



BRAC GENDER POLICY

Towards Gender Equality

BRAC Gender Policy 2020

Table of Contents	Page
1. Background and Rationale of BRAC's Gender Policy	04
2. Purpose, Goal and Objectives of Gender Policy	05
3. Key Principles	06
4. Organisational Development	06
5. Programmatic Measures	08
6. Advocacy, Networking, Partnership	09
7. External Representation	09
8. Financing and Resourcing	10
9. Implementation and Accountability	10
10. Annex	12

List of Abbreviations

AoP: Annual operating plan
CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
BCV: BRAC culture and values
GA- Gender analysis framework
GFP-Gender Focal Person
GTA- Gender Transformative Approach
GBV- Gender Based Violence
VAWC: Violence against women and children
SHRC: Sexual Harassment redressal committee
GEWE: Gender Equality and women Empowerment
SDG- Sustainable Development Goals
PMS- Performance Management system
JD- Job description
NGO-Non-governmental Organisation
CSO-Civil society Organisations
BGS- BRAC Gender strategy
EMC-Executive Management Committee
SMC-Senior Management Committee
PCC-Programmme coordination Committee

Approved (date-month-year)

Introduction

1. Background and Rationale:

BRAC's vision is of a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential. Creation of this equal world is not possible keeping half of its population, the women and girls, disempowered. Women and girls do not enjoy the same status, power or access to and control over resources as men and boys. This situation is unacceptable. Principles of equity and social justice require us to work to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity for expressing and using their potential, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, caste, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, HIV status or disability.

Since its inception in 1972, BRAC recognized women as the "change agents" within the family and community for poverty alleviation. They play a vital role in ensuring their family's health, nurturing their children's education and, subsequently, ensuring the sustainability of their households. BRAC also realized that women's mobility, decision-making capability and access to resources were controlled by men on a day to day basis.

In order to achieve gender equality, redistribution of power through economic, social and political empowerment is necessary. There is a strong need for safeguarding, and therefore, BRAC aims to create a safe guarding culture at organizational level where staff give of their best, allowing them to develop, grow and achieve their full potentials without any gender based discrimination. Also safe guarding culture promotes the rights of the target beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders.

In addition, a men and boys engagement approach should be part of the process of empowering women and girls through addressing gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination and abuse that will be applicable for employees, participants and the wider community.

The Gender Policy is the guiding document for BRAC to be a high performing gender transformative organisation ensuring commitment at the highest level – to the staff as well as to the community. To be a truly inclusive and diverse organisation, we have also looked at the inclusion of other gender identities in this policy in order to address emerging needs. Promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, addressing VAWC, and mobilizing men and boys are the core priority areas of interventions and organisational commitments of BRAC. In Bangladesh, BRAC has been at the forefront of addressing gender inequalities and women are placed at the center of all of BRAC's interventions.

To ensure the revised gender policy reflects the organisation's priorities, values, as well as changing local and global contexts it is important to ensure that everyone takes ownership of

the process. It is also important that all members of BRAC actively engage in this effort to build a just and inclusive society promoting gender equality.

This policy considers the Human Rights Declaration and The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Sustainable Development Goals 5, 10, 16, and others (2016-2030) also provide guidance in the policy to accelerate efforts of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through adopting holistic action plans and proper implementation.

2. Purpose, Goal and Objectives of the Gender Policy

Purpose: The purpose of the Gender Policy is to create a clear vision for the organization in terms of what it would like to achieve for gender equality. It also aims to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to BRAC's:

- Programmes at all levels;
- Organizational culture and behaviors;
- and External representation..

Goal: The overall goal of the policy is to set the standard and principles of gender equality, under which all BRAC entities create systems, programmes, processes and practices for mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) towards BRAC's vision of a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential.

Objectives:

- a. clearly define the principles of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and take appropriate measures to adopt a shared vision to guide BRAC staff in their work with a clear direction to promote Gender Equality and equity at organizational and programmatic level;
- b. develop an organisational culture that demonstrates BRAC commitments towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1 **Gender equality, equity and nondiscrimination** are central to BRAC's activities and operation
- 3.2 **The empowerment of women and girls** is recognized as fundamental to BRAC's vision and mission
- 3.3 **Every individual understands clearly** and **demonstrates** attitudes and behaviours that promote gender equity and equality
- 3.4 **Adequate resources are allocated** to work on promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment
- 3.5 All work is continuously **monitored against gender indicators** based on different country contexts
- 3.6 The **cross-cutting nature of gender equality and equity issue** is recognized (and is both everyone's responsibility and an area that warrants/ deserves specialized attention and resources in programme development)
- 3.7 BRAC recognizes that the path towards gender equality must also take into account **gender diversity and intersectionality**, i.e. inequalities between women resulting from all other forms of embedded discrimination to which they may be subjected based on sex, gender, ethnic origin, class, nationality, skin color, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or political beliefs
- 3.8 **Men and boys are prepared to be active agents** in transforming the unequal society into an equal one

4. Organisational Development

- 4.1 Uphold gender equality, and integrate gender and diversity perspectives through organisational policies, procedures, systems and practices; ensuring all the relevant policies, plans and measures and systems related to organisational development is gender responsive
- 4.2 Strengthen the commitment to women's rights and diversity at all levels of the organization, guiding all staff and stakeholders on the importance of gender equality with an intersectional approach
- 4.3 Ensure that specialized gender functions, programmes and projects are in place and adequately resourced

- 4.4 Recognize knowledge related to gender concerns and gender analysis as one of the core areas of building capacity for staff and build capabilities throughout the organization
- 4.5 Develop core competencies that address core values and gender awareness and equity and equality
- 4.6 Build a common understanding around gender through induction and training
- 4.7 Ensure that all training across the organisation is gender-sensitive; and staff are trained on gender equality, intersectional perspectives and gender responsive behavior
- 4.8 Make all Human resource (HR) systems and process gender-sensitive and responsive, and integrate gender indicators into staff objectives in performance management systems (PMS) towards a gender responsive work environment
- 4.9 Prioritise gender sensitivity in all terms of reference documents, including Terms of references (TORs) for external consultants
- 4.10 Determine the nature, structure, and causes of gender imbalance in staff throughout the organisation and set targets for recruitment, retention and promotion of staff accordingly, particularly women in senior positions
- 4.11 Develop strategies for reaching gender targets, including: affirmative action; career development opportunities including development posts, training and internal promotion; family friendly and flexible working policies to allow staff to fulfil care responsibilities (including job-sharing, maternity, paternity and parental leave, and policies on childcare provision and/or subsidies for staff)
- 4.12 Promote a gender equity approach, aimed to ensure justice in the way women and men are treated and involving the adoption of special measures to tackle gender inequalities and to increase women's independence
- 4.13 Ensure child safe guarding, child protection, sexual harassment prevention and protection policies are in place and applied properly
- 4.14 Make best endeavours to provide suitable transport and accommodation when travelling for work purposes, particularly for women staff and persons with disability.
- 4.15 Ensure an equal pay for equal work value for all staff irrespective of sex, gender, religion, race, language, HIV status, disability, class, ethnicity and other sexual orientation and sexuality etc.
- 4.16 Ensure that access to and use of information technology is gender equitable
- 4.17 Encourage women's participation throughout the organisation and develop strategies to increase their representation at decision making levels

5. Programmatic Measures

BRAC is also committed towards gender mainstreaming in all programmes and enterprises. As a part of this process the following measures will be taken:

- 5.1 Support development of women's inclusion, leadership, socio-economic empowerment, and decision making of all levels from family to public spaces
- 5.2 Promote intersectional analysis of gender inequalities and transform power relations at every sphere of life
- 5.3 Promote participation of women and girls as active citizens
- 5.4 Promote positive masculinities for changing gender relations, patriarchal mindset/attitudes, norms and harmful practices to women and children, and support value for gender roles and responsibilities.
- 5.5 Recognize the impact of climate change and exploitation of natural resources on women and support them for different initiatives for ecological justice
- 5.6 Support women and children survivors/victims of violence and support protection of their human rights
- 5.7 Ensure that women actively participate in humanitarian work in all stages (preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitations)
- 5.8 Integrate gender equality and gender justice dimensions in all new programmes and project cycles (e.g. context analysis, planning, implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation, setting objectives, indicators and budgeting)
- 5.9 Ensure that throughout the proposal development process, the programs and projects seek to contribute towards gender diversity, gender equality and empowerment of the disadvantaged people, especially women and girls
- 5.10 Develop, promote, and use transformative ways of engaging men and boys for self-reflection and to promote gender equality and addressing VAWC
- 5.11 Integrate representation issues when developing BCC materials, reviewing text, pictures/ images/illustration to identify the gender norms communicating by the materials and to also pay attention to norms regarding age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and functional ability
- 5.12 Initiate cross-programme interventions to address emerging issues and priorities to promote gender equality and justice
- 5.13 Assess how interventions will impact women's access to and control over resources and assess whether the project/ programme will address women's practical needs or strategic interests or both (transformative potentials)

- 5.14 Develop Annual Operational Plans (AOP) based on gender objectives and indicators in achieving programmatic outcomes
- 5.15 Ensure that staff at all levels are able to identify examples of behaviour and attitudes that promote gender equality and those that reinforce gender stereotypes in programme delivery
- 5.16 Ensure gender as a cross-cutting issue in all key strategic pillars of BRAC nationally and internationally
- 5.17 Highlight gender perspectives in all research and evaluation findings of BRAC's core programmes and ensure that BRAC programmes/departments/enterprises develop ownership for collecting gender disaggregated data and capturing gender equality results for analysis and reporting
- 5.18 Ensure periodic documentation of gender mainstreaming lessons learned, challenges and good practices for learning and generating evidence advocacy

6. Advocacy, Networking, Partnership

Policy advocacy and networking will create a greater impact in reinforcing progress towards **gender equality**. Human rights defenders and policy makers have the data and evidence to support women's movements by guiding efforts to reach national and global goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, BRAC will build partnerships/allies, networking with like-minded organisations and forums at national, regional and global level.

- 6.1 Ensure women and girls participation with gender diversity and intersectionality in different forums/committees/meetings at local, national and global levels
- 6.2 Build partnerships/allies by networking at national and global levels with like-minded organisations who believe in gender equality and women's empowerment
- 6.3 Influence national policies for empowerment of women, gender equality and justice and for implementation of policies by upholding women's human rights at different levels
- 6.4 Support partners in developing their capacity to undertake gender analysis at the policy, program, and institutional levels, and to design and carry out programming that supports gender equality

7. External Representation

The external presentations and communications of BRAC should promote a balanced view of the issues surrounding gender equality and equity.

- 7.1 Ensure representation of women and girls at every setting with respect and dignity at programmatic and organisational levels of different countries
- 7.2 Ensure that gender analysis is central to the development of all marketing, fund raising, sponsorship and campaign work and incorporate gender equality and equity concerns into different activities wherever and whenever possible
- 7.3 Design and develop fundraising proposals/concept notes that consider gender equality and equity concerns and gender transformative approach (GTA)
- 7.4 Inform donors about BRAC gender equality goals and objectives and shared good practices of BRAC gender mainstreaming work and its positive impact , respecting rights of privacy
- 7.5 Formulate all materials and general communications to reflect BRAC's goals and objectives on gender equality and equity, challenging gender stereotypes and recognizing gender diversity
- 7.6 Use gender-sensitive language and images in all internal and external communications
- 7.7 Endeavour to participate in public events only if there is gender diversity, taking into consideration the context and purpose.
- 7.8 Whenever possible, ensure women's and girls' voices are heard in the first person, and ensure that women and men are proportionately represented during press briefings and other public relation activities
- 7.9 Ensure the organisation's internal and external communications and public engagement initiatives reflect the directions of this Gender Policy

8. Financing and Resourcing

Adequate financing and resource arrangements are crucial for implementing the Gender Policy to achieve gender mainstreaming across the organisation. Adequate resources will be allocated to all programmes, enterprises and departments to implement the Gender Policy throughout the organisation, and evaluate results All programmes will document the operational cost for this with the respective annual account, and present on it if and when necessary.

9. Implementation and Accountability

Each Staff of BRAC and BRAC entities, programmes, projects, divisions, departments, and enterprises is accountable for successfully implementing the Gender Policy. Each team under a

supervisor will be responsible in taking appropriate steps for ensuring gender mainstreaming to promote gender equality.

Every staff of BRAC and BRAC entities should make all necessary efforts to study and become fully acquainted with the Gender Policy and its implementation. This policy also requires to document or disclose reasons for not having diversity in any item mentioned in this document with the intention to review the reasons towards ensuring progressive increase in inclusion.

The policy will be available to all staff both in Bengali and English.

Specific roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

BRAC Governing Body

Members of the Governing Body will be responsible for the approval of the Gender Policy and its revisions to the previous version that reflect the changes in the organisational culture and development challenges.

The Governing Body will ensure accountability of BRAC senior management towards implementation of this policy.

Gender Steering Committee

The gender steering committee will ensure BRAC's commitment for effective implementation of this policy and coordination to ensure gender equality promotion and gender justice in alignment with BRAC's strategic priorities.

BRAC Senior Management Authority

BRAC's senior management (EMC, SMC, and PCC) will play a crucial role for the process of gender policy implementation and resource allocation. They will lead and be accountable for mainstreaming implementation processes in their own programmes/departments/enterprises. This will be different for BI. The Country Management Team (CMT) will play the leading role for gender policy implementation.

Gender Justice and Diversity (GJD) Programme

The main responsibilities of the GJD programme are to disseminate this policy, maintain an overview of the implementation of this policy within BRAC, set monitoring indicators for its implementation, and provide technical assistance to different levels of the organisation as necessary, either directly or by recommending external resources.

The division will play the role of secretariat to the Gender Steering Committee. It will work towards building ownership and accountability over the policy among staff at different levels. It will work with various programmes and departments to create gender goals and strategies to achieve those. It will follow up on the gender policy monitoring mechanism and the gender policy operational guideline action plans of all programmes and departments. GJD as secretariat of Gender Steering committee will be responsible for coordination among other BI countries. In addition, gender audit and climate survey and diversity strategy will be led by

HRLD and GJD will provide technical support.

Gender focal persons (GFP)

Gender focal persons (GFPs), consisting of mid management representatives from each programme, enterprise and department in the organisation, will work closely with GJD to incorporate the gender policy into the respective programmes interventions and organisational level. GJD will provide appropriate training to the GFPs to enhance their leadership capacity for integrating gender concerns into their respective programme operations. The GJD team will also provide appropriate guidance to prepare and monitor the gender action plans using the gender policy operational guideline and technical support to BI other countries GFP??

Safe Guarding Unit

The Safeguarding unit under the Human Resources Division will be responsible for providing all necessary technical support such as formulation of gender related policies and procedures (including Safeguarding Policy and other subset policies, such as, Child and Adolescent Protection Policy, Sexual Harassment Elimination Policy, Adults with Special Needs policy, Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Violence Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct).

This Safeguarding unit works to establish a high ethical safeguarding culture and practices within the organization to protect its staff, volunteer, partners, programme participants and community people from all kinds of abuse that is, against sexual harassment, intimidation and violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect and exploitation (“safeguarding”).

Annex: 01

Glossary:

Gender: Gender refers to socially constructed roles played by women, men and other gender identities that are assigned on the basis of sex. Gender is used as a means to distinguish similarities and differences between women, men and other sexual identity people without direct reference to human biology, but rather to the behavioural patterns expected of women and men and their cultural reinforcement. These roles are usually specific to a particular area and time.

Gender as crosscutting: Cross-cutting issues are topics that affect all aspects of a programme (i.e. cut across) and therefore need special attention. They should be integrated into all stages of programmes and projects, from planning through to impact assessment – but this has not always been the case. Therefore, it’s really important to keep in mind that gender will be always one of the cross-cutting issue at programmatic and organizational level of BRAC.

Gender Equity: Gender equity means the fairness of treatment for women, men and other sexual identities, according to their respective economic, social, cultural needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms

of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In order to ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate historical and social disadvantages and create a level playing field for both men women and other sexual identities. It is a means to achieve the ultimate goal of Gender Equality

Gender Equality: Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men, women and other gender identities, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women men and other gender identities are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women men and other gender identity have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender Equality is the ultimate goal in sustainable development

Gender diversity is an umbrella term that is used to describe **gender** identities that demonstrate a **diversity** of expression beyond the binary framework. For many **gender diverse** people, the concept of binary **gender** – having to choose to express yourself as male or female – is constraining.(Gender Rights Org.)

Gender justice as the full equality and **equity** between women and men in all spheres of life, resulting in women jointly, and on an equal basis with men, **defining** and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole.

Intersectionality: Awareness of all forms of discrimination combined and simultaneously experienced by women. This theory asserts that it is necessary to examine how the many forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, social class or disability interact to fully understand the experiences of women. All women are therefore not equal.(Adapted from CECI/Uniterra, Key Concepts for Equality Between Women and Men) .

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. This involves making gender perspectives – what women and men do and the resources and decision-making processes they have access to – more central to all policy development, research, advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of norms and standards, and planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. Both dimensions – gender representation and gender responsive content - need to be taken into consideration in all phases of project/proposal/institutional development¹.

Gender mainstreaming does not entail developing separate women's projects within work programmes, or even women's components within existing activities in the work programmes. It requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all programmes. Organisational culture and Organisational values are important in terms of creating work environments which are conducive to gender mainstreaming².

¹European Institute for Gender Equality

²Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), UNWomen

Practical Gender Needs: Practical gender needs (PGNs) are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. PGNs do not challenge, although they arise out of, gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate positions in society. PGNs are a response to immediately perceived necessities, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often inadequacies in living conditions, such as water, provision of health care and employment

Strategic Gender Needs: The necessary requirements of women and men to improve their position or status in the community or society is termed as Strategic Gender Needs. Addressing these needs allow people to have control over their lives beyond socially-defined restrictive roles. Strategic gender needs for women might include land rights, more decision-making power, equal pay and greater access to credit. This strategic gender need link with dignity and position of women at family, workplace and wider society.

Gender transformation refers to efforts to change gender and social norms to address inequalities in power and privilege between persons of different genders, in order to free all people from harmful and destructive norms. These norms include gender roles, expectations, stereotypes, and harmful attitudes, customs, and practices, including gender-based violence (MenEngage Alliance, 2017). Gender transformation enables individuals to question and critically analyze issues of gender inequality and injustice, and provides them with opportunities to challenge harmful norms.

Women's Empowerment: BRAC defines Women's empowerment as the capacity of women to be economically self-sufficient, with control over decisions affecting their life options, and to be free from violence.

Transformative Gender Programmes/Policies: These programmes/projects include policies and programs that seek to transform gender relations to promote equality and achieve program objectives. This approach attempts to promote gender equality by: 1) fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics, 2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment, 3) promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups, and transforming the underlying social structures, policies and broadly held social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Gender Socialization: The process of girls and boys, women and men learning social roles based on their sex, which leads to different behaviours and creates differing expectations and attitudes by gender. An example is that concept that girls and women do more household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, while boys and men do more work out of the home. Gender roles often lead to inequality.

Gender Gap: The gap includes the disproportionate difference between men and women and boys and girls, particularly as reflected in attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. A gender gap indicates gender inequality.

Gender Analysis: Gender analysis is a systematic way of looking at the different impacts of development, policies, programmes and legislation on women men and other sexual identity that entails, first and foremost, collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the population concerned. Gender analysis can also include the examination of the multiple ways in which women men and other sexual identity, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.

Gender Responsive Work Environment: Creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of the women. A gender responsive work environment recognizes several important differences in life circumstances and behaviours between female, male and other sexual identity staff and takes these differences into account when designing logistics, culture, practices in the institution that produce the best outcomes for women, men and other sexual identity.

Gender Responsive Behaviour: Gender responsive behaviour includes having a non-discriminatory attitude, promoting dignity and respect of all human beings irrespective of their sexual identity. Staff feel comfortable with this type of behaviour from their colleagues and are able to fulfill their career aspirations in a safe working environment.

Annex: 02

History of BRAC's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

As an Organisation, BRAC continues to focus its interventions towards women and endeavors to adopt in all its practices a gender-sensitive approach that takes into account the inequalities prevalent in society. Towards this end, in 1997, BRAC adopted a gender policy with the aim of achieving gender equality in a systematic manner both within the organisation and in its scope of work. The policy provides the necessary guidelines for ensuring gender equality in the organisation's activities. Later, in 2007 BRAC's gender policy was reviewed in the face of new challenges so that it could continue to contribute more precisely and effectively towards gender equality in a changed landscape. From 2016 BRAC shifted its approach to adopt a gender mainstreaming approach to amplify the results of its work by integrating gender equality perspectives in all of BRAC's programmes.

Annex: 03

BRAC's Gender Equality Milestones

BRAC is committed to achieving gender equality through the empowerment of women and the transformation of gender relations within village households, communities, and the organisation itself. In the late 80's, BRAC directed all its policies and programmes towards achieving gender equality through sustained interventions focused on women's basic needs and strategic interests such as healthcare, legal education, access to credit, and gender capacity building.

This kind of commitment involves long-term strategic planning. BRAC, as an advocate for social change, is constantly pioneering new ways to engage women and men and encourage their participation in the development process, with the ultimate goal of economic, social and political empowerment. In this process, it is essential that women and men work collectively, develop partnership in implementing BRAC institutional and community interventions for gender transformative change.

1973

Women's village organisation formed in Sulla aiming at economic development of the poor

1975

Women's income generating project (with handicraft producers) in Jamalpur

1976

The Manikganj integrated project initiated

1977

Community professionals development through health volunteers (ShasthyoShebika) from village organisations

1980

Oral rehydration therapy training delivered door-to-door to 13 million rural mothers by specially recruited female staff. These female staff were pioneer field staff in Bangladesh, having directly contributed in women's mobility in rural Bangladesh.

1985

70 per cent female enrolment policy adopted for the non-formal primary education programme
Credit and income generation programme for disadvantaged women initiated
Non-traditional income-generating projects introduced to mainstream women into development
Greater number of female staff recruited

1986

Programme initiated to provide legal education to women village organisation members

1987

Income generation for vulnerable group development (IGVGD) programme initiated, exclusively targeting ultra-poor women.

1991

Women's health and development programme started Women's Advisory Committee (WAC) set up
A one-day course called 'Men and women in partnership development' launched based on WAC recommendations.

1993

Gender Awareness and Analysis Course (GAAC) introduced Policy of affirmative action adopted and decision taken to allocate motorcycles to female staff six months earlier than male staff

1994

Gender Quality Action Learning (GQAL) Team established; GQAL needs assessment undertaken

Adopted policy to rapidly promote women to management positions

1995

UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing GQAL Programme for BRAC staff launched
Women-only recruitment policy announced for the year

1996

GQAL (staff) expanded to 20 Area Offices Maternity leave (paid and unpaid) introduced BRAC values redefined on the basis of gender perspective BRAC culture and values launched

1997

First workshop on sexual harassment BRAC Values developed with training sessions for staff
Gender policy introduced (revised 2005) Daycare for children of staff introduced

1999

Highest ever (to date) proportion of female staff in BRAC (30 per cent)

2000

Adolescent development programme launched with almost 100 per cent girls' participation
Started APON/LSB course for adolescent boys and girls

2001

GQAL pilot with Village Organisation (VO) members under Training Division
GQAL with VOs re-launched jointly with Research and Evaluation Division

2002

Maternity leave increased to four months from three months

2003

Gender Unit moved to BRAC Advocacy and Human Rights Unit (BAHRU); Gender training with Executive Director and senior managers
Conducted assessment on sexual harassment situation

2004

Sexual Harassment Elimination (SHE) policy introduced;
Paternity leave for 7 days
BRAC's code of conduct reformulated
Mon KhuleKotha Bola forum (listening to female and male staff voices); SHARE (Sexual Harassment Redressal) Unit established;
Gender policy and SHE policy staff orientation

2005

GQAL launched as component of BRAC's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR-TUP);
Gender Justice and Diversity (GJD) Unit developed under Human Resources Division;
GQAL moved from Training Division to Human Resources;
End of GQAL Programme with staff

2006

Gender policy revised (2nd edition)
Gender trainers team formed

2007

Gender focal points set up to support gender policy implementation
Gender-responsive human resources policy and procedure developed

2008

Gender analysis framework developed for the WASH programme
Initiated gender sensitisation training at branch level
Re-introduced orientation session on 'organisational culture and values' at branch level

2009

Gender Justice and Diversity Division established

2010

MEJNIN (Safe Citizenship for Girls) launched (expanded in 2012)
GQAL launched as POSITION (Enhancing a Positive Life)

2011

Gender audit conducted;
Gender retreat for BRAC's Governing Board;
Gender Equality Goal and Action Plan for BRAC approved by BRAC's Governing Board
Sexual harassment redressal committee formed

2012

F.H. Abed, Founder and Chairperson of BRAC, declares gender equality is one of the unfinished agenda of his life.
Project POSITION renamed GQAL and launched as a stand-alone community programme by GJD
Expansion of GQAL Programme to eight regions

2013

Integrated development Programme (IDP) launched which incorporated some good practices from GQAL

2014

The BRAC Education Programme (BEP) incorporates the MEJNIN Programme and works with 37 schools in two sub-districts of Sylhet.

2016

BRAC adopts 'Gender equality, reduce violence and increase men's engagement to create greater voice, choice, and spaces for women across all BRAC's programmes' as strategic goal in its 2016-2020 strategic plan BRAC's gender strategy is developed, with clear programmatic and Organisational goals.
Gender equality promotion approach has been shifted from independent project implementation to gender mainstreaming with existing BRAC's sectoral programmes, enterprises and departments (Education, Health, Micro-finance, Community Empowerment, integrated development program, Road safety program, Aarong, Ayesha Abed Foundation, BRAC Dairy and HRLD)for greater impact. Accordingly GJD has carried out gender integration pilots.

2017

BRAC senior management accepted gender commitments and made agreements across all BRAC Programmes/departments/enterprises set Gender objectives and indicators in their Annual Operating Plan (AOP) Gender Climate assessment done by BRAC Research and Evaluation Division

2018

Gender assessment by external consultant for refinement and up scaling of pilot gender integration in programmes and enterprises.