

Goal: To empower marginalized children and young people, especially girls, to achieve their full potential through education.

12
million

Children graduated from BRAC pre-primary and primary schools

10%

Percentage of students reached with disabilities

99%

Proportion of BRAC primary school students who pass national exams

Background

The effects of poverty on children are profound, long-lasting, and disproportionate compared to other populations. According to the World Bank and UNICEF, children are more than twice as likely as adults to live in extreme poverty — but quality education can help offset the negative effects of poverty on children, helping them grow into active, engaged adults with improved employment rates, higher income potentials, and better health outcomes.

Opportunity

When BRAC opened its first 22 primary schools in 1985, most children in Bangladesh were not enrolled in school. More than half of enrolled children dropped out before finishing secondary school, girls in particular. BRAC wanted to give these children the opportunity to gain fundamental literacy, numeracy, and life skills.

Recognizing the importance of guiding children from cradle to career, BRAC expanded its programs to meet the needs of children at all ages. With early childhood development; pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools; scholarships; higher education; and skills development programs; BRAC prepares children and young people for fulfilling futures.

Approach

BRAC believes every good education starts with a good teacher. Its schools elevate the importance of a warm student-teacher relationship, making human connection the heart of the classroom experience. BRAC teachers are trained to pay less attention to standardized tests. They favor child-friendly, participatory approaches over rote learning and emphasize soft skills and playful activities.



A BRAC student in South Sudan. ©BRAC/Alison Wright



A BRAC classroom in Bangladesh. ©BRAC/Matt Kertman

BRAC's pre-primary and primary classrooms are full of song, dance, art, and games. Children build their confidence, work with others, and gain critical health and hygiene knowledge — in addition to learning reading, math, and other core subjects. Research shows this is a winning combination: students from BRAC primary schools consistently outperform students from government schools on standardized tests, despite coming from poorer families.

By investing in a community-driven, joyful learning experience, BRAC has created a cost-effective, quality education model for some of the world's most disadvantaged children. Every child is welcome in BRAC classrooms: more than 50 percent of BRAC students are girls, and more than ten percent are children or youth with disabilities.

BRAC has also developed cutting-edge innovations for especially hard-to-reach populations. Its boat schools in Bangladesh and the Philippines bring primary education to children living in remote, flood-prone regions who are otherwise unable to access schools due to seasonal flooding.

Beyond the classroom, BRAC supports government teacher training, computer-aided learning, on-the-job skills development programs, and community and mobile libraries. In Bangladesh and Uganda, it provides scholarships to low-income students to ensure a successful transition to secondary and tertiary education.

In 2001, BRAC founded BRAC University, now the number one private university in Bangladesh, to prepare bright, eager young people to become leaders and innovators in their fields. It also established the BRAC Institute of Educational Development at BRAC University, which aims to improve education quality, equity, and efficiency through research and development, training, capacity-building, policy dialogue, and advocacy.

Why BRAC?

Today, BRAC is the world's largest private, secular education provider, with over 1.1 million students and 12 million graduates in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Moving forward, BRAC is piloting cost-recovery and social enterprise models to increase the sustainability of its education programs ensure that it can continue to provide marginalized children with high-quality education for years to come.

Additionally, to better serve children's needs in the early years and adequately prepare them for lifelong learning, BRAC is expanding its high-quality, low-cost early childhood education programs for children ages three to five in Bangladesh, Tanzania, and Uganda. BRAC will rigorously evaluate its innovative play-based learning model to assess how it improves a child's language, playfulness, social-emotional learning, pre-literacy, and pre-numeracy.

“ Education is the most important tool for development,” says Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, BRAC Founder and Chairperson. “It is the catalyst for all positive change.”