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Is There a Slate Here for Me?- A Look at the Inclusion of Children With Disabilities in BRAC Schools

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Is there a slate here for me?-A look at the inclusion of children with
disabilities in BRAC schools

A Thesis Presented

By

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Abstract

The rights of people with disabilities have been outlined through many international policies. One specific right, which many of us take for granted, is the right to access public education. Many of these policies, which have been adopted by countries and non-governmental organizations (NGO) throughout the world, call for the inclusion of children with disabilities. One such organization, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, most commonly known as BRAC, is explored in this paper.

In June of 2004, BRAC created a research team, which was made-up of two interns and a unit manager to conduct research over a period of one month. The team was to gather information through interviews and observations; specifically looking at the impact of inclusion on selected BRAC schools and the school community (children with disabilities: CWD, children without disabilities: CWOD, guardians of children with disabilities: GCWD, guardians of children without disabilities: GCWOD, and teachers).

A total of 67 interviews were conducted, another thematically coded for analysis. The results indicated that the majority of CWD and CWOD played and worked together. CWOD were found to be very supportive of inclusive education, however, they questioned the academic ability of their CWD classmates. Some of the guardians said that CWD had promising futures; others indicated that they were surprised by how much a CWD could achieve. Lastly, the responses to the questionnaires indicated that teachers supported inclusion and adapted their instruction to meet the needs of CWD.

Furthermore, teachers requested further training to learn about disability issues.

The findings, observations, as well as literature helped the author to develop recommendations. The recommendations were categorized into three groups, training, school services, and awareness. Each of these categories was then elaborated upon.

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List of Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BEOC	Basic Education for Older Children
BEP	BRAC Education Program
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CFS	Child-Friendly School
CFSIEA	Child Friendly Schools Inclusive Education Approach
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSE	Center for Special Education
CSID	Centre for Services and Information on Disability
CWD	Children with Disabilities
CWOD	Children without Disabilities
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
EFA	Education for All
GCWD	Guardians of Children with Disabilities
GCWOD	Guardians of Children without Disabilities
HO	Head Office
IE	Inclusive Education
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOPME	Ministry of Primary Mass Education
NFPE	Non-Formal Primary Education
NIES	National Institute of Educational Science
NPA	National Plan of Action
OPNEC	Office of National Primary Education Commission
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PIT	Provincial Implementation Teams
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SC US	Save the Children United States
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific Cultural Organization
USAID/DCOF	United States Agency on International Development/ Displaced Children and Orphans Fund

Chapter 1

Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

As an intern from June-August, 2004, the author was given an excellent opportunity to explore the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee's (BRAC) Education Programme not only in Dhaka, but throughout Bangladesh.

The following sections articulate the profound nature of disabilities as well as related global policy and historical milestones. Additionally, clarity of terms and a glance at some programs addressing disabilities are explored in the literature review section.

Ultimately the paper will center on the research that was conducted. The research problem and objectives were developed by the researchers and BRAC Inclusive Education Staff.

Statement of Problem

The Inclusive Education Unit realized that there was a lack of information on children with disabilities attending BRAC schools and knowledge of the instruction within these schools, the academic and social/emotional well being of all students, and the perceptions of the guardians.

Research Objectives

With this problem in mind, the following research objectives were pursued as part of the study. These research objectives were the guiding force for the findings which will be shared in chapter 5.

1. To investigate characteristics of the instruction in BRAC schools that have included children with disabilities
2. To assess the level of academic and social/emotional well being of participating children in inclusive BRAC schools
3. To describe the perceptions of the guardians of children attending inclusive BRAC schools

Data observed from field visits also are given, some key findings will be highlighted and recommendations will be made. It is important for the reader to keep in mind that although the author made every effort to sensitize himself to the Bengali culture and its environmental context, he understandably was unable to relinquish his western upbringing and culture.

1.2 Incidence¹

Six hundred forty million is a considerable number in any circumstance (Population Action International, 2003²). This number doesn't represent financial debt or gain; it represents women, men, and children. According to a 2003 report written by the World

¹ Note: Bangladesh became a member of UNESCO on October 27, 1972. So see the full list of members, visit http://erc.unesco.org/cp/MSList_alpha.asp?lg=E

² This source gave the 2003 world population which was estimated at 6.4 billion, this number was used in calculating the 10% that was shared above

Health Organization, this number would represent the estimated 10 percent of the world's population that has some form of a disability (Asia-Pacific, 2003). In Bangladesh there are an estimated 13 million people with disabilities (United Nations Economic, 2003). As for children internationally, a 2004 UNESCO survey calculated that the number of children under the age of 18 who have a disability ranges from 120-150 million. In developing nations it is believed that more than 90 percent of children with disabilities don't attend school (Caruzo, 2004). According to a Bangladeshi governmental estimate³, cited in a report by Dr. Gholam Kibria titled *Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Are we ready for it?*, there are approximately 1.6 million children with disabilities that reside in Bangladesh. Of this total, 80% are from rural areas (Centre for Services, 2004). With the feared increase in the number of children with disabilities due to such things as malnutrition, poor prenatal care, child labor, and HIV/AIDS, the world must continue to promote and recognize influential initiatives, one of which is the inclusion of children with disabilities (Caruzo, 2004, p.5).

As the inclusion of children with disabilities becomes a global phenomenon, there is hope. Hope that these children will be given equal opportunities, specifically with education and a chance for a bright future. It is also hoped that this will lead to a better understanding and appreciation by the able-bodied community.

One such organization which has taken on this huge commitment is BRAC. The educational sector of BRAC known as the BRAC Education Program (BEP) has been

³ Dr. Kibria's cited governmental estimate was found in the Bengali Primary Education Development Programme II (PEDP II)

responsible for addressing these issues. With the start of this sector in 1985, BEP's primary focus was on addressing children who had traditionally been excluded, largely girls. As the years passed, BEP continued to address the educational needs of marginalized groups. In 1997, BRAC began work on developing programs that would promote the inclusion, as well as meet the needs of indigenous learners. Most recently in 2003, BEP began to officially target and include children with disabilities into their schools and programs. As of August, 2004 there were four head office (HO) staff members with the support of other inclusive education head office staff addressing this issue. Initially there were approximately 6,500 students identified as having disabilities who were attending BRAC schools and programs prior to the official mandate. After BRAC passed a policy mandating the inclusion of children with disabilities, the number of students with disabilities in BRAC schools and programs increased drastically to over 14,000 children (Dewan, L., personal communication, June 10, 2004)⁴.

1.3 Policy Context

There have been many international policies that have addressed the rights of individuals with disabilities, particularly children and their right to education. These as well as many other policies have been the leading forces for addressing the needs of marginalized people, such as those with disabilities.

⁴ Statistics on CWD were given to researcher by Ms. Dewan (Inclusive Education Unit Manager & Children with Disabilities HO Staff)

The United States of America

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975 (PL 94-142)

- In 1975, the United States Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This allowed children with disabilities free access to public schools. Prior to PL 94-142 public schools had the right to refuse children with disabilities access to their schools. Equally important, PL 94-142 required schools to provide special services for children with disabilities, which included for the first time, children with certain learning disabilities (Smith, 2004).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1990 (IDEA)

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was developed out of the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act. IDEA was a government act that required all states in the union to locate and identify children with disabilities. States were also required to assess the needs of these children and develop Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for each identified child (Fleischer, 2001).

The United Nations

The UN Decade on Disabled Persons 1983-1992

- The importance of addressing disability issues was clear when the United Nations declared 1983-1992 as the Decade of Disabled Persons. Many important disability issues were addressed, including education. In 1989 an influential publication was distributed named *The Guidelines for Action on Human Resources Development in the Field of Disability*. This publication strongly promoted the independence of

individuals with disabilities, specifically recognizing “disabled persons as agents of their own destiny, rather than as dependent objects of Governments”. To help create an environment for the disabled that would promote independence and full integration, education had to be addressed, and it was. This publication supported the education of individuals with disabilities in the general education system and when applicable it suggested the preparation of certain individuals to learn skills, which would allow them to be economically self-sufficient (United Nations Mine, 2000, Ch. 7).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

- On November 20, 1989 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted. Article 2 of the Convention emphasizes the importance of non-discrimination. The Article specifically states “All rights apply equally to all children without exception. It is the State’s obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.” Even more specific to addressing children with disabilities is Article 23. The article reads “A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest possible degree of self-reliance and social integration possible” (United Nations International, 2002, p.5).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Conference on Education for All (EFA), Jomtien, Thailand 1990

- In 1990, UNESCO addressed the importance of providing basic learning needs to all children, youth and adults. In Article III of the World Declaration on Education for All, UNESCO highlighted the importance of promoting equity and having universal education access. In Part 5 of Article III, UNESCO specifically states “The learning needs of the disabled demand special attention. Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system” (UNESCO, 2001).

The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 1994

- In June of 1994, 92 government and 25 international organization, which accounted for more than 300 participants, came together to participate in a world conference on special needs education in Salamanca, Spain. Keeping in mind the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, the Salamanca Statement was developed. The statement presented some of the most influential recommendations of the time in regards to educating children with disabilities. Inclusion of children with disabilities was called upon to be the norm internationally. With inclusion in mind it was suggested that the general education school make the appropriate accommodation for children with disabilities. The Salamanca Statement goes on to state that inclusive education benefits all students. It is argued that teaching methods used to address the needs of children with disabilities enhance the learning of all children. One such style is child-centered instruction.

Furthermore, it was stated that inclusive education would help to reduce discrimination towards those with disabilities. The delegates of the Salamanca Conference made many suggestions throughout that statement for the international community to consider. One specific request was “to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling and to support the development of special needs education as an integral part of all educational programmes.” Additionally, the statement highlighted that the inclusion of children with disabilities was ultimately more cost effective for the educational system of a country than exclusion would be (Centre for Studies, para. 5).

Asia

The Asian and Pacific Decade of the Disabled Persons 1993-2002

- The governments of the Asian and Pacific Region declared 1993-2002 as the Decade of the Disabled Persons. The main goal of this decade was the promotion of full participation and equality of people with disabilities into mainstreamed society. A second decade of disabled persons (2003-2012) is now in place with the theme of “Positive Action for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities” which has three main principles: rights, organization, and independence for individuals with disabilities (Asia-Pacific, 2003).⁵

⁵ For a more detailed look at The Asian and Pacific Decade of the Disabled Persons 2003-2012 the reader is recommended to visit <http://www.apcdproject.org/countryprofile/bangladesh/decade.html>

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act 2001

- The Bangladesh Disability Welfare Act of 2001 was written to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. The education of children with disabilities (CWD) is specifically addressed within this document. In theory these guidelines laid out in Part D *Education of Persons with Disability* (PWD) support and create many educational opportunities for PWD, please refer to Appendix A.1 in the for a closer look at Part D (Bangladesh Persons).

Education for All: National Plan of Action II (NPAII) 2002-2015

- Bangladesh's NPA II came out if the original NPA I which spanned the period of 1991-2000. NPA I was inspired by the 1990 UNESCO World Conference on EFA, Jomtien, Thailand. Although the 2000 assessment found that progress was made towards Education for All, it was openly acknowledged that there was a lot more that needed to be done and that more time was needed. The goals and strategies of the 2000 EFA: Dakar Framework for Action, which was agreed upon by member nations, was designed to help countries reach EFA by 2015. These, as well as next steps identified in the NPA I, laid the groundwork for Bangladesh's NPA II. NPA II scheduled duration is from 2002 to 2015. Education of children on the margins is a primary focus on NPA II. In one section of the NPA the importance of educating children with disabilities is stressed. Please refer to Appendix A.2 for a closer look at the NPA goal that highlights educating children with disabilities (Parvin, 2002).

Primary Education Development Programme II (PEDP II)

- PEDP II was developed in 2002 by the Ministry of Primary Mass Education (MOPME), the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), and other concerned parties for a planned five year period 2003-2008. Notably one of its purposes is to support the above mentioned NPA II (Ahuja, 2004).

Component four, which can be found in Appendix A.3, can be seen as an avenue of support for the education of CWD. The report titled *An Assessment of Inclusive Education in Bangladesh* states that inclusive educational practices are addressed in PEDP II, these practices are specifically limited to disability issues rather than all marginalized groups, which some inclusive education definitions include. According to Dr. Ahuja and Dr. Ibrahim the PEDP macro plan specifically states that:

a special needs⁶ task force would be established to devise strategies to mainstream special needs children in primary schools. Annual events will be planned and implemented at the school level during education week to raise awareness of good health for good education, provide reference service for children with special needs, and facilitate early detection and inclusion of children with disabilities (Ahuja, 2004, p.23).

BRAC

BRAC Policy (August, 2004)

- BRAC's policy of the inclusion of children with disabilities limits each class to a maximum of 3 children with disabilities (physical, visual, hearing, speech,

⁶ Special needs in this context appears to relate to children with disabilities, which is different from BRAC's definition

intellectual) per school; severity is also considered when a child is included; at this point if too severe they will not be admitted. Ultimately, severity is based on a case by case scenario (Dewan, L, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

The policies have highlighted the global recognition of the rights of individuals with disabilities. One of those fundamental rights is the right to education. This right has moved from an emphasis on access to a struggle for inclusion.

1.4 Definitions of Terms

Prior to exploring the disability issues and more specifically, BRAC's inclusion of children with disabilities, it's important that terms are clearly defined. Below two terms are explored from different perspectives. Specifically, the terms disability and inclusion are addressed through definitions from the United States of America, the United Nations, Bangladesh, and BRAC. Additionally, a stipulative definition will be given to provide the reader with the definition the author will be using throughout the paper.

Disability

United States of America

- *Americans with Disabilities Act/ADA* (Fleischer, 2001, p.93)
 - “The ADA defines disability as: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, such as walking, seeing, hearing, learning, breathing, caring for oneself, or working.”

United Nations

- The United Nations recognizes the complexity of the term “disability” and that globally there is no agreed upon definition. The United Nations highlights that “disability is a socially created problem and not an attribute of a person.” The actual definition used by the United Nations is “any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being...” (United Nations Enable, 2003-2004, para. 1).

Bangladesh

- According to the Bangladesh Persons with Disabilities Act-2001, a disability is defined as “any person who, is physically crippled either congenitally or as result of disease or being a victim of accident, or due to improper or maltreatment or for any other reasons became physically incapacitated or mentally imbalanced, and as a result of such crippledness or mental impairedness, has become incapacitated, either partially or full, and is unable to lead a normal life” (Bangladesh Persons, para. 2).

BRAC

- BRAC is focusing on five main areas in regards to disabilities.
 - physical (mild, moderate, severe)
 - intellectual (mild, moderate)⁷

⁷ BRAC, at this time is not admitting children with severe intellectual disabilities

- visual (mild, moderate, severe)
- hearing (mild, moderate, severe)
- speech (mild, moderate, severe)

(Dewan, L., personal communication, June 8, 2004).

Stipulative Definition

- Although the definitions have many similarities, due to its clarity, the author will be using the United States ADA definition of disability mentioned above.

Inclusion

United States of America

- Although definitions vary in the United States for full⁸ inclusion, there are some key similarities.
 1. All students no matter what their disability are expected to attend general education classes, in a sense eliminating special education classrooms.
 2. Students with disabilities are given access and expected to attend their neighborhood school (which is essentially the school that students without disabilities in the neighborhood are attending).
 3. The main responsibility for the education of children with disabilities falls on the general education staff rather than the special education staff.

It is important to note that often in the United States full inclusion is confused with mainstreaming. Mainstreaming in contrast, is the placement of children with

⁸ Full Inclusion is the phrase most often used in the United States

disabilities into general education classroom for some, not necessarily all of the classes. Additionally in a mainstreaming model, the special education staff has more responsibility than the general educator in addressing the needs of these students (Hallahan, 2003, p.44).

- United Nations

The 1994 Salamanca Statement clearly lays out the United Nations' understanding of inclusive education. Part I of the Salamanca Statement highlights the fundamental principal of inclusive schooling (inclusion) as giving all students, regardless of their differences an opportunity to learn. Importantly it goes on to clarify that all children should be included into the general education classroom, unless, it is found that the regular classroom is not meeting the needs of the child. It is then found to be suitable for the students to be placed in special schools or classrooms (The Salamanca, 1994).

- Bangladesh

The Bangladeshi definition is taken from the NPA II which defines inclusive education as “ensuring access and enrolment of children with disabilities of physical/mental, social and ethnic nature to normal schools...”(Primary, 2002, p.16).

- BRAC

BRAC defines inclusive education as the process of addressing the needs of “all” marginalized learners (girls, impoverished children, indigenous children, children with disabilities, and many others) within the mainstream school, using all available resources to create opportunities for learning and preparing them for life (Dewan, L, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

- Stipulative Definition

Since there are notable differences in the way inclusion is perceived, the author will use BRAC’s definition, but with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of CWD.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The following literature selections were chosen to give the reader background knowledge on other inclusive education programs. These were specifically selected because of their geographic and economic relevance to Bangladesh. These selections will be revisited in chapter 7 when suggestions are made. Furthermore, it's recommended that the reader keep these cases in mind, as we are introduced to and explore the BRAC Inclusive Education Program-Children with Disabilities.

Eleweke and Rodda (2000) address inclusive education in developing countries. Examples of inclusive practices are given and factors for effective implementation are highlighted.

The authors first stress the magnitude of disabilities in developing countries. They indicated that the majority of the world's population with disabilities resides in developing countries. The authors estimate that of the population with disabilities 150 million of them are children and of this number only 2% are receiving some form of service.

Prior to exploring inclusive education practices the authors define inclusive education as the integration of most children with disabilities into the general education schools.

Additionally, they highlight the main principal as giving all children, even those who

differ from the mainstream population an opportunity to learn from one another in the same environment whenever possible. Furthermore, the authors stress the importance of addressing the individual needs of all children through appropriate teaching strategies as well as a partnership with the local community, who they consider a valuable resource.

The authors recognize that in many developing countries there are policies in place that address the importance of inclusive education. However, the authors found that despite the recognition, little progress has been made. Furthermore, they note that many developing countries have made steps to include children with disabilities (e.g. Peru, Mongolia, and South Africa). What's more, most of the inclusive practices have been done through pilot projects that don't reach the majority of the children with disabilities. One example that was highlight by the authors was the case of India. Although India has had a nation-wide program since 1974 called "Integrated Education for Disabled Children" only 60,000 of the estimated 30 million children with disabilities have been enrolled in this program and in many cases children are dismissed from the program due a lack of resources and support.

"Inadequate facilities and personnel training programmes, lack of funding structure, and absence of enabling legislation" (Eleweke, 2002, p. 113) were three concerns of the authors that impact the effective implementation of inclusion. Some of the highlighted points of each concern are listed on pages 25 and 26.

Inadequate facilities and personnel training programmes

- Basic materials (charts, maps, etc.) that could be used to support all students are not available in many developing countries
- Poor classroom conditions and large class sizes hinder the inclusion of children with disabilities
- Many children in rural communities are not using the few facilities that are available due to cost and distance, which results in them simply staying at home
- Support personnel for teachers, particularly with addressing the needs of children with disabilities are not available; teachers also have inadequate training on these issues
- Lack of professional support in identifying and diagnosing children with disabilities

Lack of funding structure

- The cost of providing services for children with disabilities could be two times as much as the cost for educating a non-disabled child
- It has been argued that the needs of non-disabled population must be addressed first
- Many believe that money spent towards such an endeavor will not prove to be fruitful, this attitude could be attributed to the lack of awareness of individual with disabilities and their potential in society

Absence of enabling legislation

- That policies which are enacted should have some form of “quality control” or monitoring to ensure its implementation
- It is suggested that there are mandatory laws with clear stipulations for the services which are to be provided

In concluding their article the authors refer back to the above mentioned areas of concern and stress the importance of addressing these. They also place emphasis on the importance of the community and specifically suggest “to ensure that the community at large is accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities, there should be parallel and complementary legislative measures in the fields of health, social welfare, vocational training and employment that support and give full effect to educational legislation.” (Eleweke, 2002, p. 120) Additionally, the authors highlighted the importance of inclusion and its ability to battle discrimination and ultimately provide education for all while developing an inclusive community.

Smith (2003) reports that prior to the 1990’s in Laos there had been little or no focus on educating children with disabilities. The first special education school was started in 1992 to address the needs of children with sensory disabilities. Following this school’s inception there was a push for an inclusive education project, what came out of this was a pilot project in a primary school located in the capital Vientiane. Some of the major players in the development of inclusive education were the Laotian Ministry of

Education, UNESCO, Sida (Swedish International Development Agency) and Save the Children UK.

The initial activities addressed in the pilot were creating and implementing more student-centered learning approaches and simply making the classroom more inviting for all students, including those with disabilities. Additionally, as the pilot went on it was evident to all parties that additional training was needed. These as well as other findings served as the foundation for what would become a national movement.

Based on what was gained from the pilot, a national plan was developed for inclusive education. In phase one, which lasted from 1995-2000 and was named the “National Experiment” 78 inclusive schools in 12 provinces were started. The major focus of this phase was the addition of inclusive schools each year and the development of Provincial Implementation Teams (PITs). The intention of PITs was to provide support services to schools within their respective provinces that had implemented inclusive education. Additionally, PITs were established to help encourage and facilitate the spread of inclusive schools within their provinces.

Phase two was started in 2002 and was expected to last until 2005. The main focus of phase two was to increase the number of inclusive schools nationwide, making every effort to reach all 141 districts in the country. Phase two also stressed the importance of transferring more responsibility to the PITs, creating a more sustainable effort. Some of the many activities which were expected to occur during phase two were continued

teacher training, making adaptations to the teacher training curricula if needed, the collection of data on children with disabilities in inclusive schools, as well having teachers share their experiences through articles in a newsletter.

Throughout these phases the team had to be conscious of developing the project specifically to meet the needs of Laotian population, this meant making sure that any international model they referred to was simply a reference rather than a duplication. The team found that Laos was one of the only nations in the region that was addressing inclusive education on a national scale. A specific example of the team addressing the needs of the Laotian people was its development of teacher aides to help educators address the needs of their classrooms, notably these aides came from village resources. Additionally, the project team had to address the communities, specifically parents of children without disabilities. Many of the parents and community members did not support the idea of inclusion. Through public awareness efforts the team was able to share with them the changing structure of the school and the teacher's pedagogy. It was specifically emphasized that the change in instruction would enhance all students' learning. With these efforts the parents and community members started to become more accepting.

One of the many lessons that have been learned since the beginning of the project was 'the importance of maintaining a fair balance between rapid expansion and quality educational provisions' (Smith, 2003, p. 33). The project team stressed the importance of reaching as many students as possible; however they mentioned that it is important that

when trying to reach more individuals that the quality of the project isn't compromised. A second lesson learned was 'the constant management of inclusive education.' The project team found that for many teachers, inclusive education practices were difficult to implement. The importance of continued management and training with a stress on less theory and more practice were found to be useful. Lastly, 'the encouragement of schools and their staff supporting one another' was identified as a crucial piece of implementing inclusive education. Having a support system in place for schools, administration and staff to share best practices and problem solve has been useful means of addressing concerns.

The Center for Special Education (CSE) which is part of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training's National Institute of Educational Science (MoET/NIES) as well as Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have worked together to develop an inclusive education project. This was of particular interest to the Vietnamese government because of their commitment to the United Nations 1989 Conventions on the Rights of the Child as well as other international policies. This project originated as a pilot project and has had some influence on the Vietnamese Ministry of Education to make inclusive education a national endeavor. Notably the majority of the project's funding has come from the United States Agency on International Development's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (USAID/DCOF).

The original project was initiated in 1995 by both CSE and CRS with the support of USAID/DCOF. It was recognized that as in many other economically deprived nations

that children with disabilities have limited access to schooling. In schools where children with special needs are given access, it is rare that their educational or physical needs will be addressed. Furthermore, families and community members often see these children as “burdens on society or sources of shame and pity” (Smith, 2003, p. 39). With these as well as other concerns in mind the initial focus of the project was to provide services, both monetary and educational to preprimary and primary schools and their communities in three Northern provinces which were chosen to include children with disabilities into their schools. Specifically, some of the services that were provided over a five year period were developing and providing training and materials for schools and their staff on inclusive education. These particular materials took into account the local conditions and the needs of the teachers and community. The project also emphasized the importance of creating awareness of disability issues in hopes to educate and sensitize both school staff and the community. In some cases teachers were encouraged to visit the homes of their students with disabilities so that they could have a better understanding of their daily lives. To help support these activities, resource centers were made accessible for all parties involved.

Over the initial five year period of this project, more than 2,500 children with disabilities were included in general education preprimary and primary schools. It was also found that the enrollment rate of children with disabilities in the project districts ranged from 80-85 percent. Lastly, it was found that through trainings, which focused on pedagogy and sensitization, teachers, parents, and the community in general were more accepting of the inclusion of children with disabilities.

In 2001, the Ministry of Education presented an outline for implementing inclusive education at a national level. The Vietnamese government foresaw inclusion reaching all of its 61 provinces. The government proposed different phases of implementation, one starting in 2002 and the other in 2005.

Lastly, in reflection the project team identified four key pieces that were crucial in the implementation of inclusive education practices. They were:

1. Awareness raising in the community, school and home
2. Teacher training and need for advanced knowledge and skills
3. Ensuring that education is individually appropriate
4. Clear guidelines and incentives from the national government on inclusive education (Smith, 2003, pp. 44-45)

In 1999 the Thai Government passed an educational reform act. Within this act there was new legislation which required free and accessible education for children with disabilities, general education schools were expected to open their doors to these children. Although accessibility was made available, there were still many children who were denied access or were excluded within the schools. Additionally, these children were not given the appropriate education they needed to succeed. With this in mind many organizations such as the Office of National Primary Education Commission (ONPEC), Mahidol University Institute for Nutrition Research, Save the Children US (SC US), UNICEF Thailand and others helped to develop the “child-friendly school”

(CFS). The CFS was developed to meet the needs of disadvantaged children who are traditionally marginalized such as children with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities and children of prisoners. What was initiated in 1998 as a pilot in 6 provinces and 26 schools grew to 346 schools by 2002. Some of the key principles that CFS centered on were the importance of child-centered approaches, having a safe and healthy learning environment and the recognition that learning not only occurs in school, but also in the home and community (Smith, 2003).

With the expansion of CFS came the development of a program with a central focus on inclusive education. This program was called the “Child Friendly Schools Inclusive Education Approach” (CFSIEA). CFSIEA was piloted in selected districts with a possibility of spreading nationally. Some of the principles governing CFSIEA were educating school and community members on how to better support disadvantaged children, training educators in child-centered teaching approaches, and learning how to provide children with life skill opportunities (Smith, 2003).

As of 2002, CFS and CFSIE had served approximately 80,000 students, an estimated one-third of these students were disadvantaged. Additionally, 346 schools were affected by this program and over 6,000 teachers were trained. Initial evidence for both of these models has shown a decrease in the dropout rates of disadvantaged students, an increase in continuing their education past primary school, and stronger relationships between students and teachers. Specifically, children with disabilities were given more opportunities to be included in the classroom and in social activities. The team also

found that there was a continued need for teachers to have training on addressing children with disabilities. Furthermore, an important piece that was identified was the principals' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities and how it influenced the schools success in CFSIEA. Lastly, the CFSIEA project developers stressed the importance of having a strong support system amongst community member, parents, and school staff and administration that's flexible and accepting to the projects goals (Smith, 2003).

These different pieces of literature have identified many important approaches to addressing the inclusion of CWD. Some of the common themes were the importance of child-centered approaches in inclusive classrooms, developing and providing training as well as materials for teachers, and creating disability awareness within the community. The reader is encouraged to be conscious of these common themes as we journey through the next few chapters.

Chapter 3

Bangladesh and BRAC Context

3.1 Bangladesh

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is a low lying country in southern Asia and the largest wetland in the world. Bangladesh is bordered by India to the west, north, and east. Myanmar also borders Bangladesh to its east, while the Bay of Bengal is found to its south. The history of Bangladesh is a rich one ranging from its absorption into the Mughul Empire in the 16th century to the British influence during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. One of the most influential events in recent Bangladeshi history was the 1971 War of Independence against Pakistan. This nine month war resulted in the independence of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) from Pakistan (U.S. Department of State, 2004).

Figure 1: Location of Bangladesh⁹



⁹ Note: From Bangladesh.com at <http://www.bangladesh.com/travel/maps.html>

With approximately 130 million people, Bangladesh is the eighth most populous nation in the world. Bangladesh is also one of the most economically deprived nations globally. The government of Bangladesh is a parliamentary democracy; the current Prime Minister is Begum Khaleda Zia who was sworn in on October 10, 2001. As for education, 55.9% of the school aged population attends school and a total of 41% are literate, 52% of these are male, and 31% are women (U.S. Department, 2004).

3.2 BRAC

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, more commonly known as BRAC was established in 1972 by Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed. Originally, its main purpose was to provide relief and rehabilitation to people of Bangladesh following the Liberation War. Over the years it has become one of the largest Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in the world with two main objectives, the alleviation of poverty and the empowerment of the poor (About BRAC, 2003).

Within BRAC there are many sectors addressing critical issues in Bangladesh such as economic development, social development, health, and education. For the purposes of this paper the BRAC Education Programme (BEP) and more specifically the Inclusive Education (IE) Unit and its work with CWD will be addressed.

In 1985 BEP started with a focus on addressing children who had traditionally been excluded, primarily girls. Within BEP there are two main models that BRAC uses, they are the Non Formal Primary Education Model (NFPE) and the Basic Education for Older

Children Model (BEOC) also known as the Kishor-Kishori. Initially, NFPE was developed to be a three year model specifically working with children who had never been to school or who had ceased their formal education. These children fell within the age range of 8-10 years. As the program evolved it became a four year model that covered the first through fifth grade curriculum material. The BEOC, which was developed in 1987, was meant to address the needs of older children. These children fell within the age range of 11-14 years. The original purpose of the BEOC was to provide a three year program designed to meet the primary academic needs of these children. More recently an initiative was passed to provide a similar grade 1-5 equivalency as in the NFPE schools, also within a four year time frame (Bangladesh Rural, 2004). Originally, most of the BRAC schools were found in hard to reach rural areas, however as BEP evolved, it began to reach into urban settings such as Dhaka and Rajshahi. Presently, there are more than 34,000 BRAC schools in Bangladesh (About, 2003).

Within these schools, each class has approximately 33 students. The majority of BRAC students come from deprived conditions and with BRAC's focus on girl's education, approximately 70% of the students are female. Within these schools, BRAC provides text and materials free of charge (About BRAC, 2003). These materials are developed by the BEP Education Development Unit, which considers the feedback of parents, teachers, students as well as others when developing their materials (Bangladesh Rural, 2004).

For the most part the BRAC teaching staff is made up of women (97%) the majority of whom are married and from the local school community. In most cases to teach at a

BRAC school the educator must have at least nine years of schooling. BRAC teachers are given both preservice and inservice training. The initial preservice training covers an intensive 15 day period. Teachers are also expected to attend “monthly refreshers” which are a day long. If a teacher is working in grades four and five they are expected to receive more training in the areas of English and Math. Additionally, prior to the beginning of each academic year the teachers are expected to attend a workshop to prepare them for the upcoming year. Lastly, the teachers are encouraged to use student-centered approaches, cooperative learning, and student participation.

The curriculum that the teachers follow pulls some of its key content from what the government mandates for its primary schools. Key concept areas in the curriculum for NFPE schools are Bengali, Mathematics, and Social Studies. English language is introduced in second grade. Teachers teaching grades four and five are expected to follow the government text in all subject areas. BEOC schools follow a similar path, however in grades four and five the students are taught health education and science.

The structural designs of BRAC schools vary based on location. Many of the schools use local resources such as mud and bamboo. The mud and bamboo can be used for the walls, while tin and thatched straw can be found on roofs. The floors themselves can be made of concrete or hard earth. In most cases these floors are covered with burlap. It’s important to note that within the majority of BRAC schools there are no desks and the students sit on the floor in a u-shaped pattern, while the teacher stands. These one room

schools have a minimum floor space of 360 square feet. The actual structure is rented by BRAC for a small price (About BRAC, 2003).

The reader is encouraged to visit Appendix B where there are some excerpts from observations made by the researchers when visiting both rural and urban school settings. These are intended to give the reader a sample of some BRAC communities and school environments.

Chapter 4

Methodology

The following chapter will help to set the context as well as give the reader a clear picture of the research methodology which was used. Key pieces such as an overview of the extent of BRAC in Bangladesh, a descriptions of the research sample and how it was chosen, an explanation of the data collection instruments, the process used for the research, and background information on the researchers themselves will be given.

4.1 BRAC in Bangladesh

As mentioned in chapter 1, there were approximately 6,500 CWD attending BRAC schools and programs at the inception of BRAC's policy to include children with disabilities. Additionally, there were more than 4,500 schools and programs catering to the educational needs of these children. It is important to note that this would suggest that over 4,500 teachers/staff had the opportunity to work with CWD. Table 1 provides a more detailed break down of the initial numbers of CWD in BRAC schools and programs (Centre for Services, 2004, p.8).

Table 1: Initial Number of Children with Disabilities

Type of school/ ed. program	Type of Disability					
	Physical	Intellectual	Visual	Hearing	Speech	Total
NFPE	2305	861	776	540	1133	5615
Pre-primary	307	88	73	40	175	683
PRIME	87	25	19	15	49	195
Community School	33	10	8	11	33	95
Formal School	9	6	7	3	11	36
Adibashi ¹⁰ School	41	1	11	4	6	63
Total	2782	991	894	613	1417	6687

Some of the most notable pieces of data from this table are the large number of children with physical and speech disabilities as well as the number of CWD who were attending NFPE and pre-primary schools. This data as well as the others will be useful when exploring the research which will be shared below.

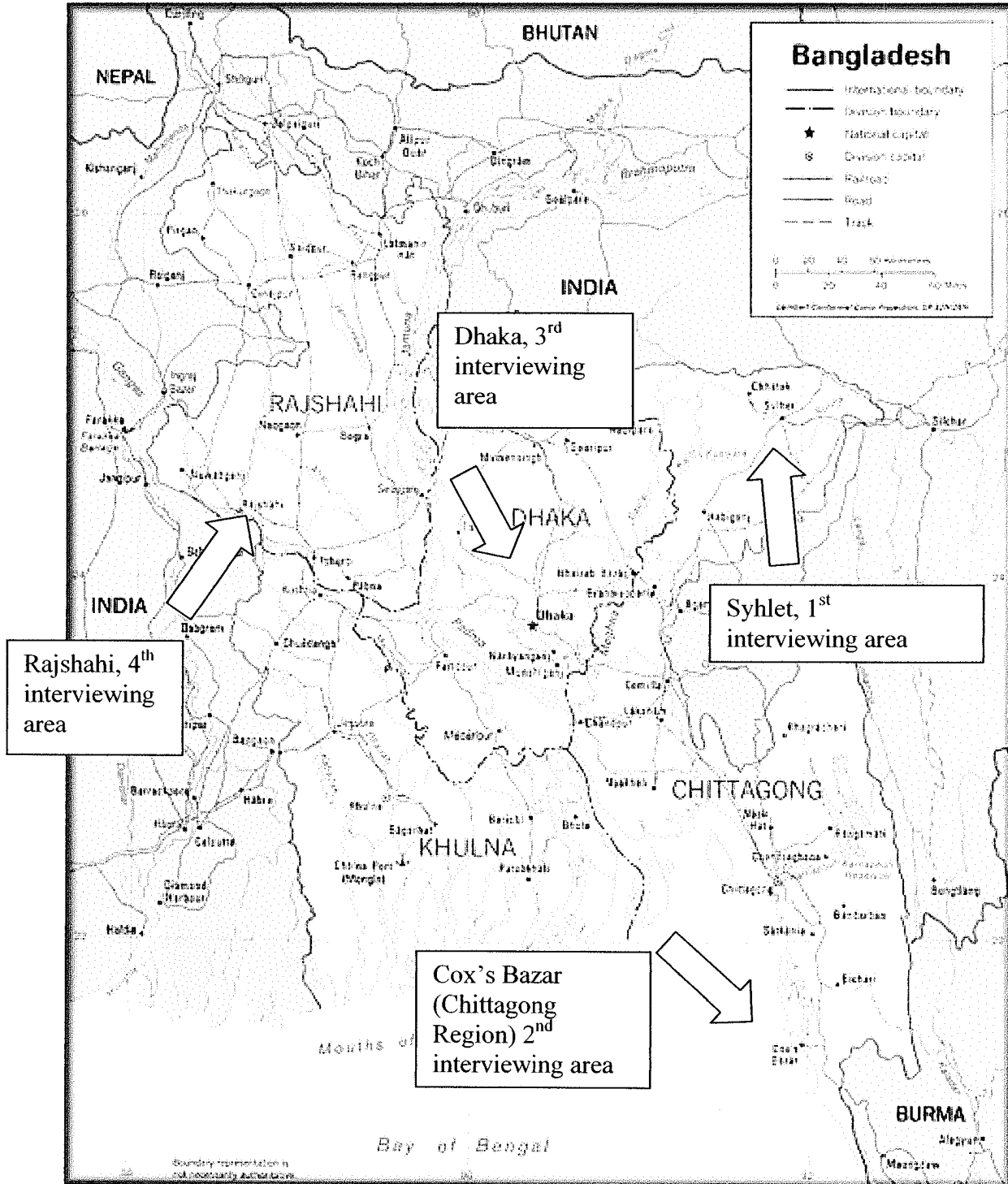
¹⁰ Indigenous Schools (also known as Education of Indigenous Schools)

As of June, 2004 it was estimated that there were over 14,000 CWD attending BRAC schools/programs nationwide. It is unclear at this point of the disability and school/program breakdown, as well as the number of teachers that have been involved since the implementation of this policy. However, it is important to keep in mind that with this policy in place, these numbers are expected to grow considerably, in turn affecting both teachers and communities throughout Bangladesh.

4.2 Sample

The districts for conducting this research were chosen by Ms. Dewan based on the reported number of CWD by the Regional Managers of BRAC. The schools within these districts were chose by the Regional Manger and his/her data on whether a CWD was attending a school or not. Please see figure 2 for a closer look at the interviewing regions.

Figure 2: Research Locations¹¹



¹¹ Note: From University of Texas Libraries at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/bangladesh_pol96.jpg

When selecting the teachers to be interviewed there was no specific format. After the school was selected, the teacher from that school was asked to be interviewed. In almost all cases there was only one teacher per school. However, there were a few cases in which pre-primary schools (two teachers at pre-primary) were visited. In these cases both teachers, if available were asked to be interviewed. Only in one case were both teachers available.

The selection of the students on the other hand was varied. In our initial selections we allowed the teacher to choose the CWD, especially if there were more than one. This also held true for the selection of children without disabilities (CWOD). We quickly realized that a random selection would be much more effective, this especially held true with the selection of the CWOD. In many cases the selected CWOD was a good friend of the CWD. We felt that the selection process could influence our findings, so we later chose to randomly select both CWD and CWOD. This was definitely a limitation of our research.

As for the selection of the guardians, this was solely based on the students who were interviewed. There was no preference for a particular guardian (e.g. mother, father); in most cases a guardian was chosen mainly on availability.

The table 2 outlines the type of locations which was chosen, the type of schools visited, the interviewers, as well as the interviewing participants. Additionally, some background

information has been given to help the reader have a clearer picture of the interviewing participants. For a closer look please refer to Appendix C.

Table 2: Totals from Interviewing Sample

Sample				
Locations	Type of School	Interviewers	Participants	
			Interviewees	Specifics
Syhlet: 6 Cox's Bazar: 3 Dahka: 3 Rajshahi: 2 Rural: 6 Urban: 8	NFPE: 5 BEOC: 6 Preprim: 3 Total: 14	T. Islam: 9 L. Dewan: 5 D. Donaldson: 14	CWD: 13	<u>Ages:</u> 0-5: 0 6-10: 5 11-15: 8 <u>Sex:</u> M: 2 F: 11 <u>Disability</u> ¹² Phy: 6 Vis: 4 Spch: 0 Hrng: 0 Mult: 3
			CWOD: 12	<u>Age:</u> 0-5: 0 6-10: 7 11-15: 5 <u>Male:</u> M: 5 F: 7
			GCWD: 14	<u>Mothers:</u> 6 <u>Fathers:</u> 8
			GCWOD: 13	<u>Mothers:</u> 6 <u>Fathers:</u> 5 <u>Other:</u> 2
			Teacher: 15	<u>Sex:</u> M: 0 F: 15 <u>Teaching Exp.:</u> 0-2: 9 2-4: 2 4-6: 1 6+: 2 Not Given: 1
			Total: 67	

¹² Please note that some of the children with multiple disabilities had speech and visual impairment

In summary from the information in table 2, 8 schools were visited in urban areas and 6 from rural areas. These areas were found within four regions throughout the country. The distribution of the schools visited could be considered a limitation when considering the findings of the Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID) in Chapter 1.2. CSID found that 80% of CWD in Bangladesh reside in rural areas. Although, this information is important and needs to be considered, the author believes that the locations chosen were appropriate because of the diversity of the four various regions and that BRAC has evolved to reach out to various urban areas since its primary focus on rural communities.

From the initial information found on disability distribution which can be seen at the beginning of this chapter, it appears that the school samples for this research are relatively representative of the BRAC school population. Although the majority of the schools visited were BEOC (6), which was an important school population, 5 were from NFPE, and 3 from pre-primary. The NFPE and pre-primary were highly represented in the disability distribution table found at the beginning of this chapter. Although the BEOC schools were not represented in this table, the Regional Managers felt that it was important that the researchers visit and conduct interviews there, mainly because of the number of CWD in these schools.

The CWD who were interviewed varied in age, sex, and disability. The CWD's age was representative of the school they were attending. For example if a CWD was in a pre-primary school s/he would be around 6 years old. As for the sex of the participants, the

overwhelming majority were female. This could be expected considering 70% of the BRAC student population is female (About BRAC, 2003). In regards to the disability sample, the majority of the students interviewed had some form of a physical disability, which is representative of the disability distribution table at the beginning of this chapter.

The CWOD was similar to the CWD when considering the age of the students is representative of the schools they were attending. As for the students' sex, it was definitely more even than the CWD pool. However, the researchers believe that the sex of these students doesn't necessarily play a crucial role in determining the findings for this research.

The data regarding the guardians of children with disabilities (GCWD) demonstrates that there were slightly more fathers interview than mothers. This does or doesn't necessarily represent the general population. As mentioned above guardians were chosen based mainly on their relationship with the student and availability. In this research study, the fathers were more accessible than the mothers. Notably, there were few cases when both the mother and father were present. In these cases the father spoke for the family. This could be representative of the Bangladeshi culture.

The information regarding GCWD holds true when considering guardians of children without disabilities (GCWOD). However, in this sample there were more mothers than fathers available and there were also two members of the extended family who were interviewed.

Lastly, all of the teachers interviewed were female. This could be expected considering 97% of BRAC teachers are women (About, 2003). As for their teaching experience, the majority of the teachers have two years or less teaching in BRAC schools. In each of these cases the teachers with two years or less experience were teaching in pre-primary (4 teachers), first class (NFPE/3teachers, BEOC/1teacher), and second class (BEOC/1). This would indicate that the experience of the majority of the teachers interviewed represents when a particular school was opened. However, this doesn't necessarily hold true in all cases, as in the example of a teacher from a first grade NFPE class in Rajshahi Urban who had been teaching for 11 years.

4.3 Data Collection Instrument

The interviewers used pre-designed, semi-structured questionnaires. These questionnaires were designed by Ms. Dewan, Mr. Islam, and Mr. Donaldson. For a complete look at the questionnaires please refer to Appendix C.

There are five separate questionnaires, one for each type of participant (CWD, CWOD, GCWD, GCWOD, and Teacher). Each questionnaire was specifically designed for the type of participant being interviewed. The table 3 outlines the five different questionnaires and their main content.

Table 3: Five Questions and Content

Questionnaire Type	Number of Questions	Content
CWD	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions on school and academic environment • Relationship with peers in both an academic and social setting • Academic support received
CWOD	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions on school and academic environment • Relationship with CWD in both academic and social setting • Thoughts on the inclusion of CWD as well as their academic abilities
GCWD	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions of school as well as suggestions, if any • Believe child's thoughts on attending school • Believe child's performance is including future expectations
GCWOD	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions of school as well as suggestions, if any • Believe child's thoughts on attending school • Impression of CWD attending their child's school and what the future will bring them
Teacher	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impression on teaching CWD • Teaching strategies used to support CWD learning • Support they have and need to support CWD in the classroom • Relationship between CWD and CWOD • CWD difficulties (academic and social)

The questionnaires designed for CWD and CWOD were very similar. In both cases the students were asked to give their impressions of their school and explain their

relationship with their peers. The major difference between these two types of questionnaires was the emphasis on CWODs' impression of inclusion and the capabilities of their CWD peers. The questionnaires given to the guardians of CWD and guardians of CWOD were also very similar. They both asked for them to reflect on their child's school and relationship with peers. The major difference in the questionnaires was the inquiry into the guardians of CWODs' impression of the inclusive model, as well as the capabilities of the CWD. Lastly, the questionnaire designed for the teachers, primarily focused on their impressions of inclusion and its impact on their instruction.

4.4 Research Process

The interviewing team was made up of 3 people, Mr. Tarequ Islam, Mr. David Donaldson, and Ms. Limia Dewan. Tareq Islam (Bengali), a graduate student of social work at the University of Deli, and David Donaldson (American) a graduate student of education (Center for International Education) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, worked together to conduct 43 of the 67 interviews in this study. During these interviews Mr. Islam acted as both interviewer and translator (Fluent in English). Due to the start of school, Mr. Islam was unable to complete the research with Mr. Donaldson. Mr. Donaldson and Ms. Lima Dewan, IE Unit Manager and CWD-HO staff member completed the remaining 24 interviews, acting as both an interviewer and translator. Ms. Dewan is Bengali and is also fluent in English.

Fourteen sets of interviews were conducted over a one month period from June 12 to July 12, 2004. These fourteen sets of interviews took place in 4 different regions (Syhlet,

Cox's Bazar, Dhaka, Rajshahi), 3 different types of schools (NFPE, BEOC, Pre-primary), and amongst 5 different types of interviewees (CWD, CWOD, GCWD, GCWOD, Teacher). For a closer look at the interviewing sample please refer to Table 2 and/or Appendix C. In most cases one school community was interviewed in a day, however there were a couple cases when more than one set of interviews were done. Typically, after a school was selected by the Regional Manager some BRAC staff members would escort the researchers to the school. In Syhlet and Cox's Bazar the researchers (Mr. Islam and Mr. Donaldson) traveled via motorcycle and when conducting research in Dhaka and Rajshahi the researchers (Ms. Dewan and Mr. Donaldson) traveled via a BRAC automobile.

The communities varied in accessibility and population based on their regional location and whether or not they were in an urban or rural area. The two journal excerpts below, as well as the ones located in Appendix B help give a picture of some of the various communities visited.

Pachimdarsha, Syhlet Urban
June 13, 2004

Pachimdarsha is considered an urban portion of the Syhlet District, but is set away from the city. At the moment it is only accessible by river boat from the city of Syhlet, presently there is construction on a bridge that will make the school and the community open to automobile traffic. The community itself is overall middle class and made up of agricultural laborers and some private business owners.

Khalabona Middle, Rajshahi Urban
July 7, 2004

Khalabona Middle BRAC School is in a rural area neighboring a couple of houses. This area is approximately 5-10 kilometers from the main road and just off an unpaved secondary road. The main industry in the area is rice cultivation.

In all cases when arriving in the BRAC school community the researchers first visited the school for 15-20 minutes. When at the school the student team leaders introduced their team of students, reciting their name and ages. The researchers also observed some instruction and made note of the school's instructional environment, as can be seen from an excerpt from the author's journal. It's also recommended that the reader visit Appendix B to explore three other school environments.

Sunmpur, Syhlet Sador
June 13, 2004

The school we visited today is designed in a traditional BRAC model with a tin roof, bamboo/grass/tin walls, concrete floor covered with burlap, as well as student work on display charts. There are a total of 33 students, 22 are girls and the other 11 are boys. Of these students 2 have disabilities (1 multiple, 1 hearing).

In almost all cases the interviewees were questioned while school was in session, although, this wasn't the case in the first interview in Syhlet, Medical Colony. At the

Medical Colony the researchers decided that rather than pull students from instruction to wait until school was over. However, what the researchers quickly discovered was that by waiting until school was over, all the students from that school became immediate onlookers. The researchers were concerned that these onlookers would affect the interviewees' responses. The noise created by the large number of people was not only distracting (noise level and people looking in the windows), but most likely influencing the responses of the interviews. With this in mind the researchers decided to conduct interviews during school hours.

Interviews were carried out both in homes and outside the schools. Interviews conducted in the homes usually took place in the home of the CWD. In all cases the families were extremely welcoming and accommodating. Based on the home, interviews took place in the living room or bedroom. Because of the time of the year the temperature was often extremely hot. Some of the homes were naturally cool, while others had fans. In some cases the family insisted on fanning us. As for the interviews that took place outdoors, shade was located and chairs were brought outside.

Typically, an interview of a student would take place in multiple venues, in most this was based on availability. Some interviews specifically took place in the child's home to make him/her feel more comfortable. When interviewing a CWOD in Syhlet, Medical Colony the girl was interviewed in her home where she felt much more comfortable. In another case, this time in Dhaka, the interviewing team conducted an interview in a CWD's home. While there the interviewers first played a board game with her to help

build trust. As for time, an average interview would take anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. Time was dictated by the nature of the student, some were more comfortable than others to share. When the students were more comfortable the interviews in most cases would take longer because of their elaboration. However, there were times when students when students finished quickly because they were comfortable answering the questions. Age also played a role in the length of the interview. The younger the student the more likely questions were rephrased or not asked at all. In some cases the length of the interview could also be determined by a student's disability. For example, in one case when interviewing a child with a cognitive disability, the interviewer had to rephrase many questions and ultimately asked the teacher for support.

Guardians were selected based off of availability. In many cases one and sometimes both guardians were working and unavailable. In these cases extended family were asked to participate. There were two case of this occurring, in one case a grandmother was interviewed and in another an uncle was interviewed. However, there were times when guardians were working and left work so that they could be interviewed. The location of the interviews varied. Some guardians preferred that we go to their home, while others were more comfortable with us conducting the interview either in the school or outdoors. The interviews of the guardians were their shortest in length and time.

When interviewing teachers, the researchers waited until school was over and most often conducted the interviews in the schools, but occasionally interviews were held in the teacher's home or in a student's home. Conducting teacher interviews in a student's

home was quickly realized to be a limitation. We felt that by doing this the teacher's responses could be affected by the on looking parents. On occasion there were some onlookers, but because of the teacher's authority few children would attempt to listen in. However, it's important to note that some pre-primary teachers were interviewed during school hours. The main reason for this was because there are two teachers in pre-primary schools so it was possible to interview one while the other was conducting class. Additionally, interviews with teachers were the most time consuming. The teacher questionnaires were the most involved. Lastly, it was difficult to dictate where an interview was held. The interviewers recognized that they were outsiders and wanted to be as accommodating as possible. Below are two excerpts from the author's journal that describes the interviewing environment of two school communities which were visited.

Medical Colony, Syhlet Urban
June 12,2004

Today the interviews took place in the afternoon in very hot and humid conditions. The teacher, CWD, and GCWOD were all interviewed in the school. While the interviews took place there were many community members looking on. It's also important to note that the CWD was very upset and even cried for a moment before being comforted, I'm afraid this could have been because of the onlookers. The other two interviews (CWOD and GCWOD) took place in the home of the CWOD, this environment was much cooler and there were fewer outside observers

Kholabona Middle Hargnam Pba, Rajshahi Urban
July 11, 2004

Today the interviews took place outside the school (about 30 meters away) next to a creek under a tree. The interviewers and the interviewees sat on stools. The temperature was mild. The interviews took place while class was in session. The teacher, however was interviewed after school was let out. As for onlookers there were some, but they were far enough away to eliminate any possible distractions, this included the BRAC staff member who escorted us.

Almost all interviews were conducted in Bengali. There were a couple of cases in which the local indigenous language was used to ask students or guardians questions. Notably the researchers attempted to translate responses into English in hopes to actively involve Mr. Donaldson in the interview process. However, at the first interview in Syhlet, Medical Colony, both Mr. Islam and Mr. Donaldson realized that translating was becoming a daunting task for not only for the interviewers but also the interviewee. It was decided that all the interviews done by Mr. Islam and Mr. Donaldson would be recorded with the permission of the interviewee and then translated into English. This proved to be an effective in capturing the interviewee's responses; however it limited Mr. Donaldson's ability to use his experience in education to ask follow up questions. When interviews were conducted with Ms. Dewan and Mr. Donaldson, interviews were conducted in Bengali or the local language. However, Ms. Dewan translated all the responses immediately into English, recordings were not done. The responses in English were later typed up by Mr. Donaldson. Notably, this interviewing technique allowed Mr.

Donaldson to be more involved in asking follow up questions. However, it was found that this was more time consuming during the interview, and without recordings some information may have been lost. Furthermore, when questions were asked they were rephrased or retracted based on the interviewers' discretion. This was important to note, because many of the participants came with various experiences and ability levels. For example, when interviewing a 14 year old child with a physical disability in Syhlet it was found that she was able to answers all questions in great detail. However, when interviewing an 8 year old child with multiple disabilities in Cox's Bazar it was found that she was unable to answer many of the questions, even after rephrasing.

After all of the data was collected with the support of Mr. Islam and Ms. Dewan the information was analyzed and findings were made by Mr. Donaldson. When determining the findings the author coded relevant questions that support the objectives of the research. These questions, which can be found in Appendix D.2 were coded by color:

- Blue: To investigate characteristics of the instruction in BRAC schools that have included children with disabilities
- Red: To assess the level of academic and social/emotional well being of participating children in inclusive BRAC schools
- Green: To describe the perceptions of the guardians of children attending

The findings from the questionnaires and observation will be explored further in chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Findings

The research findings are based on the three objectives stated in chapter four. The results are based on the analysis of the data from semi-structured questionnaires. Responses of the participants were tabulated by number and with brief descriptions. Additionally, the responses to the questionnaires were analyzed and coded for common themes that related to the research objectives. Please refer to Appendix C.2 for a closer look at the coded questionnaires and their contents. In addition to the questionnaires, observations and personal communications of the author are included to help interpret the responses.

These findings will later be used to support the recommendations presented in chapter 6.

1. To investigate characteristics of the instruction in BRAC schools that have included children with disabilities

Before exploring the findings it's important to keep in mind that all of the teachers knew the researchers were from BRAC. Additionally, in most cases the escorts for the researchers were figures of authority to the teacher. This is important because many of the findings below could have been affected by the researchers' relationship with BRAC.

Some of the notable findings which support this objective were taken from the interviews with classroom teachers. When explaining what it was like to teach a child with a disability all of the teachers indicated that they were in support of the inclusion of CWD.

One teacher said that she had a special place in her heart for students with disabilities, while three said that CWD have every right to be included in schools. Although they were supportive this didn't necessarily mean that teachers found inclusion to be an easy process, as is indicated in the quote below.

It is very difficult because my student is challenging, but I enjoy working with her. –
Arefa (P.P. Teacher, Syhlet, Sador)

The interview of this particular teacher took place at her home in the early evening. From the author's observations she seemed very sincere and interested in helping her students. With this in mind the author consulted a fellow researcher who concurred with his observations. Additionally, Mr. Islam explained that this teacher was truly interested in supporting her student with a disability and wanted to receive more support. Based on the classroom visits an overall observation can be made that the teachers were definitely supportive of the idea of inclusion, but the teachers are in need of support. The author also got the impression that the teachers were accepting of the policy change because BRAC is their employer, not necessarily because the teachers took the initiative to promote inclusion. Lastly, some of the teachers' responses may have been "watered down" knowing that the researchers were from BRAC.

When responding to things they've learned from teaching CWD, 12 of the 15 teachers indicated that they adapted their instruction to meet the needs of their students with disabilities. Teachers said that they gave extended time (2), preferential seating (2), and created some form of sign language (3) to communicate with children with hearing impairments. The other 5 teachers gave no further explanation. A clear example of

teacher adaptations can be seen in the Appendix D in the stories of Sazed, Suma, or Babul, as well as in the following quote.

Sometimes I'll write out information for Babul, give him more time and help him with reading separately. –Somer (NFPE Teacher, Dhaka Urban)

Through observations and time spent with BRAC it's thought that many of these strategies to adapt instruction have come indirectly from BRAC training. Many of the adaptations above are strategies teachers might learn from being exposed to student-friendly and student-centered instructional techniques. Although 12 of the teachers indicated that they adapted their instruction in some manner, 9 said that adapting their instruction was the most difficult thing they've had to do when teaching children with disabilities, as can be seen in the following statement.

Some of the difficulties I face are the extra time spent with the children with disabilities as well as having to speak loudly to the child with a hearing impairment. –Amena (BEOC Teacher, Syhlet Sador)

The researchers explored this area of adapting instruction by asking whether or not the class as a whole had been given instruction on appreciating individual differences. It was thought that this type of questions would highlight whether or not teachers were proactively addressing issues that may arise with the inclusion of CWD. Of the 15 teachers, 3 responded that they had. One teacher indicated that she was told by BRAC at the beginning of the year that she should incorporate this type of instruction into her

classroom. Another teacher explained that she simply addressed issues as they arose. As for teachers not giving instruction, 9 said that they simply don't discuss this with the students and 2 indicated that they see all of their students as equals. The large number of teachers not addressing sensitization issues should be looked at further, specifically if whether or not the lack of such instruction would affect the learning environment for both CWD and CWOD.

In response to a question on the relevance of the current curriculum as it relates to CWD, 14 of the 15 teachers indicated that the content of the current curriculum is appropriate for CWD. Only one teacher indicated that changes were needed, she specifically said that a specialized text for CWD would be beneficial. It's important to remember when looking at this finding that the majority of the teachers (9) have two years of experience or less. With such limited experience the author believes that it would be difficult to truly look at a curriculum and its effectiveness. Additionally, the BRAC teaching staff receives intense preservice and inservice training, but no formal pedagogical training. The lack of such training may limit the teachers' critical lens.

Moreover, when responding to whether or not their teaching strategies were child-centered, 9 responded that they were. Of these, 6 indicated that these methods were effective in teaching children with disabilities. One teacher said that she used pictures and posters to support child-centered learning and another teacher explained that she used pairing. Additionally, when responding to whether or not the teachers use cooperative learning, 10 indicated that they did.

Another important finding that relates to the instruction of BRAC inclusive classrooms was the teachers request for training on disability issues. When responding to what type of support was needed for teaching CWD, 13 responded by saying that training on disability issues would be beneficial (see quote below). The two other teachers indicated the need for assistive devices and one added that parental support was a must. Through discussions with BRAC staff it was found that the teachers up to that point had not been trained on disability issues. However, the staff did explain that there was a plan to train the teachers; however, they weren't sure when this would take place. Furthermore, it was found that many of the regional staff members were unfamiliar with such issues, leading the researchers to believe that little support by the local staff could be given to the teachers. In regards to the assistive devices (hearing aide, magnifier, wheel chair) that two of the teachers felt were important, it was found that BRAC was exploring the idea of providing assistive devices to students in need.

It would be beneficial if I had more training about dealing with children with disabilities. -Mohsana (BEOC Teacher, Cox's Bazar Sador)

In addition to the teachers interviewed, responses given by CWD are useful in addressing the instruction in inclusive classrooms. In response to whether or not their teachers gave them the required academic help they needed, all 13 indicated that their teachers did.

Once again the reader needs to be cautioned that the students were aware that they were being interviewed by BRAC staff. At times students were very nervous and afraid to

respond. Even after comforting, many questions were briefly responded to without in-depth explanation. However, we cannot rule out that these responses could be of true sincerity. For example, later in this chapter we will address how many of the students enjoy school which is less formal and traditional and more inviting.

My teacher helps me whenever I need it, as well as my friend. –Sazeda, (12 years old, NFPE, Dhaka Urban)

These findings provide a snapshot of the instructional environment of the BRAC inclusive classrooms, which were visited. The responses to the questionnaires indicate that teachers are supportive of inclusion and have adapted their instruction to meet the needs of CWD. These adaptations could be the indirect result of intensive preservice and inservice BRAC training, which promote child-friendly and child-centered instruction. Regarding child-centered instruction, it was found that some teachers believe that their child-centered instruction supports the needs of CWD. Furthermore, the request by teachers for training to learn more about disability issues shows the interest and desire teachers have in learning more ways to meet the needs of their children. Lastly, all of the CWD interviewed indicated their approval and acceptance of their teacher's instruction, specifically stating that they are receiving the required help they need. There could be many reasons for this overwhelming acceptance, some of these will be addressed in the findings below.

2. To assess the level of academic and social/emotional well being of participating children in inclusive BRAC schools

The majority of the findings for this research objective come from responses by children both those with disabilities and those without. However, there are some findings that were taken from the teacher and parent questionnaires. The results will be discussed in two areas of concentration, academic and social/emotional.

Academic

The information below highlights some of the academic findings, as they relate to both CWD and CWOD. These findings will help to outline the academic well being of all students.

When CWD were asked what they liked about school, 7 of the 13 interviewed said that they enjoyed studying. One specifically said that she enjoyed studying Bengali.

Additionally, one student indicated that she simply liked getting help. Other responses were not academically related, such as playing (5) and seeing friends/teacher (3).

Another important finding that helps to support the students' academic well being were the 6 teachers who believed that their child-centered teaching approaches have been effective in educating CWD. This helps to give a teacher perspective on the academic conditions within the classroom and their usefulness in meeting the needs of CWD.

<p>These methods have definitely been useful teaching my student with a disability. – Rita, BEOC Teacher, Syhlet Urban)</p>

Also mentioned and equally important are the acknowledgement of all students with disabilities who have said that they receive the required support they need from their teachers. However, there may be some contradiction in the findings in the sense that of these 13 students 4 mentioned that they had difficulty in class due to their disability. This could mean that these students are not connecting support in the classroom and their difficulty with their disability or that they possibly misunderstand either of the two questions. Whatever the reason, it is something that is important and should be considered.

In regards to CWOD, 9 of the 12 interviewed indicated that they enjoyed studying at school. Another student stressed her appreciation for singing at school. The remaining student responses reflected their interest in playing. All of the guardians of CWOD added that their children enjoyed being in school. Of the 13, 6 specifically said that their children enjoyed studying. One of these explained that their child particularly enjoys writing. The other guardians believed that their children enjoyed school because of their interest in playing.

In summary these findings have helped the researcher to conclude that the majority of the students, both children with and without disabilities enjoy studying at BRAC inclusive schools. Additionally, all of the guardians of CWOD responded that their children enjoyed going to school. What's more, the majority of the teachers that use child-centered approaches have found them to be effective when supporting the academic

needs of children with disabilities. These findings as well as others mentioned above, provide a better picture of the academic well being of children who attend BRAC inclusive schools. Through observations and informal discussions the author found that students overall are happy to be in school. The school itself appeared to be welcoming; the posters on the wall, cultural designs/artwork on the floor and walls, as well as the displaying of the students' work could be key factors in the students' interest in school and in studying. Additionally, small group work, the inviting u-shaped seating in the classroom, a small teacher-student ratio, and a designated time for cultural events could also add to their interests.

Social/Emotional

The following findings come from the questionnaires and some observations. The responses to these questions and the observations will help to determine the social/emotional well being of both CWD and CWOD within a BRAC inclusive classroom.

All 15 of the teachers interviewed indicated that the CWD and CWOD students interact with one another both socially and academically. Of these teachers, 8 simply said that the students will often play with one another or help each other with work. No other explanation was given. The author observed that the opportunities for children to interact with one another are representative of the traditional BRAC school model. This model promotes cooperative learning, cultural appreciation time, small class sizes, and an

overall sense of community. This environment would definitely allow for students to interact with one another.

To help determine whether or not students had been exposed to sensitization in the classroom the teachers were asked whether they had instructed the students on this issue. Additionally, the interviewers felt that this question was directly related to the social/emotional well being of the students. Of the 15 teachers, 3 indicated that they had done some form of sensitization or appreciation of differences. The quote given below by one of the teachers, frames the issue of sensitization as it relates to the social/emotional relationship of children with and without disabilities.

In the past the students used to tease children with disabilities, but due to continued sensitization/awareness of the children, they don't anymore. –Popi, (P.P. Teacher, Syhlet, Golopganj)

Some of the responses given by the CWD are significant in determining the social/emotional well being of the students. When asked whether or not the CWD had a best friend from class 11 of the 13 said that they did. Of these 11, 9 explained that this person was their best friend because of his/her kindness specifically when it came to helping them with their studies. Two of these 9 also said that their best friend would also help them to go to and from school. Additionally, of the total number of CWD interviewed, 1 was unable to answer the question and the other explained that she didn't play with anyone at school. From an informal discussion between the researchers it was determined that this girl was very shy and kept to herself and wasn't interested in playing with other children. Although this may have been due to her visual impairment, it's

difficult to know the reason. Furthermore, when CWD were asked what they liked about school, 11 responded that they enjoyed going to school because they had a chance to socialize. Of these 11, 5 specifically mentioned their enjoyment of playing and 3 indicated that they liked seeing their friends and teacher.

Not only were interests and likes asked, but also dislikes. It was hoped that by asking dislikes the students would have an opportunity to share some of their concerns, which would ultimately give the researcher a better picture of the social/emotional relationship within the inclusive classrooms which were visited. When asked about their dislikes as they relate to school 11 of the 13 participants claimed that they had no dislikes. In hindsight, this would have been an opportune time for follow-up questions to help explore this one-sided response. However, 2 students did share some dislikes. One explained that teasing was a concern and the other didn't like it when students questioned her ability.

To help get a better picture of the findings for this objective some of the CWOD questions were looked at more closely. There were actually a variety of findings that addressed the social/emotional well being in inclusive BRAC schools. For example when asked whether or not these students liked their classmates, all said that they did. Five of these 12 indicated that all of their classmates were kind and helpful, while two mentioned that they liked their classmates because they could play with them. In reflection it's possible that this lopsided response could be due to the question, possibly it was too general, which really only allowed for an either-or response, or the presence of

the BRAC staff could have affected the students' responses. There are many other speculations of why this response as well as others would be this one-sided. However, in this case it could simply represent that the students truly saw all of their classmates as friends. However, it's important to explore the reasoning behind this response as well as others in hopes to get an accurate picture.

When asked how the CWOD felt about having classmates with disabilities in their schools all 12 said that they were supportive of inclusive education. Of these students, 3 added that they believed it was the students' right to attend schools like theirs. The quote below highlights this point even further. This strong response was very interesting, especially in one case. When the interviewing team went to a Rajshahi school the CWOD who was interviewed explained that her students often had teased. However, the CWOD openly shared that he was very supportive of inclusive education and unaware of the teasing. This response could have been very sincere and it's possible that teasing didn't occur. If teasing did occur the CWOD could have thought that his classmate deserved to be in his school, but didn't relate his or his classmates teasing to his acceptance. This example was shared not to come to any conclusion, but rather to bring light to the situation and not assume that all of the responses are representative of what is actually occurring in the classroom.

I don't mind having a classmate with a disability in my class; I think she has a right to be here. –Shadequl (12, NFPE, Rajshahi, Urban)

Additionally, when asked whether or not these CWOD worked with CWD 11 said they did. Of these CWOD, two said that they study with CWD, one said that they work together in small groups, and another said that they helped the CWD with class work.

As for playing with CWD, 10 said that they did. Some of the activities which were mentioned were storytelling (1), hopscotch (1), role playing (2), board games (1), and cricket (1). Furthermore, CWOD were asked whether or not they felt that their classmates with disabilities were academically capable, 7 felt that they were just as capable as any other student. One of these students specifically said that his classmate is very knowledgeable.

Of the 5 students who didn't believe their classmates with disabilities were as academically capable as themselves, 3 believed that their classmates with disabilities struggled academically, and one of these students felt that too much attention was given to his classmate, which he believed disturbed the rest of the class. It could be concluded that although CWOD students are accepting of inclusion and welcoming to their classmates with disabilities, many still believe that they are not at the same academic level as their classmates without disabilities. This could be related to the type of disability the child has or it could be related to misconceptions about their classmate's disability. Moreover, when responding to what they thought CWD will do when they grew-up, 7 felt that their classmates with disabilities could achieve what they'd like, of these 3 explained that they would need support for this to occur. The other 5 responses gave very specific job titles (e.g. driver: 1, teacher: 3, office worker: 1), these students didn't indicate if the job which was suggested was related to their classmate's disability.

In summary, children with and without disabilities have many opportunities to work with one another during the school day. Many of these students play with or socialize with one another. Additionally, a high number of students with disabilities said that they had no dislikes and few identified problems with teasing. Furthermore, all students without disabilities stated that they believed that their classmates with disabilities had every right to attend school. Although these CWOD were so supportive, only a little over half of them believed that their classmates were academically capable. These findings as well as others mentioned above have given the researcher a good picture of the social/emotional well being of the inclusive schools which were visited, and will help to support the suggestions given in chapter 6.

3. To describe the perceptions of the guardians of children attending inclusive BRAC schools

Below are the findings of the perceptions of guardians of children with and without disabilities. This information will be broken up into findings from both sets of guardians. It is intended that these findings will support this research objective and support any related suggestions which will be made in chapter 6.

Guardians of Children with Disabilities (GCWD)

When responding to whether or not the guardians were pleased with their child's school all said that they were. Of these 14, 3 added that they were specifically pleased with their

child's teacher and another 3 said that BRAC offering a free education was great. The quotes below help to highlight some of the guardians' impressions of BRAC schools.

BRAC is doing extremely well especially BRAC teachers who pay particular attention to their students and they themselves are thoroughly observed by other BRAC staff, which is beneficial. –Ibrahim (father, Syhlet, Urban)

I think the location of the BRAC school is very convenient especially for my child who would normally have had a lot of difficulty due to his disability. Also, the quality of education that BRAC offers is much better than other schools. –Kajol (mother, Syhlet, Urban)

Although the guardians openly expressed their appreciation of their child's BRAC School 9 of the guardians indicated that some improvements to the school were needed. Two of these guardians suggested that it would be useful for their child to be provided assistive devices from BRAC. Two other guardians said that their BRAC School needed some structural changes, such as raising the floor to protect it from flooding and widening the windows to allow for more air and light. Another guardian explained that it would be useful for the BRAC teaching staff to have more formal education. Lastly, 5 guardians responded that it would be beneficial for BRAC to open other schools.

Additionally, 13 of the guardians believed that their children were pleased with their school, 3 of the guardians added that this was because they enjoyed studying, while another 8 said it was because their child enjoyed seeing their classmates. Only one guardian indicated that his child didn't enjoy going to school and that sometimes she'll try and make excuses not to go. No explanation as to why his child felt this way was given. Furthermore, 11 of the guardians interviewed believed that their child was doing well in school, 2 of these guardians shared that they were surprised by this. Of the two guardians who didn't believe their child was doing well, one said that his daughter was doing poorly, but at her potential. Another guardian explained that although his child was low performing, she is better off socially.

My daughter is doing very well and I'm actually quite surprised. I didn't think she would do that well, but now I feel that she has a chance at a good future. –Saraban (mother, Rajshahi Urban).

When asked whether or not these guardians believed that their child had a promising future, 12 felt that they did. One of these guardians specifically said that his child would be able to do small jobs. Another said that with support from BRAC to help his child become more self-sufficient he believed she could find a job. Of the two guardians who felt that their child would not be able to find work, one attributed this to his poor family and that his child was a girl. However, he did add that if his child is lucky she may be able to find work.

Guardians of Children without Disabilities (GCWOD)

When responding to whether or not these guardians were pleased with their child's school, all 13 said that they were. Of these guardians, 3 specifically said that they believed the quality of education was excellent. One of these guardians also said that they were pleased about the materials being free. Additionally, 2 guardians said that they were pleased that their child gets support from their teacher. Furthermore, all of the guardians felt that their child enjoyed school. Of these guardians, 6 said that their children enjoyed studying, while 4 thought that their children liked going to school to play with their classmates.

When asked whether or not these guardians were aware that there was a child with a disability in their child's school, 11 said that they were. Of these guardians, 10 added that they were supportive of the inclusion of these children. Moreover, 3 explained that they were surprised about the capabilities of the children with disabilities and that prior to their inclusion they didn't think they could be successful. This is clear in the following statement that one of the guardians made when responding to this question.

I definitely don't think it's a problem that a child with a disability is attending the local school and this shouldn't be a problem for the whole country.—Chaitanno (father, Syhlet Urban)

The two guardians who were not aware of a student with a disability in their school simply said they weren't aware, no further explanation was given.

Lastly, 12 of the guardians believed that with support and education, CWD could achieve what they'd like in the future. One of the guardians specifically said that the child in her community could do small jobs or work for the government. Another guardian believed that children with disabilities could be an asset to the country rather than a burden. One guardian felt that the CWD in her community wouldn't be able to achieve anything. She specifically said that due to the child's severe physical disability she is a burden on the community and her family. This GCWOD was in response to Sazeda whose story can be found in Appendix D. This guardian was very forward and open. When reflecting on this interview, the researcher/translator explained that this isn't an uncommon response and that she was surprised that there weren't other responses similar to this one.

Overall, these findings help provide a better understanding of the perceptions of the GCWD and GCWOD. In summary, the great majority of the guardians were pleased with their child's BRAC School. It was also shown that the guardians believed that their children enjoyed school. Equally important some guardians of children with and without disabilities felt that CWD had a promising future and some guardians even shared their surprise of how much a child with a disability could achieve. Lastly, it was observed that the guardians overall were excited to share their opinions and that they appreciated this opportunity. Additionally, it cannot be ruled out that guardians knew that the interviewing team was from BRAC and that this could have affected their responses, especially considering BRAC schools and materials are free of charge.

The findings from the questionnaires and observations have been helpful in pulling out key pieces which address the three objectives of this researcher. These findings as well as other information will be used to help support the recommendations which will be made in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

Recommendations

Chapter 6 will conclude this thesis by making recommendations. Prior to this it's important to recognize the amazing efforts the BRAC Education Program has taken to include children with disabilities into their schools. This is a huge undertaking that BRAC has welcomed. The accomplishments they've made in the short period of time since the policies inception is simply amazing. With that in mind the following recommendations have been made for BRAC's consideration. These suggestions will be based off of observations, professional experience, the literature from chapter 2, and the findings from chapter 5. Additionally, these recommendations will directly and indirectly address the three research objectives. The recommendations have been grouped into a general theme of support. Within this theme three sub-thematic areas, training, school services, and awareness will addressed. It's important to note that all of these suggestions have been made keeping the most important piece of education in mind, the learner.

Training

Training for teachers and staff is one of the main recommendations. This originated out of the 13 of 15 teachers who indicated that they would like specific training on disability issues. This type of training would also be very appropriate for regional BRAC education staff, who act as a support system to teachers. The training content could address a number of different things, most notably providing teachers and staff with a clearer understanding of disabilities and ways to accommodate them. From informal

discussions it was apparent that most educators and BRAC regional staff had very little understating of disabilities and how to effectively address the needs of the students. Training was clearly identified as an area of need in both the Laotian and Vietnamese inclusive education models discussed in chapter 2. In the case of the Laotian model it was recommended that the teacher training curricula be adapted to address disability issues. This may be something BRAC would want to consider. Altering teacher training to address disability issues would help teachers and staff to create a learning environment, lesson plans, and instruction which are conducive to all students. This knowledge could then be built upon by revisiting disabilities in BRAC's "monthly refresher" (monthly inservice trainings) and other trainings. BRAC trainings are an excellent venue for teachers who have students with disabilities to share their experiences and consult their colleagues.

Having an understanding of disability issues is crucial before tackling pedagogical related items, which is also recommended. The training BRAC has given the teachers in child-centered instruction has allowed them to make self initiated adaptations to their instruction to meet the needs of the children with disabilities, as was seen from the findings. Some of these adaptations were preferential seating, extended time, and sign-language. Although BRAC promotes child-centered instruction, classroom observations and professional experience indicated that it was more child-friendly. These classroom environments were inviting (e.g. student work on the wall, u-shaped design, educational posters on display), but with a teacher-centered instructional focus (teachers reading and instructing directly from a guide, students giving chorale responses). It's recommended

that BRAC build off of this well establish child-friendly environment and encourage more student exploration and discovery, as well as the promotion of differentiated instruction. These strategies will stimulate learning at all academic levels, specifically building off the knowledge and ability of each student. Furthermore, differentiated instruction will allow the teacher to use his/her knowledge to adapt instruction to meet the needs of each learner. With trainings and support, teachers can adapt their instruction to meet individual needs in the classroom. Notably these skills are not easy to adopt or incorporate, however with BRAC's strong infrastructure of available staff and monthly inservice training; there are possibilities for support amongst teachers and staff. This type of recommended instruction was found to be useful in the Laotian, Vietnamese, and Thai inclusive models in chapter 2. It was also stressed in the paper *Enhancing inclusive education in developing countries*. by author?

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School Services

In addition to training it's recommend that BRAC provide a paraprofessional for teachers who have children with severe disabilities. Having this support will not only help the teacher meet the needs of his/her students, but specifically address the student with a particular disability. Taking on such an endeavor could be costly, however at this point it's only recommended on a case-by-case situation.

Informal conversations indicated that there was a lack of clarity on identifying the types of disabilities students had and their needs regarding learning. It's recommended that BRAC hire professionals who would be responsible for diagnosing disabilities. These

professionals could come from BRAC (possibly a sector outside of education), regional non-governmental organizations, or possibly local medical centers. Through this diagnosis, proper steps could be made for the child's education and if need be health. This diagnosis would also be beneficial for the guardians, who with awareness could better meet the needs of their child. The importance of diagnosing children with disabilities was addressed in the a paper in chapter 2 by Eleweke and Rodda . The article specifically highlights the "lack of professional support in identifying and diagnosing children with disabilities" as an area of concern when having an inclusive education model .

To support the mobility and accessibility of schools it's recommended that certain structural adaptations be made. The initial statistics cited in chapter 4, indicated children with physical disabilities to be the largest disability group attending BRAC schools and programs. These statistics along with observations and interviews support the need for schools to make structural adaptations. Simple low cost adaptation using local resources can be made. For example the area outside of the school could be cleared of debris such as rocks and tree limbs, small ramps could be place in schools for children who have wheel chairs, hand railings could also be placed on a portion of the school wall to help children with physical disabilities to stand and sit, and a chair could be given to those who may find it difficult to sit on the floor. Furthermore, as new schools are being built it would be useful for BRAC to make wider windows and doors, which would allow for more light and fresh air, this would not only support children with disabilities (e.g. visually impaired, physically disabled), but all students. With better accessibility,

children with disabilities are more likely to find the environment more suitable for learning.

Awareness

Although it was found from the questionnaires that the majority of the guardians were supportive of children with disabilities and more specifically inclusion, it was observed that few had knowledge on disability issues. It's believed that educating both the guardians and community members on disability issues will not only encourage long term support for the school and its changing methodologies, but also support of children with disabilities within the community, especially as they enter the professional world. In the case of the Laotian inclusive model in chapter 2, public awareness was used to help explain the changing school model and its benefits to all students.

Furthermore, it's recommended that BRAC encourage guardian support groups for those who have children with disabilities. Support groups could possibly use a local school or BRAC center as a venue for discussion of concerns, issues, and successes. This could also be a place to learn more about disabilities and specifically how to meet the needs of their children. Additionally, a guardian support group could help encourage participants to become advocates for their children. Overall, having a support group might simply be beneficial for guardians to express their feelings, listen to others, and know that there are people they can turn to for support.

With this in mind it's recommended that BRAC encourage all of its students to be advocates for themselves, specifically those with disabilities. It's suggested that BRAC help to educate children with disabilities on what their disability is and what strategies and accommodations they can use to help support their academic needs. Additionally, it's recommended that children with disabilities be educated on their rights as citizens of Bangladesh. Guardians of these children would also benefit from this. By having a clearer understanding of their disability and their rights these children will learn to become their own advocates within the school and in their community.

In conclusion, the recommendations above were made keeping in mind the Bangladeshi context as well as the capacity of BRAC. With BRAC's solid infrastructure and acceptance within communities throughout the country, it's believed that these suggestions are appropriate. Overall, the intention of these recommendations is to help create a school/community environment that is conducive to all children and adults.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Policy Descriptions

A.1 Bangladesh Persons with Disability Welfare Act 2001

Part – D Education of the Persons with Disabilities (PWD):

1. To encourage establishment of Specialised Education Institutions to cater to the special needs of the special categories of children with disabilities, to design and develop specialised curriculum and write special text books and to introduce Special Examination System, if situations so demand.
2. Create opportunities for free education to all children with disabilities below 18 years of age and provide them books and equipments free of cost or at low-cost.
3. Endeavor to create opportunities for integration of students with disabilities in the usual class-set-up of regular normal schools wherever possible.
4. Undertake programmes for imparting vocational training for the disabled.
5. Arrange trainings for the teachers and other employees working with the disabled.
6. To incorporate/include appropriate articles and other related subjects in the introductory social science subjects aiming to create public awareness about the lifestyle and associated problems faced by the persons with disabilities.
7. To arrange easy transport facilities for up-down journey to school for the students with disabilities.

(Bangladesh Persons, Part-D)

A.2 Education for All: National Plan of Action II (NPAII) 2002-2015

NPA II Addressing Inclusive Education: Access and Equity in Education 7.2.1

- Inclusive approach: Children with disabilities (mental, physical, the hearing and vision-impaired), of ethnic/tribal minorities and those living in isolated areas have very limited scope of access to general primary level institution... The current emphasis is on inclusive education, which provides access to all children in regular schools.

(Primary,2002, p.73)

A.3 Primary Education Development Programme II (PEDP II)

The four major components of PEDP II are:

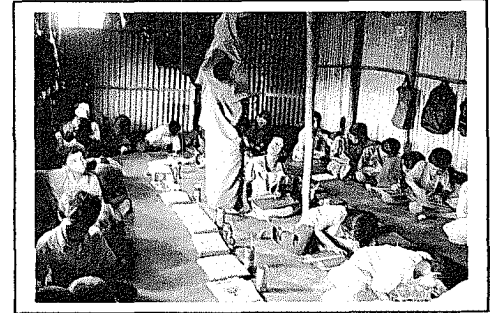
1. Quality improvement through organizational development and capacity building
2. Quality improvement in schools and classrooms
3. Quality improvement through infrastructure development
4. Improving and supporting equitable access to quality schooling

(Ahuja, 2004, p.22)

Appendix B: BRAC School Environment

Urban: Shahparayan 6 (NFPE, first class), Mirpur Dhaka

Wednesday, June 30, 2004



Community: The Shahparayan 6 School is located in the Mirpur area of Dhaka Urban. This is a heavily populated lower class area of Dhaka. Employment is not steady and many of the community members are refugees from India and Pakistan. It is not uncommon to hear Urdu or Hindi in this area.

School: The Shahparayan 6 BRAC School is only accessible by foot and is tucked away at the back of an alley behind a residence. The actual physical structure is smaller than the normal BRAC school with a tin roof and walls, small barred windows (this area has a large number of thefts, this is one reason the community decided not to put a fan in the school), and a concrete floor. Due to its secluded and densely populated area, there is little natural light and no electricity. On this particular day it was extremely hot reaching or surpassing 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Like other BRAC schools, the floor is covered in burlap with a design the teacher created. There is a chalkboard in front of the room and informational posters on the walls. Student work is also hanging on display. There are a total of thirty-six children, fourteen boys and twenty-two girls. Of these there is one child with a disability. This child (girl) has a visual impairment.

Urban: Malnichara: Tea Garden (BEOC, first class),

Syhlet Urban

Saturday, June 12, 2004



Community: The members of Malnichara are low income laborers in the tea gardens of Syhlet Urban (although this is considered urban, it very much resembles what a rural environment may look like). The average income of a laborer is 28TK a day for 8 hours of work, which is less than \$.50 (this is only enough to buy 1kg of rice). To overcome these hardships some families have collectively bought food and other items which suggest a close and supportive community. The homes of the community are set back from a main road and are only accessibly by foot or motorcycle.

School: The Malnichara School has a tin roof with a straw ceiling, mud walls and a canvass covered concrete floor. The school sits on the property of a villager and most of the students live only minutes away by foot. Because of its location and design, the school has a lot of natural light. As in the school above, there are informative posters and student work on the wall as well as a chalkboard for the teacher. Additionally, the students have decorated the room with colorful hangings, which were said to represent some local costumes. Of this first grade class there are a total of twenty-five students, ten boys and fifteen girls. Of these students there is one child who has a special need (visually impaired). The teacher of the school is a young woman single woman.

Rural: Middle Kuliapara (BEOC, second class), Cox's Bazar Sador

Thursday, June 17, 2004

Community: Middle Kuliapara is a working class community located in Cox's Bazar Sador. It is made up of agricultural laborers and small business workers.



School: The school in Kuliapara is a BRAC BEOC (Basic Education for Older Children) school, particularly focusing on the second class. The school itself is only accessible by foot or motorcycle/bicycle. The teacher of the school is a young woman who has a total of thirty students ranging in age of ten to fourteen. There are ten boys and twenty girls who attend the school and of these there is one child with a disability (physical). The actual school is look very much like a traditional BRAC School, there is a tin roof, thatched ceiling, concrete floor covered by burlap and bamboo/grass walls.

Appendix C: Interviewing Sample

Sample					
	Location	School	Interviewers	Participants	
				Interviewees	Specifics
	Syhlet Urban (Medical Colony)	BRAC BEOC (3 rd Class)	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	15yr, male, physical disability
				CWOD: 1	13yr, female
				GCWD: 1	Mother
				GCWOD: 1	Uncle
				Teacher: 1	Female, 8yrs. Teaching ex.
	Syhlet, Urban (Malnichara)	BRAC BEOC (1 st Class)	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	12yr, female, visual imp.
				CWOD: NA	NA
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Father
				Teacher: 1	Female, 8months teaching ex.
	Syhlet, Sador (Bibidul)	BRAC Preprimary	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	6yr, female, physical disability
				CWOD: 1	6yr, female
				GCWD: 1	Mother
				GCWOD: 1	Father
				Teacher: 2 ¹³	2 female teachers, each having 5 months experience
	Syhlet, Sador (Sunmpur)	BRAC BEOC (3 rd Class)	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	13yr, female, speech and intellectual disability
				CWOD: NA	NA
				GCWD: 1	Mother
				GCWOD: NA	NA
				Teacher: 1	Female, 6years teaching ex.
	Syhlet, Urban (Pachimdarsha)	BRAC BEOC (5 th Class)	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	14yr, female, physical
				CWOD: 1	12yr, female
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Mother
				Teacher: 1	Female, 3.5 yrs. Teaching ex.

¹³ BRAC Preprimary schools have two teachers, in this case both were interviewed together and responses were summarized, this will be considered 2 participants 1 interview

	Syhlet, Golapganj (Korh-gaon preprimary)	BRAC Preprimary	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	6yr, male, hearing and visual imp.
				CWOD: 1	6yr, male
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Mother
				Teacher: 1	Female, 4months
	Cox's Bazar, Sador (South Lamajipara)	BRAC BEOC (1 st Class)	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	15yr, female, visual imp.
				CWOD: 1	12yr, female
				GCWD: 1	Mother
				GCWOD: 1	Father
				Teacher: 1	Female, 4months
	Cox's Bazar, Sador (Middle Kuliapara)	BRAC BEOC (2 nd Class)	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	15yr, female, physical
				CWOD: 1	15yr, female
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Mother
				Teacher: 1	Female, 1.5 yrs teaching ex.
	Cox's Bazar, Sador	BRAC Preprimary	T. Islam and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	8yr, female, intellectual, speech, physical
				CWOD: 1	6yr, female
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Mother
				Teacher: 1	Female, 2yrs teaching ex.
	Tongi Dhaka, Urban (Data Para 3)	BRAC NFPE (2 nd Class)	L. Dewan and D. Donaldson	CWD: NA ¹⁴	NA
				CWOD: 1	9yr, male
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Father
				Teacher: 1	Female, teaching ex. not given
	Tongi Dhaka, Urban (Data Para Middle 2)	BRAC NFPE (1 st Class)	L. Dewan and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	12yr, female, physical
				CWOD: 1	10yr, male
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Mother
				Teacher: 1	Female, 3months teaching ex.

¹⁴ Due to this child's severe hearing impairment the interviewers were unable to interview him

	Mirpur Dhaka, Urban (Shahparayan 6)	BRAC NFPE (1 st Class)	L. Dewan and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	7yr, female, visual imp.
				CWOD: 1	7yr, female
				GCWD: 1	Father
				GCWOD: 1	Father
				Teacher: 1	Female, 4months teaching ex.
	Rajshahi, Urban (Khalabona Middle Hargnam Pba)	BRAC NFPE (1 st Class)	L. Dewan and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	9yr, female, visual
				CWOD: 1	9yr, male
				GCWD: 1	Mother
				GCWOD: 1	Grandmother
				Teacher: 1	Female, 11yrs teaching ex.
	Rajshahi, Urban (Khalabona Middle)	BRAC NFPE (5 th Class)	L. Dewan and D. Donaldson	CWD: 1	12yr, female, physical
				CWOD: 1	12yr, male
				GCWD: 1	Mother
				GCWOD: 1	Mother
				Teacher: 1	Female, 4yrs teaching ex.
Total	Syhlet: 6 Cox's Bazar: 3 Dahka: 3 Rajshahi: 2 Rural: 6 Urban: 8	NFPE: 5 BEOC: 6 Preprim: 3 Total Interviews: 14	T. Islam: 9 L. Dewan: 5 D. Donaldson: 14	CWD: 13	<u>Ages:</u> 0-5: 0 6-10: 5 11-15: 8 <u>Sex:</u> M: 2 F: 11 <u>Disability</u> ¹⁵ Phy: 6 Vis: 4 Spch: 0 Hrng: 0 Mult: 3
				CWOD: 12	<u>Age:</u> 0-5: 0 6-10: 7 11-15: 5 <u>Male:</u> M: 5 F: 7
				GCWD: 14	<u>Mothers:</u> 6 <u>Fathers:</u> 8
				GCWOD: 13	<u>Mothers:</u> 6 <u>Fathers:</u> 5 <u>Other:</u> 2

¹⁵ Please note that some of the children with multiple disabilities had speech and visual impairment

Is there a slate for me? 93

				Teacher: 15	<u>Sex:</u> M: 0 F: 15
					<u>Teaching Exp.:</u> 0-2: 9 2-4: 2 4-6: 1 6+: 2
				TOTAL: 67	Not Given: 1

Appendix D: Questionnaires

D.1 Five Types of Questionnaires

Questions for a Child with Disabilities

Fact Sheet:

Area: _____

Team In-charge: _____

Name of Student: _____

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Special Need: _____ Reason: _____ Degree: _____

School: _____

Standard: _____

Address: _____

Father's Name: _____ Father's Occupation: _____

Mother's Name: _____ Mother's Occupation: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Religion: _____

1. When did you join this school? Which standard?
2. What do you like about this school? Dislike? (Inquire to find a reason)
3. Do you think your school can be improved? If yes, how? If no, why not?
4. Who do you admire the most at home and in school?
5. Who is your best friend? Why is s/he is your best friend? (Inquire to find out whether the friend is a child with or without a disability and what both children like about each other)
6. What are some of your hobbies?
7. Who do you play with in school and at home? (Inquire about the play activity in school and at home and whether it involves physical activity and following rules. Do the other children give any allowances to her/him? Are there any adaptation in the play equipment that is being used, sounding ball, tactual material, etc.?)
8. Who do you study with in school and out of school?
9. Tell me about the difficulties if any you face in school and at home? (Inquire about the travel to and from school, interactions, learning process including availability of learning materials, aids, attitude and expectations of adults etc.).
10. Do your teachers give you the required help you need with your schoolwork? Who else do you approach if you have some difficulty at school?
11. Who do you approach if you're having difficulty with schoolwork at home?
12. How do other children help/interact with you in school and at home?
13. Do your teachers and parents scold you? What are you scolded for?
14. How often do your parents visit the school?
15. What would you like to do when you grow-up?

Questions for a Child without a Disability

Fact Sheet:

Area: _____
Team In-charge: _____
Name of Student: _____
Age: _____
Sex: _____
School: _____
Standard: _____
Address: _____
Father's Name: _____
Father's Occupation: _____
Mother's Name: _____
Mother's Occupation: _____
Ethnicity: _____
Religion: _____

1. What do you like most and least about your class?
2. Do you like your classmates? (Inquire more based off of their response)
3. How do you feel about having a student(s) with disability in your class? Do you think s/he should be studying with you?
4. Do you and the student(s) with disabilities ever work together? If yes, how? (Inquire to know whether there is or isn't a healthy mutual give and take relationship.)
5. Do you play with any children with disabilities in school (in class or outside in the field) and at home? If yes, what types of games have you played?
6. Have you had any disagreements (physical or verbal disputes) with a student(s) with a disability? What was the cause of the incident? Did anyone come and help settle your dispute?
7. Are your parents aware that there is a student(s) with a disability in your classroom? How do they feel about this? Are they supportive of you having a friendship with this student(s)?
8. What do you think about the abilities of your classmates who have disabilities? (If applicable inquire about strengths and needs)
9. What do you think the student(s) with disabilities will do when s/he grows-up?
10. What do you think you'll be doing when you grow-up?

Questions for Teachers

Fact Sheet:

Name: _____

Sex: _____

Number of Years Teaching: _____

Class Level Teaching: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Number of Children with Disabilities in Class: _____

1. What is it like to teach a child with a disability?
2. What are some things you have learned from teaching children with disabilities?
3. What difficulties have you faced while teaching children with special needs? What do you believe are some possible solutions?
4. Among the marginalized children in your class (children with disabilities, impoverished, girls, indigenous, etc.) which group do you find to be the most welcoming and challenging to work with?
5. Are there any cases where the language of instruction in the classroom is different from a child's mother tongue?
6. Does family instability (e.g. poverty, parental separation, immigrations, divorce, inadequate care giving, and violence/abuse) pose a barrier to learning? If yes please cite some examples.
7. What support within and outside the school do you need for teaching children with disabilities?
8. In your opinion is the content of the curriculum and the lessons relevant to the real lives and future of the children with disabilities? Please explain. What if any suggestions do you have?
9. Do the children with disabilities interact socially and academically with the other children? Please explain, citing examples.
10. Are there instances when other children make fun of or tease children with disabilities? If so how do you address these situations?
11. Has the class as a whole been given instruction pertaining to the appreciation of individual differences (e.g. children with disabilities, indigenous background? If so, how has this been done?
12. Are your teaching methods child-centered and interactive?
 - If yes, what are the key features of these methods? Do you face any difficulty in using these methods? How did you learn to use these methods? Have you found these methods to be effective for students with special needs?
 - If no, are you familiar with child-centered approaches. Would you like to learn more about them?
13. Do you promote cooperative learning activities?
 - If yes, how are the groups formed? How do you introduce the activities? How do you ensure that all the students are participating? How do you evaluate the children's learning in the groups? Do you think this type of learning is effective for the children with disabilities?
 - If no, are you familiar with cooperative learning activities? Would you like to learn more about them?
14. How do you plan your lessons to see that the needs of the individual learners are met and that no group (e.g. girls, religious minority, and indigenous tribes) is left out?
15. What kind of difficulties do children with disabilities face in learning the various subject matters? How do you address these? How is the pace of learning affected in your classroom? Is it affecting the learning of the other children?
16. How do you address the needs of children with multiple disabilities?
17. Who supports you the most in your teaching (BRAC, colleagues, and community)?
18. Do you ever get an opportunity to discuss best practices and concerning teacher issues with other educators? If yes who organizes these? How often do you meet and what do you discuss in meetings? Please share some examples of best practices and difficulties shared.
19. What do you think might be the reasons that some children experience learning difficulties or perform poorly? Do the children with disabilities approach you when there is any doubt?
20. How do you assess the learning of children with disabilities?

Questions for Guardians of Children with Disabilities

Fact Sheet:

Guardian(s) Name: _____
Ethnicity: _____
Child's Name: _____
Child's Class: _____
Child's Disability _____

1. Overall, what is your feeling about the school your child attends?
2. As parent(s), what difficulties are you facing in supporting the education of your child?
3. Are there children in the community who are not attending school? Who are they?
4. Does your child enjoy school? Why? Why not?
5. Does the community support the teachers and the school? What else can be done?
6. What improvements are needed in the school for all children to learn and develop well?
7. How is your child with a disability been performing in the school? Do you believe that they're performing at their potential? How does your child feel about attending school? What are common stereotypes/prejudices about the children with disabilities that you've heard? (For parent with a special needs child)
8. What do you think children with disabilities can do when they are older?

Questions for Guardians of Children without Disabilities

Fact Sheet:

Guardian(s) Name: _____
Ethnicity: _____
Child's Name: _____
Child's Class: _____

1. Overall, what is your feeling about the school your child attends?
2. As parent(s), what difficulties are you facing in supporting the education of your child?
3. Are there children in the community who are not attending school? Who are they?
4. Does your child enjoy school? Why? Why not?
5. Does the community support the teachers and the school? What else can be done?
6. What improvements are needed in the school for all children to learn and develop well?
7. Are you aware that there are children with disabilities at your child's school? If yes/no, what are your feelings about them attending your child's school? What has your child told you about their special needs classmate? What are common stereotypes/prejudices about the children with disabilities that you've heard? (For parent with non-special needs student)
8. What do you think children with disabilities can do when they are older?

D.2 Findings of Coded Questionnaires

Themes are coded by color. Each question that was used to develop the findings is highlighted below.

1. To investigate characteristics of the instruction in BRAC schools that have included children with disabilities
2. To assess the level of academic and social/emotional well being of participating children in inclusive BRAC schools
3. To describe the perceptions of the guardians of children attending inclusive BRAC schools

Questions for Child with Disability: ¹⁶

Fact Sheet¹⁷: Total: 13 students interviewed

Area: Sylhet: 6 (46%) Cox's Bazar: 3 (23%) Dhaka: 2 (15%) Rajshahi: 2 (15%)
Urban: 7 (54%) Rural: 6 (46%)

Age: 0-5: NA, 6-10: 5 (38%), 11-15: 8 (62%)

Sex: male: 2 (15%) female: 11 (85%)

Disability: physical: 6 (46%), cognitive: NA, visual: 4 (31%), hearing: NA, speech: NA, multiple¹⁸: 3 (23%)
Degree: severe: 3 (23%), moderate: 5 (39%), mild: 5 (39%)

School: Preprimary: 3 (23%), NFPE: 4 (31%), BEOC: 6 (46%)

Standard¹⁹: Preprimary: 3 (23%), First: 5 (39%), Second: 1 (8%), Third: 2 (15%), Fourth: NA, Fifth: 2 (15%)

¹⁶ In many of the questions below students gave multiple responses which have resulted in more response areas than the number of students interviewed

¹⁷ All percentages are rounded figures

¹⁸ Note: multiple disabilities incorporates in some situations students with both visual, hearing, speech, etc.

¹⁹ Both NFPE and BEOC are represented in each grade level

Father's Occupation²⁰: Self employed: 2 (17%), Laborer: 8 (67%) Service Provider: 2 (17%) 1 deceased

Mother's Occupation: Self employed: NA, Laborer: 1 (1%), Service Provider: 1 (!%), Housewife: 9 (82%), Not Given: 2

Ethnicity: Bengali: 11 (85%), Indigenous: 1 (8%), Pakistani: 1 (8%)

Religion: Muslim: 12 (92%), Hindu: 1 (8%)

3. When did you join this school? Which standard?

Of the thirteen children interviewed, the two students (15%) who were in preprimary mentioned that they started at the beginning of the year, the overwhelming majority of the students (10, 77%) explained that they had joined their school in first class, and one student (8%) shared she had joined in third class.

4. What do you like about this school? Dislike? (Inquire to find a reason)

When students were asked about their likes and dislikes it was found that the majority of the students had identifiable likes and very mentionable dislikes. In many cases students shared multiple things that they liked. Below are the likes that the students mention:

- Studying: 7 students
- Socializing: 3 students
- Playing: 5 students
- Getting help: 1 students
- Seeing friends or teacher: 3 students
- Bengali: 1 student
- General statement of liking the school: 2 students

In regards to dislikes, the students shared the following:

- No dislikes mentioned: 11 students
- People teasing: 1 student
- Questioning their ability: 1 student

*note: the same student shared the second and third points

3. Do you think your school can be improved? If yes, how? If no, why not?

When responding to this question three students made suggestion regarding the physical structure of the school, specifically two suggested better lighting and one requested a ramp. Another student thought that the instruction of the school could be improved. Five students thought that the school was perfectly fine and that no improvements were needed. Additionally, the interviewer chose not to ask the question to two students

²⁰ Note for both father and mother: self employed (e.g. business owners), laborers (e.g. farmers, rickshaw pullers, garment employees), service provider (e.g. shop keeper, hospital employee, maid), those parents not given are not calculated in percents

thinking that the student were not going to be able to answer the question. Lastly, two other students who were asked were unable to answer the question.

4. Who do you admire the most at home and in school?

When sharing who they admired at home the majority of the students (7) explained that they admired their parents, 5 students expressed their sole appreciation for their mother, and 1 said that she admired her sister the most. As for people the students admired in school, the overwhelming majority explained that they admired their teacher (10), 1 student said that she admired her friend, another said everyone, and one simply didn't share.

6. Who is your best friend? Why is s/he is your best friend? (Inquire to find out whether the friend is a child with or without a special need and what both children like about each other)

Of the girls who were interviewed 9 explained that they were best friends with another girl in class. The two boys interviewed explained that their two best friends were boys in the class. Of the girls and boys who shared that they had best friend, 9 of them explained that this was due to their kindness, specifically stating that they were very helpful when it came to their studies. Of these 9 students, two additionally explained that their best friends also helped them to and from school. Furthermore, one student shared that she didn't have any friends and that she didn't play with anyone at school. Another student was unable to answer this question.

6. What are some of your hobbies?

The following examples of hobbies were given: 2 singing, 1 story telling, 2 studying, 1 listening to music and watching TV, 1 reading, 1 playing tag, and two simply playing games. It's also important to note that 2 students were unable to answer the question.

7. Who do you play with in school and at home? (Inquire about the play activity in school and at home and whether it involves physical activity and following rules. Do the other children give any allowances to her/him? Are there any adaptation in the play equipment that is being used, sounding ball, tactual material, etc.?)

Ten of the thirteen students explained that at home they played with their friends. One shared that in addition to her friends she also plays with her sister. One student shared that she doesn't play with anyone, while two others didn't answer the question. When specifically sharing the types of games they played four said that they played local/regional games (e.g. clapping, Ludu /board game, hopscotch), while one said that she doesn't play any games due to her disability, but she does make a point to talk with her friends when she has a chance. Additionally, two other students shared that because of their disability they couldn't play certain games, specifically outdoor games.

8. Who do you study with in school and out of school?

This question brought a wide variety of responses. In school the students explained that they studied with friends (8), their teacher (5), a classmate not identified as a friend (1), sister (1), and one student mentioned that she has had the opportunity to study with all of her classmates. In regards to people who they study with out of school the students shared that they work with their parents (2), mother (2), sister (2), aunt (1), sister-n-law (1), brother-n-law (1), father (1), brother (1), friend (1), and one student explained that she simply doesn't study.

11. Tell me about the difficulties if any you face in school and at home? (Inquire about the travel to and from school, interactions, learning process including availability of learning materials, aids, attitude and expectations of adults etc.).

When sharing difficulties that they encountered in school, two mentioned that due to their visual impairment they were unable to see certain things, one mentioned being teased in school, and another mentioned difficulty with writing. Additionally, one student shared difficulty with hearing certain instruction, while two students explained that they had no difficulties in school related to their disabilities.

As for difficulties at home two children explained that they had trouble helping their family with household chores. One child with a hearing impairment and another with a visual impairment both explained difficulty with their particular disability at home. One child explained that on her way home from school she is often teased by her classmates. Lastly, one child shared that they had no difficulties at home that were related to their disability.

It's also important to note that three students did not answer the questions, and four other simply stated their difficulty due to their disability, but didn't mention whether or not it made things more challenging for them in school or at home (3 mentioned difficulty with mobility, 1 with visual impairment).

12. Do your teachers give you the required help you need with your schoolwork? Who else do you approach if you have some difficulty at school?

All thirteen children interviewed responded that their teachers give them the required help they needed. In regards to other people they approach for help seven students mentioned that they'll turn to a fellow classmate, while six students specifically mentioned that they would ask a friend for help. One student didn't respond.

16. Who do you approach if you're having difficulty with schoolwork at home?

The students shared a variety of responses, all of the people who they approached were relatives in some manner. Below are the family members that the students seek out for help.

- Sister 3
- Mother 3
- Brother 2
- Parents 2
- Brother-n-law 1
- Sister-n-law 1
- Aunt 1
- Cousin 1
- Didn't respond 2

17. How do other children help/interact with you in school and at home?

When explaining how these students interact with other children in school two explained that they approach their classmates when they need help, one explained that she doesn't interact with any students, and one child gave no response. The overwhelming majority of the students (9) simply said that everyone was very helpful. As for interacting with students at home two explained that they don't interact with their classmates, one shared that they interact with others when they need help with their schoolwork, two shared that some of their classmates may come and visit with them, while one child explained that at times her classmates will tease her out of school. Furthermore, the majority of the students (5) shared that their classmates were simply very nice and helpful.

18. Do your teachers and parents scold you? What are you scolded for?

Eight of the thirteen students explained that they weren't scolded by either their parents or their teachers. Only two students elaborated on their responses, simply saying that they didn't do anything bad. The remaining five students who were interviewed explained that at times they were scolded. One student shared that this was due to his lack of studying, one student said that when he doesn't do his homework properly he is scolded, and another student said that she is scolded when she deserves it.

19. How often do your parents visit the school?

Of the students interviewed four shared that their a parent will visit their school often, eight said sometimes, and one said never. Four students explained that their parent(s)

would visit the school for parent meetings; three said their parent(s) would visit to inquire about their child's studies, and one child explained that their parents would stop by the school only when there was a teacher request.

15. What would you like to do when you grow-up?

The students gave a variety of answers when sharing what they'd like to be when they're adults. Five students explained that they'd like to be teachers, three said doctors; one explained that he'd like to work for BRAC and another said that she'd like to be a businesswomen. Additionally, there was one student who wasn't sure and two students who didn't respond to the question.

Questions for Child without Disability

Fact Sheet: Total: 12 students interviewed

Area: Sylhet: 4 (33%) Cox's Bazar: 3 (25%) Dhaka: 3 (25%) Rajshahi: 2 (17%)
Urban: 7 (58%) Rural: 5 (42%)

Age: 0-5: NA , 6-10: 7 (58%), 11-15: 5 (42%)

Sex: male: 6 (50%) female: 6 (50%)

School: 3 (25%), NFPE: 4 (33%), BEOC: 4 (33%)

Standard: Preprimary: 3 (25%), First: 4 (33%), Second: 2 (17%), Third: 1 (8%),
Fourth: NA, Fifth: 2 (17%)

Father's Occupation: Self employed: 1 (9%), Laborer: 8 (73%) Service Provider
2 (18%), 1 deceased

Mother's Occupation: Self employed: NA, Laborer: 2 (18%), Service Provider: NA
Housewife: 9 (82%), Not Given: 1

Ethnicity: Bengali: 12 (100%)

Religion: Muslim: 11 (92%), Hindu: 1 (8%)

1. What do you like most and least about your class?

When explaining what they liked most about their class nine students shared that they liked to study, while six students explained that they enjoyed seeing and having fun with their friends and classmates. One student said she enjoyed singing, a boy mentioned his appreciating for dancing, while another student stressed her appreciation for his teacher. Lastly, a student said that she simply enjoys everything.

In regards to things that the students like the least, four said that there was nothing that they disliked, five gave no response, while one said shared her dislike of dancing, another explained that he didn't like being scolded.

2. Do you like your classmates? (Inquire more based off of their response)

Of the twelve students interviewed all twelve explained that they liked their classmates. Five of these students shared that all of their classmates were kind and helpful, while two mentioned that they like to play with their classmates.

4 How do you feel about having a student(s) with disabilities in your class? Do you think s/he should be studying with you?

All twelve of the students interviewed said that they were supportive of the inclusion of children with disabilities. Three of these students specifically said that children with disabilities should be allowed to attend their school, specifically saying it's their right. Additionally, one student mentioned that having students with disabilities in his class makes him feel good. Lastly, one student shared that more students with disabilities should be given the right to attend school.

9. Do you and the student(s) with disabilities ever work together? If yes, how? (Inquire to know whether there is or isn't a healthy mutual give and take relationship.)

Eleven of the twelve students interviewed said that they did work with students with disabilities. Of these students, two said that they study with them, one said that they work with their classmate during group work, another said they explain to the student in class assignments, and three shared that they play with the students with disabilities.

10. Do you play with any students with disabilities in school (in class or outside in the field) and at home? If yes, what types of games have you played?

Ten of the twelve students explained that they do play with students with disabilities. Two of these ten students said that they specifically play with these students in school rather than at home. Of these students a variety of games and activities were shared (storytelling 1, hopscotch 2, role playing 1, board games 1, cricket 1, local and regional

games 2). Two of the total number of students interviewed said that they don't play with children with disabilities, in both cases no explanation was given.

11. Have you had any disagreements (physical or verbal disputes) with student(s) with a disability? What was the cause of the incident? Did anyone come and help settle your dispute?

Ten of the twelve students shared that they hadn't had a disagreement with their classmates who have disabilities. The other two students who were interviewed did not respond to the question.

12. Are your parents aware that there is a student(s) with a disability in your classroom? How do they feel about this? Are they supportive of you having a friendship with this student(s)?

Eleven of the twelve students explained that their parents were aware that one or more of their students had a disability. Eight of these students said that their parents were supportive, one said that her parents encouraged her to be friends with her classmate with a disability, another student said their his parents thought the parents of the child with a disability should take their child to the doctors, while one other student said that his parents simply didn't share what their feelings were on the topic. One child of this interview group explained that his parents weren't aware of one of his classmates having a disability, he believed that their not knowing was due to them being very busy.

13. What do you think about the abilities of your classmates who have disabilities? (If applicable inquire about strengths and needs)

In response to this question seven of the students felt that their classmates with disabilities were just as capable as any other student. On of these students specifically said that his classmate is very knowledgeable in certain areas. Three of the twelve students answered believed that their classmates with disabilities struggled academically. One specifically said that the attention spent toward his classmate disturbs the rest of the class. Lastly, two students didn't answer the question.

9. What do you think the student(s) with disabilities will do when s/he grows-up?

This response brought a variety of answers. Seven of the students said that their classmates with disabilities can do whatever they'd like. Three of these students specifically shared that for them to achieve what they'd like they would need support. The other five responses were very specific, two of these students gave multiple answers (driver:1, teacher:3, office worker: 1, border guard: 1, computer programmer, 1).

10. What do you think you'll be doing when you grow-up?

As in question, this question also brought a variety of responses (doctor:4, teacher:1, driver:1,soldier:1, BRAC employee:1, principal:1, border guard:1, computer operator).

Questions for Teachers

Fact Sheet: A total of 15²¹ teachers participated

Sex: male: NA, female: 15 (100%)

Number of Years Teaching: 0-2: 9 (64%), 3-5: 2 (14%), 5+: 3 (21%)

School: Preprimary: 3 (21%), NFPE: 5 (36%), BEOC: 6 (43%)

Class Level Teaching: Preprimary: 4 (27%), 1st: 5 (33%), 2nd: 2 (13%), 3rd:2 (13%), 4th: NA, 5th:2 (13%)

Number of Students in Class with Disabilities: 1 student with a disability: 9 teachers (60%), 2 students with a disability: 6 teachers (40%)

7. **What is it like to teach a student(s) with disabilities?**

All fifteen of the teachers shared that they enjoyed teaching CWD. Some of the teachers specifically said:

- special place in my heart for students with such needs (1)
- at times it can be difficult, but I enjoy it (2)
- Like adapting her lesson (1)
- Good experience (2)
- Their student deserves the right to a proper education, like everyone else (3)

2. **What are some things you have learned from teaching students with disabilities?**

²¹ In Syhlet, Sador two preprimary teachers were interviewed simultaneously

Twelve of the fifteen teachers shared that they have adapted their instruction to meet the needs of their student with a disability. Two teachers explained that through this experience they have learned more about the personal needs of the CWD and one teacher said that this has provoked an interest for her in disability issues.

21. What difficulties have you faced while teaching children with disabilities? What do you believe are some possible solutions?

Nine of the fifteen teachers interviewed explained that the major difficulty they had was adapting their lessons/instruction to best meet the needs of the CWD. Three teachers shared that helping student go from one place to another was very difficult, while one teacher explained that it was difficult for her when the CWD was unable to understand her instruction. Additionally, two teachers simply said that they had no difficulties.

In regards to solutions, eight of the fifteen teachers gave solutions, six thought that it would be useful for their students to have assistive devices, such as wheel chairs and hearing aids. Two of the eight teachers suggested that their students receive proper medical treatment.

22. Among the marginalized children in your class (special needs, impoverished, girls, indigenous, etc.) which group do you find to be the most welcoming and challenging to work with?

In regards to the most welcoming individuals in the class, two teachers said girls and two said boys (although in this context they are not considered marginalized). When discussing the most challenging students, nine said that CWD are the most challenging, while one said girls and another said boys. Lastly, four teachers suggested that all students in their classrooms are treated equally and no child or group of children is more welcoming than another.

23. Are there any cases where the language of instruction in the classroom is different from a child's mother tongue?

Five of the fifteen teachers explained that there are times that they'll use the local/regional language in their instruction if the students are having difficulty understanding. Eight of the fifteen teachers simply said that they don't use another language when instructing. Two teachers gave no answers.

24. Does family instability (e.g. poverty, parental separation, immigrations, divorce, inadequate care giving, and violence/abuse) pose a barrier to learning? If yes please cite some examples.

Fourteen of the fifteen teachers said that instability wasn't a problem in their schools. One teacher did mention that instability was at times a problem in her school. She attributed this due to the migration of families.

25. What support within and outside the school do you need for teaching children with disabilities?

When sharing the type of support that would be useful to the teachers, thirteen responded by saying that a training on disability issues would be something of need. Two mentioned the importance and need of assistive devices and one felt that parental support was an area of need (Note: one teacher responded by giving two answers). Teachers did not specify whether this support should be within or outside the school.

26. In your opinion is the content of the curriculum and the lessons relevant to the real lives and future of the children with disabilities? Please explain. What if any suggestions do you have?

Fourteen of the fifteen teachers said that the current curriculum is appropriate, one teacher said that it would be beneficial to have a specialized text for CWD.

27. Do the children with disabilities interact socially and academically with the other children? Please explain, citing examples.

All fifteen of the teachers shared that the students interact together. Eight of the teachers explained that the students will often play together and help each other with their work.

28. Are there instances when other children make fun of or tease students with disabilities? If so how do you address these situations?

Thirteen of the teachers said that there are no instances of teasing of CWD. Three of these teachers explained that at the beginning of the year teasing was addressed. Two other teachers said that they promoted sensitization and awareness at the start of the year and that they no longer tease one another. Two of the fifteen teachers did say that at times there is teasing, one said that they try their best to address this behavior.

29. Has the class as a whole been given instruction pertaining to the appreciation of individual differences (e.g. children with disabilities, indigenous background, and gender)? If so, how has this been done?

Nine of the teachers explained that they do not give any specific instruction for recognizing and appreciating differences. Two of these teachers said that all their students are seen as equals so this form of instruction is not needed. Three of the fifteen teachers said that they have given specific instruction promoting the appreciation of differences. One of these teachers explained that in the beginning of the year local BRAC staff explained that they should instruct the students on differences. Another one of these teachers simply said that she addresses issues as they arise.

30. Are your teaching methods child-centered and interactive?

If yes, what are the key features of these methods? Do you face any difficulty in using these methods? How did you learn to use these methods? Have you found these methods to be effective for students with disabilities?

Of the fifteen teachers, nine felt that their teaching methods were child-centered and interactive. Seven of these teachers felt that a key component of their teaching was cooperative learning, one teacher explained that she uses pictures and posters to support child-centered learning and another teachers explained that she uses pairing. Of these nine teachers five shared that they learned these techniques from BRAC staff, the others didn't share. Additionally six of the nine teachers felt that these strategies were effective in teaching CWD.

*note: Six teachers didn't respond to the question.

If no, are you familiar with child-centered approaches. Would you like to learn more about them?

NA

31. Do you promote cooperative learning activities?

If yes, how are the groups formed? How do you introduce the activities? How do you ensure that all the students are participating? How do you evaluate the children's learning in the groups? Do you think this type of learning is effective for students with disabilities?

Of the fifteen teachers ten shared that they do promote cooperative learning activities. When explaining how groups are formed only two of these teachers responded. These teachers explained that they form groups based off where their students live (neighborhoods). As for how activities are introduced, there was only one response. The teacher who responded shared that activities were assigned to the whole class first then students were broken up into cooperative groups. Lastly, when sharing how the teachers evaluated their students learning, five mentioned that they give tests to check their progress, one said she monitors students through questioning, and another said through facilitation during group activities.

If no, are you familiar with cooperative learning activities? Would you like to learn more about them?

NA

32. How do you plan your lessons to see that the needs of the individual learners are met and that no group (e.g. girls, religious minority, and indigenous tribes) is left out?

Of the fifteen teachers five said that they do adapt their lessons to meet the needs of the individual learner. One of these teachers said that she provides the CWD with more time, she'll rewrite information and read separately to him. Another teacher said that she'll give extra time when needed and a third teacher explained that she plans each lesson taking into consideration which students may need extra support. Ten of the fifteen teachers said that they don't make any specific adjustments to their lessons to meet the individual needs of the learner. Three teachers explained that they do pay particular attention to CWD and five of these teachers said that they don't instruct to the individual because they see all of their students as equals. One of these five teachers specifically said that she was instructed by BRAC staff to teach to the group, not the individual.

33. What kind of difficulties do children with disabilities face in learning the various subject matters? How do you address these? How is the pace of learning affected in your classroom? Is it affecting the learning of the other children?

Ten of the fifteen teachers did share that the CWD does have some difficulty in learning. The other five teachers explained that their students with disabilities have no difficulties beyond that of any other non-disabled student. One teacher actually said that her student with a disability is very strong and excellent academically. As for the teachers that mentioned that there were some difficulties, two said their student had difficulty seeing text and the board (visually impaired students), two other teachers explained that due to their students disability they have difficulty with writing, both of these teachers explained that they give extra time to these students. Another two teachers shared that their student has difficulty in math, however, they didn't explain whether or not this was due to the child's disability. One teacher explained that due to their student's physical disability she has difficulty with mobility. Another teacher shared that her student has trouble comprehending the content of the lessons she teaches. This teacher explained that she doesn't address this student's difficulties, but feels that she feels it's important for her to be in class for the socialization piece. As for impacting the other students, she said that it doesn't. Lastly, one teacher simply said that a student of hers does have difficulty, but no explanation was given.

34. How do you address the needs of children with multiple disabilities?

Of the fifteen teachers, eight explained that they hadn't had any students with multiple disabilities. However, one of these teachers did say that if she had a child with multiple disabilities she would make sure to pay extra attention to the child. As for the teachers who did mention working with children with disabilities, six said they weren't given any training so they were unable to give examples of how to address the needs of their

students with multiple disabilities. Another teacher said that she creates easier questions for her student with multiple disabilities. The teacher explained that by doing this, she causes herself “extra fatigue.”

35. Who supports you the most in your teaching (BRAC, colleagues, and community)?

Fourteen of the fifteen teacher interviewed explained that BRAC staff supports them the most. One of these teachers additionally said that the community and her colleagues are equally as supportive. Additionally, one teacher of the total did not respond to the question.

36. Do you ever get an opportunity to discuss best practices and concerning teacher issues with other educators? If yes who organizes these? How often do you meet and what do you discuss in meetings? Please share some examples of best practices and difficulties shared.

Of the total number of teachers (15) interviewed, fourteen said that they do receive an opportunity to share best practices and issues with other educators. All of these teachers said that they had been given opportunities to share at the BRAC monthly inservice trainings called “monthly refreshers.” Three of these teachers added that they also have opportunities when BRAC staff visit their school. Another teacher said that she also has an opportunity to share through basic trainings. One teacher of the fifteen did say that she hasn’t been given the opportunity to share with others.

37. What do you think might be the reasons that some children experience learning difficulties or perform poorly? Do the children with disabilities approach you when there is any doubt?

Of the total number of teachers interviewed (15) six mentioned that they were unable to explain why their student with a disability had difficulties. They all said this was due to their lack of training. Eight of the fifteen teachers were not asked the question based off the interviewer/translator’s discretion (*in most cases the interviewer felt that this question was answered in previously asked questions). Another teacher simply did not answer the question.

As for the second part of the question explaining whether or not a student with a disability will approach them when they are having difficulty, six of the teachers said that their students feel very comfortable to ask questions.

38. How do you assess the learning of children with disabilities?

Of the teachers, two gave no explanation and eight said that they didn't assess their students with disabilities any differently. Three of these teachers specifically said that they were unaware of how to assess their students with disabilities any differently than the other students. One other teacher explained that she doesn't assess her student with a disability any differently because she mentioned the disability is physical in nature and doesn't impact the child's academics. Four teachers specifically said that when assessing the learning of CWD they give their students more time and another said that she adapts the content of her lesson to better suit her student.

Questions for Guardian of Child with Disability

Fact Sheet: A total of 14 guardians of children with disabilities were interviewed

Sex: male: 9 (64%), female: 5 (36%)

8. Overall, what is your feeling about the school your child attends?

Thirteen of the fourteen parents explained that they were pleased with their child's school and that they felt BRAC was simply good or of a better quality than the government schools. Another parent said that the location of the BRAC school was very convenient, especially considering their child's disability. Some additional comments that were made were: BRAC's offering of a free education (1) and that the teachers were very caring (3).

9. As parent(s), what difficulties are you facing in supporting the education of your child?

Four of the fourteen parents shared that they have no difficulties supporting their child; three of them said that this was due to BRAC not charging for schooling. Three of the total number of parents interviewed explained that they had some financial concerns. Four teachers explained that they have had difficulty getting their child to and from school because of their disabilities. Two explained that it's difficult supporting their child's learning at home. One specifically said that there is no one at home to help their child because everyone is illiterate. Another parent said that their child has difficulty studying because of her visual impairment. Lastly, two parents simply said that their child's disability causes some difficulty for their child's education, no further explanation was given (*note: some parents confirming that there were difficulties gave more than one answer).

10. Are there children in the community who are not attending school? Who are they?

Nine of the guardians interviewed explained that they were unaware of any children in their community not attending school. One father said that he was unaware, mainly because he works a lot and is not as in touch with the community. Two of the total number interviewed said that almost all of the children they knew were attending school. One of them attributed this to the parents' lack of knowledge. Lastly, three parents weren't asked this question, based on the interviewer's discretion.

11. Does your child enjoy school? Why? Why not?

Thirteen of the total number of guardians explained that their child does enjoy going to school. Two of these explained that their children are excited every morning and get their things in order by themselves; one even said that her son sometimes misses breakfast because he's so excited. Some of the reasons the guardians gave for their children enjoying school were: studying (3), seeing classmates (8), furthering education (1), future (1), and their teacher (1) (note: some guardians gave multiple answers, while others did not). One guardian of the fourteen total interviewed shared that their child doesn't enjoy going to school, and that sometimes she'll try to make excuses not to go, no explanation as to why the child feels this was were given.

12. Does the community support the teachers and the school? What else can be done?

Seven of the guardians shared that they did believe the community was supportive. Two guardians specifically shared that the community helps to monitor the attendance of the students. One of these two also said that the community will fix the school after it is damaged by a storm. Four of the fourteen guardians explained that the community is not supportive. One of these guardians explained that it would be helpful if the community would support the school in monitoring student attendance. Additionally, one guardian blamed the lack of community support on the town leader, who he said was illiterate and not interested in education. Lastly, three of the total interviewed were not asked the question based off the interviewer's discretion.

13. What improvements are needed in the school for all children to learn and develop well?

Five of the guardians interviewed explained that there was no need for improvements, everything was fine. Nine of the total number interviewed did believe that some improvements were needed. Two believed that it would be useful for their children if BRAC provided assistive devices. One thought that the BRAC teaching staff should have more formal education. Five other guardians explained that it would be useful for BRAC to open other schools (secondary, community, vocational, preprimary). Two others said that structural changes were needed to BRAC schools, such as raising the floor to protect it from flooding and widening the windows to allow for more air and light. One of these guardians also added that it might be beneficial for all of the students

if they had a bench to sit on and if there was a fan (note: some guardians who recommended improvements gave more than one response).

7. How is your child with a disability performing in the school? Do you believe that they're performing at their potential? How does your child feel about attending school? What are common stereotypes/prejudices about the children with disabilities that you've heard? (For parent with a special needs child)

Of those interviewed eleven believed that their child was doing well or performing where s/he should be. One guardian explained that he has seen an improvement in his child's speech while another shared that his child has learned strategies to deal with her visual impairment. Additionally, two of these parents openly shared their surprise that their child was doing so well in school. Of the total interviewed, three believed that their child wasn't doing well. One guardian believed that his child was performing poorly, but at her potential. Another guardian shared that although his child was low performing she is better off socially.

8. What do you think children with disability can do when they are older?

Twelve of the guardians interviewed felt that with support and proper education they can achieve in some cases whatever they'd like or a suitable job. One guardian specifically said that his child would be able to do a small job. Another said that with the help of BRAC to make his child more self-sufficient he believed she could find a job. Two guardians of the fourteen interviewed felt that their child would not be able to find work, one attributed this to his poor family and that his child is a girl, but he did say if his child's lucky maybe she can find a job.

Questions for Guardian of Child without Disability

Fact Sheet: A total of 13 guardians/family representative (in one case an uncle was interviewed because the mother was working and the father was deceased) of children without disabilities were interviewed

Sex: male: 6 (46%), female: 7 (54%)

1. Overall, what is your feeling about the school your child attends?

All thirteen of the guardians interviewed said that they were pleased about BRAC and overall felt that the school was simply good. Three guardians specifically said that the

quality was excellent. One of these guardians also said that they were pleased about the materials being free. Additionally, two guardians said that they were pleased that their child gets support from their teacher.

2. As guardian(s), what difficulties are you facing in supporting the education of your child?

Eleven of the thirteen guardians interviewed said that they have no difficulties supporting their child's education. Four of these guardians specifically said that this was due to the free tuition of BRAC. Two other guardians mentioned that their main difficulty was economic.

3. Are there children in the community who are not attending school? Who are they?

Eleven of the thirteen interviewed shared that as far as they knew, everyone was attending school. The other two guardians were not asked the question based off of the interviewer's discretion.

4. Does your child enjoy school? Why? Why not?

All thirteen of the guardians interviewed explained that their children enjoy school. Five of the guardians specifically said that their children enjoy studying, while four said playing with their friends and one said handwriting.

5. Does the community support the teachers and the school? What else can be done?

Six of the guardians said that there was community support. One of these guardians specifically said that his community has a volunteer organization that supports the school. Two guardians of the thirteen said that the community doesn't support the school. One of these guardians stated that only BRAC is supportive, it was commented that there needs to be more of a community support system. Lastly, five guardians weren't asked based off of teacher discretion.

6. What improvements are needed in the school for all children to learn and develop well?

Five of the total number of guardians interviewed by BRAC shared that no improvements are needed. One parents stressed her appreciation of BRAC and their not charging tuition or fees. The other eight guardians did make some suggestions for improvements of

BRAC. Some of the suggestions are: play area (1), fan (4), better educated teachers (1), better light (1), and more BRAC schools (3).

7. Are you aware that there are children with disabilities at your child's school? If yes/no, what are your feelings about them attending your child's school? What has your child told you about their special needs classmate? What are common stereotypes/prejudices about the children with disabilities that you've heard? (For parent with non-special needs student)

Of the total number of guardians interviewed eleven said that they were aware of children with disabilities attending their child's school. Ten of them shared that they were supportive of the inclusion of these children, three said that they were surprised at the capabilities of the children with disabilities and that prior to this inclusion they didn't think individuals with disabilities could be successful. One of these guardians recommended that BRAC provide education for the families in the community on disability issues. Two of the total number interviewed said that they were unaware of the inclusion of CWD. One openly said that he was supportive of the idea. As for stereotypes and prejudices in the community, two parents said that they were unaware of any, no one else responded.

8. What do you think children with disability can do when they are older?

Twelve of the guardians explained that with proper support and education the children with disabilities are capable of achieving whatever they wish. One of these guardians specifically thought that the child in her community could do small jobs or work for the government. Another guardian believed that children with disabilities could be an asset to the country rather than a burden. One guardian of the total interviewed felt that the child with a disability in her community wouldn't be able to achieve anything. She specifically said that due to the child's severe physical disability she is a burden on the community and her family. She went on to say that because of this burden and that no one will marry her she has nothing to live for.

Appendix E: Their Stories

Sazeda

12 years old

Class 1, BRAC NFPE²²

Physical disability

Dhaka



Sazeda lives twenty feet from the local BRAC school she now attends. Up until last year Sazed had only dreamed about going to school. Sazeda and her parents didn't believe that she would be allowed to attend any school due to her severe physical disability. Upon hearing about Sazeda and her situation some BRAC staff paid her a visit. Through observations and questions the staff saw how bright Sazeda was and how in many ways, very self-sufficient with her one limb. The staff saw how Sazeda was capable of writing with her foot, sweeping the floor and moving within her room. With these observations the BRAC staff believed that Sazeda was very capable of achieving at a high intellectual level and that they could support her physical needs within the classroom. Sazeda was very pleased and soon after began school.

Presently, Sazeda is enjoying school and her classmates. Her teacher shared that Sazeda overall is doing well. However, the teacher said that Sazeda does have difficulty with

²² BRAC did not have a Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC) school in Sazeda's community so she was placed in a first class at the neighboring NFPE school; her age has not been a factor, there are many students who are of the same age or older

writing, which she is given extra time for. Sazeda herself stated that an easel to hold her slate and a wheelchair (her cousin carries her everyday) would be helpful. Her father and mother who have a modest home both agreed that these assistive devices would be extremely beneficial. It appeared that the family themselves were financially capable (they had a new TV and DVD player) of supplying the assistive devices, but had very little if any knowledge in this area.

Even with some strong stereotypes of community members (e.g. she's a burden to her family, she'll never get married) Sazeda, who is a strong believer in herself, hopes to some day be a teacher. With the education BRAC is offering, she now has a chance to work towards her dream.

Suma

14 years old

Class 5, BRAC NFPE

Sylhet

Physical disability

Suma who is fourteen, has never been able to walk. As of now her father, who is a successful local businessman, carries her wherever she needs to go. At age ten, Suma started school at the local BRAC NFPE and is currently in fifth class. The



school is actually on her parent's land in a large clearing, so she doesn't have to travel far. However, next year her father is very concerned about his daughter's schooling. Since the BRAC school she's attending ends at class five, Suma will have to enter the local governmental school. Unfortunately, the only way for Suma to get to the school is by boat. Presently, her two sisters are traveling each day (20TK and 20min one way) to and from school. Her father who is very caring and supportive was a little skeptical about how his daughter would make it to school everyday.

According to her teacher and parents, Suma is very bright. Suma shared that she enjoys school and her friends very much. When asked to share if any school improvements were needed, she explained that more challenging material and instruction would be useful.

Ironically, the teacher who had up to that point not been trained to work with CWD

explained that she at times alters the content for the CWD in her class (there are two CWD in the class, Suma and a child with a hearing impairment). The attempt of the teacher to make adaptations is a clear sign of the dedicated BRAC teaching staff, unfortunately in this case it appears that the teacher has made the incorrect adaptation and may be associating Suma's physical disability with her intellect.

When asked about her friends and who she plays with, Suma explained that because of her disability she doesn't go outside and that occasionally someone will visit her to talk. Outside of talking and storytelling Suma appears to be stranded in her own home. The idea of a wheelchair was not even suggested by Suma or her parents. Her father whose cell phone was constantly ringing with business calls would surely consider purchasing a wheelchair and building a ramp to his house, if he was aware that it was even an option. These simple and low cost adaptations would bring so much freedom to Suma. With a wheelchair she'd be able to go to and from school without support and socialize with her classmates outside.

Suma hopes to work in an office some day. With the appropriate support and continued education, Suma can definitely be an influential figure in the Bengali workforce and society.

Babul

9 years old

Class 2, BRAC NFPE

Dhaka

Multiple disabilities (speech, hearing)



Two years ago when Babul found out that BRAC was starting a first class NFPE school in his community, he simply went to the local team office and told them that he'd like to enroll. Seeing his drive for an education, Babul was enrolled, despite his severe hearing and speech impairments²³.

In class Babul's energy is visible and carries over to his classmates, who he seems to get along with very well. When the interviewers visited, he and some friends volunteered to dance. He also demonstrated his writing ability on the board. His father explained that since attending school, Babul's speech has improved and that he often practices at home. His dedicated teacher shared some of the many innovative strategies she uses to teach Babul. She explained that to address Babul's needs she: stands directly in front of him, placed him in front of the class where the majority of the instruction takes place, created a form of sign language with him, gives him extended time, writes out questions if he can't hear them and helps him with his reading separately. These adaptations by the

²³ It was observed by one interviewer that Babul was able to hear a plane flying over the school

teacher are simply amazing, especially considering that up to that point she had not been given any training on teaching CWD.

Babul's father, a rickshaw driver, explained that a hearing aid and surgery were recommended by a local doctor. However, due to the extensive costs the parent's haven't been able to provide either. With Babul's drive to learn, an assistive device such as a hearing aid could open up a whole new world for him both socially and academically.

Babul is an inspiration to all. His energy and will to learn as well as his teachers creativity is an excellent example of how all students benefit when there are CWD in the classroom.