.e. school/centres, students/members, teachers/librarians etc.) new MIS will cover the data including collaboration with the Government (DPE, Upazilla Education Committee) and others stake holders /community involvements (SMC and Parents), Linking with Other Programmes of BRAC, cross cutting and gender Issues, Implementation Plan/target, Operation and Management process (Box-1), Performance and Learning, Quality issue (capacity building of teachers and Staff), Transition of preprimary and primary school's children to mainstream schools and their tracking/follow up etc.

Thus, the main purpose for developing an Education-MIS is to establish a systematic collection, dissemination and use of relevant and reliable information about BEP activities (i.e. schools/centres), resources (i.e. teachers) and results (i.e. output, outcomes etc.) The key object of upcoming BEP MIS should include

- ✓ to have complete, accurate, reliable and high quality data that can be used to effectively plan, set up and manage learning programmes and activities of BEP's key and associate components through "Emerging Technologies and Approaches" that already hold great promise for developing country's EMIS .
- ✓ to be able to disseminate evidence based data (i.e. each beneficiary/ student/graduate/members, teacher with picture and reg. ID etc.) and information to relevant stakeholders and to find location of each school/centre through "Google earth and digital mapping" that will empower stakeholders to be more competent than ever before.
- ✓ to have data that can be linked to and shared with other BEP (i.e. Monitoring, Quality Assurance, Capacity Development, Logistics, CSN, Ethnic Unit etc.) and BRAC (i.e. HNP, Microfinance, TUP etc.) programme and some supplementary data of other organizations/national.
- ✓ to be able to conduct data processing/analyzing (i.e. statistical tables, figures/graphs, map etc.) as per quick management requirement using data export/import tools to MS Access/Excel/ SPSS etc. plus any others requirement during development phase.