

Integrated Development Programme (IDP) for *Haor* in Derai and Baniachong

Marziana Mahfuz Nandita
Sabuj Kanti Mistry
Mrinmoy Samadder
Md Mahbubur Rahman
Sabeth Hasnain
Ahmed Munrat
Morsheda Banu

Integrated Development Programme (IDP) for *Haor* in Derai and Baniachong

Report on the Rapid Assessment

Marziana Mahfuz Nandita,
Sabuj Kanti Mistry,
Mrinmoy Samadder,
Md Mahbubur Rahman,
Sabeth Hasnain
Ahmed Munrat,
Morsheda Banu

December 2016

Research and Evaluation Division
BRAC Centre, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
Web: www.research.brac.net, E-mail: altamas.p@brac.net
Telephone: 9881265, 8824180-87

For more details about the report please contact: sabuj.km@brac.net

Contents

Acronyms	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Executive summary	vi
Chapter 1. Introduction	
1.1 Background	1
1.2. Programme Goals and Objectives	3
Chapter 2. Structure of the Integrated Development Programme	5
2.1 Coordination Approach	8
2.2 Common Platform Approach	10
Chapter 3. The Rapid Assessment of the IDP	11
3.1 Study Rationale	11
3.2 Study objectives and methodology	11
3.3 Study design	11
3.3.1 Quantitative survey	11
3.3.2 Qualitative study	13
Chapter 4. Findings	
4.1 <i>Haorbashi</i> : Beneficiaries and The Integrated Development Programme of the <i>haor</i>	16
4.1.1 Vulnerabilities of the <i>haor</i> People	16
4.1.2 Glimpse of <i>haor</i> : community's experience	17
4.1.3 BRACs IDP at <i>haor</i> .	19
4.1.4 Food for thought	20
4.1.5 Beneficiaries experience with IDP support	22
4.2 The Integrated Development Programme Perception and Practice	22
4.2.1 The Integrated Development Programme as defined by the field staff:	22
4.2.2 POs Understanding of IDP	23
4.2.3 Management's Understanding of IDP	23
4.2.4 Practice of integration in the Integrated	

- 4.3 Challenges or Barriers to Implementation
- 4.4 Coverage of the Programme in the coordination and common platform area
 - 4.4.1 Household characteristics
 - 4.4.2 Service delivery and awareness building
 - 4.4.3 Coverage of asset transfer components
- 4.5 Comparison between Coordination and Common Platform Approach
 - 4.5.1 Cost analysis of coordination versus combination approaches

Chapter 9. Conclusion

Chapter 10. Post Script

List of Figures

Figure 1. Administrative Units of BRAC Sectoral Programmes (left) and IDP (right)	5
Figure 2. Organogram of IDP <i>haor</i>	7
Figure 3. IDP coordination organogram	9
Figure 4. IDP Common Platform Organogram	10
Figure 5. Sampling strategy	12
Figure 6. Coverage of awareness building components	30

List of Tables

Table 1. Programme Coverage by Distric and <i>Upazila</i>	4
Table 2. Key Variables	13
Table 3. Breakdown of interviews conducted	14
Table 4. Community's Experience	17
Table 5. Beneficiaries experience with IDP support	22
Table 6. Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the household	29
Table 7. Coverage of service delivery components between comparison groups	30
Table 8. TUP eligible House Holds and coverage	31
Table 9. Experience and gender-wise breakdown of IDP <i>haor</i> staff	32
Table 10. Overall Cost Comparison of combination vs. Coordinator Approches	33
Table 11. Detailed cost breakdown of Combination vs. Coordination Approches	33

Acronyms

AADC	Assistant Area Development Coordinator
ADC	Area Development Coordinator
AFSP	BRAC Agriculture and Food Security Programme
ANC	Antenatal Care
BDP	BRAC Development Programme
BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BM	Branch Manager
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CEP	Community Empowerment Programme
CFPR	Challenging Frontiers of Poverty Reduction Programme
CHW	Community Health Worker
CSBA	Community Skilled Birth Attendant
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDBC	<i>Gram Daridro Bimochon</i> Committee
GJ&D	Gender Justice and Diversity Programme
GO	Government Organisation
HNPP	Health Nutrition and Population Programme
HRLE	Human Rights and Legal Education
HRLS	BRAC Human Rights and Legal Aid Services
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IDP	Integrated Development Programme
MF	BRAC Microfinance Programme
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NHW	Newborn Health Worker
OTUP	Other Targeted Ultra Poor
PNC	Postnatal Care
PO	Programme Organiser
SHIREE	Stimulating Household Improvements Resulting in Economic Empowerment
SK	<i>Shasthya Kormi</i>
SMP	BRAC Safe Migration Programme

SS	<i>Shasthya Shebika</i>
STUP	Specially Targeted Ultra Poor
UDC	<i>Upazila</i> Development Coordinator
VAW	Violence Against Women
VAWC	Violence Against Women Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDO	Village Development Organisation
WVC	Village WASH Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene programme

Acknowledgements

The rapid assessment was completed in a very short period of time. Without the support of the programme staff and data management and field management unit of RED it would not have been possible to complete this study. The research assistants hired in the study played a vital role in attaining sensitive information. Without them a lot of the findings would not have been available.

Executive summary

The research report presents findings from a rapid assessment that was done on specific aspects of BRAC's Integrated Development Programme (IDP) for the *haor* region. The *haor* region in the North-eastern part of the country consists of large bowl shaped floodplains that have unique hydro-ecological conditions. The area is under water most of the year and is subject to flash floods and other geographical conditions that have made it very isolated and largely excluded from mainstream socioeconomic development initiatives. Consequently, the presence of government and NGOs is very low in the area, making it one of the most underdeveloped regions in the country. BRAC's first development initiative in the 1970s started off in the *haor* area and for decades very little has changed in the region. Therefore, BRAC has decided to return to take an integrated development approach with its IDP for *haor*.

IDP in BRAC is essentially a package that has taken a holistic approach to household development and is offering BRAC's ten major development programmes. Since January 2013 BRAC has started working in 10 branches in Baniachong *Upazila* of Hobiganj District and 5 branches in Derai *Upazila* in Sunamganj District of the Sylhet Division with a target of 80 per cent coverage of eligible households in programme areas. The IDP is a pilot initiative that is trying out different management and operational approaches with a number of programme innovations. These are constantly being researched and developed by the programmes own onsite action research team. The major programme innovation includes the testing of both the 'coordination' and the 'combination' programme delivery approaches. In the coordination approach, ten of BRACs programmes are coordinated centrally in each of the branch offices, overseen by a single Area Development Coordinator (ADC). In this approach, which is being carried out in 13 of the 15 branch offices, there is no difference in programme delivery at the household level. In other words, the service delivery of the programme at the household level is done just as it is done in sectoral programmes. However, all the different programme components are integrated at the management level through a single ADC from IDP who leads all the Branch Managers (Targeted Ultra Poor Programme, BRAC Education Programme, Community Empowerment Programme, Health Nutrition and Population Programme, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programme, Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Microfinance Programme, Human Rights and Legal Aid Services, Gender Justice and Diversity and the Safe Migration Programme) in the IDP Branch Offices.

The combination approach is a pilot within the IDP that is being implemented using a new approach. In the combination approach one Programme Officer delivers all ten programme components to each household as well as having a single ADC supervising the Branch Managers. Therefore, in the combination approach, the integration is done at two levels, the management level and the household service delivery level. The combination approach is being carried out in Chamakpur and Shyamar Char IDP Branches of Baniachong and Derai *Upazila* respectively.

Considering the new nature of the programme and the difficulties of the geographic location, BRAC management was interested in understanding certain aspects of the IDP *haor* programme. The key concerns were the coverage of the programme in the coordination

and combination areas, the perception and practice of integration by the staff in operational management and implementation, the barriers to programme implementation and the relative strengths and weaknesses of the coordination and combination approaches. BRAC Research and Evaluation Division formed a multi-disciplinary team and conducted a quick assessment using mixed methods. A quantitative survey using structured random sampling was used to get an idea of the coverage of IDP under the two approaches and a qualitative study using focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, informal interviews and direct observation of the programme staff and beneficiaries were used to address the other questions.

The initial findings from the quantitative survey of 300 households suggested that the combination area achieved similar if not better coverage at significantly lower cost than the coordination approach. Coverage means the provision of services to eligible households. Two issues should be noted. First that the programme had only been running for a short time and second that the study was not designed to measure the quality difference of the two approaches in terms of outcome and impact. Therefore, no definitive conclusions could be drawn at this stage.

The qualitative research findings suggest that the IDP allows for a greater understanding of household development needs, of the nature of the programmes, and enables better programme implementation and monitoring. In this regard community forums, specifically '*Polli Shomaj*' play a significant role as a platform for identifying beneficiaries, crosschecking beneficiary selection and other related aspects of programme delivery.

As far as programme implementation is concerned, it is seen that the *haor* region is inherently different from rest of the country, which the field staff described as 'plain land'.

It is clear from the study that the specific characteristics of the *haor* basin need to be integrated into the programme design to fully address the challenges of working in the area. However, the field staff are well aware of the differences and constantly work hard to meet their targets despite the difficulties faced while working in this region.

A key role of IDP management is to keep employees motivated. As for their perception of integration, most of the interviewees mentioned that integration in the truest sense is taking place in the combination area. The programme staff also mentioned that extensive IDP-specific training would be helpful.

Interviews with the programme beneficiaries showed that overall they are satisfied, given that it had not been long since the programme started, greater emphasis was given to the implementation side rather than the beneficiary side in this study.

The final key finding is that there is slight unease among staff about the duration of IDP as they are under the impression that the programme is going to be in operation only until 2015, and not beyond that. This is a potential disincentive towards their overall performance.

In keeping with the research findings and the core philosophy of the IDP it might be more efficient to convert the entire initiative into the combination approach that is being piloted in the Shyamar Char and Chamakpur Braches of IDP. It is crucial to address issues such as

the difficulties of working in the *haor* region and ensuring the availability of basic needs of the field staff. Furthermore, adjustments would be needed in the programme selection criteria, training manual and implementation strategies that would allow for integration in a real sense and to cater for holistic development of beneficiary households. Finally, an in depth piece of research should to be conducted to identify, more specifically, the scalability and quality of programme delivery in the *haor* area.

Chapter 1. Introduction

After a long period of providing development assistance through a sectoral approach, BRAC decided to reintroduce an integrated development approach through their Integrated Development Programme for the *Haor* (IDP). The programme started as a pilot in 2013 that will run until 2015. In the Programme two different management approaches were tested in two *Upazilas* of the *Haor* region in Sylhet. The idea behind this report is to document the process and findings of a study that was initiated to attain greater insights into the operational aspects of the programme.

This report has a very straightforward layout. Firstly, the geographical and socioeconomical context of the programme area is explained. This provides an understanding of the research context as well as highlighting the key factors that triggered the initiation of the programme. The second section talks about the targets and goals, the design and operational aspects of the programme that make it different from any other development programme run by BRAC. The third section outlines the rationale of the research as well as identifying the key research questions and explaining the methodology used. The fourth section contains detailed findings identifying key concerns regarding the operation of the programme and possible actions that can be or have been taken to address the issues. The findings section has five chapters starting with findings about the context and opinions of the programme followed by perception and practice of IDP by staff. The third chapter details the implementation challenges and the fourth chapter contains the quantitative findings on programme coverage. The fifth chapter compares the two different implementation strategies for IDP *Haor*. After the findings, the final section provides a summary of the overall research findings and recommendations.

1.1 Background

The *Haor* is a low-lying river basin area below the level of the flood plain. The *Haor* basin is one of the poorest regions of Bangladesh. IRRI and BARC have pinpointed Sunamganj and Hobiganj districts as one of the four 'hot-spots' of poverty in Bangladesh in terms of access to education, health, water, and sanitation. The *Haor* region is substantially worse off than other parts of Bangladesh. The majority of households in the poor and extreme poor categories suffer from significant shortages of food. The *Haor* is an important fishing ground and area of Boro rice cultivation. Unfortunately, flood and river erosion brings abject poverty and vulnerability. Over fifty per cent of the population was absolutely landless and the most marginalised depend on physical labour in agriculture and fisheries. The major economic sector of income and livelihood was agriculture. Most agriculture was carried out as mono cropping. Early flash floods often wash away the standing crops and people lose their harvest. Therefore, very few people were able to come out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

Considering the multifaceted vulnerability of the *Haor*, BRAC undertook the Integrated Development Programme, a pilot programme in Baniachong and Derai *Upazilas* from the two districts Hobiganj and Sunamganj, as a way of lifting people out of the poverty trap through targeted intervention by all BRAC programmes. BRAC's IDP is essentially a package that has taken a holistic approach to household development and is offering

BRAC's ten major development programmes. The concept of integrated development is not new for BRAC. At present BRAC intends to implement the integrated development programme with a focused approach targeted towards the poor, in order to have the most impact. It was assumed that after taking the interventions, the target communities would benefit from knowing their rights and entitlements and so gain access to and claim their share of resources from various service providing institutions of the government, stand against exploitation and social injustice, and acquire greater skills to cope with vulnerabilities and shocks. IDP provided support to the target beneficiaries with the technical assistance of BRAC's core and support programmes to ensure sustainable development. By carrying out these different programmes, they provided technical support and activities for the smooth implementation of the programme under the overall management of IDP.

The ten mainstream programmes that are part of BRAC's sectoral approach and have been brought under a common umbrella as part of the IDP *Haor* Project:

BRAC's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction Programme(CFPR) provided a special package of support including economic assets for enterprise development, livelihood support, enterprise-related training and health support to the extreme poor households — Specially Targeted Ultra Poor (STUP) and Other Targeted Ultra Poor (OTUP).

BRAC's Education Programme (BEP) established pre-primary and primary education institutions at the community level along with technical support. This programme also assisted in improving the quality of education in secondary schools through improving management, enhancing teachers' capacity through in-service training and improving students' education and participation through mentoring.

BRAC's Health Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP) provided community level and facility based health care services and essential health care. To ensure these services, BRAC recruited community health workers (CHW), the *Shasthya Shebika* (SS), the *Shasthya Kormi* (SK), Community Skilled Birth Attendants (CSBA), and Newborn Health Workers (NHW) and trained them according to their roles and responsibilities.

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Programme (WASH) provided both financial and technical support by promoting hygienic sanitary latrines with the participation of all levels of target beneficiaries in a village. This programme also installed deep tube wells to provide safe water to people living in the *Haor*.

BRAC Agriculture and Food Security Programme (AFSP) support in agriculture includes (i) homestead vegetable cultivation, (ii) crop cultivation, (iii) livestock and poultry raising, and (iv) fish culture, including open water fingerling release to enhance sources of animal protein available for all. Supply of seeds and other critical inputs including training were also provided.

BRAC's Microfinance Programme (MF) provided loans (savings and credit facilities) to target beneficiaries following their own terms and conditions for ensuring sustainability.

BRAC's Safe Migration Programme(SMP) offered opportunities to unemployed youths to migrate to other countries for better and more rewarding livelihoods and contribute to sustained national development through foreign remittances.

The Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) facilitated and organised rural poor women to empower them to improve their well-being through the institutional structure. *Polli Shomaj*, is a non-formal community based platform of the poor and disadvantaged women where rural women are empowered to unleash their latent social energy, exercise their rights, claim their entitlements and play a more active role in public life. This programme also arranges popular theatre, which depicts community problems, raises awareness and provides possible solutions towards community problems.

BRAC Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS) programme provided legal education, legal aid and community mobilisation implemented with the help of the Human Rights and Legal Education (HRLE) *Shebikas*, also referred to as the "Barefoot Lawyers". Legal aid clinics with technical assistance have a large network of lawyers to provide legal support for cases going through the formal justice system.

The Gender Justice and Diversity (GJ&D) programme provided gender training and implemented gender related capacity development activities for empowering women, reducing gender discrimination and to improve gender relations at the community level.

1.2 Programme Goals and Objectives

The goal of the intervention is to improve the socioeconomic condition of the *Haor* dwellers and ensure sustainable livelihoods through an integrated development approach. Objectives of IDP *Haor* are as follows:

- To ensure *Haor* dwellers have access to basic education, health, and water and sanitation services.
- To enhance *Haor* dwellers having access to sustainable livelihood opportunities with a focus on increasing farm based production, diversification and improved market linkages.
- To enhance the capacity of the poor community and local authority to access local available Government Organisations (GO), Non-Government Organisation (NGO) services/resources, to protest against exploitation/injustice and to exercise leadership in promoting pro-poor development.
- To test a pilot model in an integrated development approach to tackle multi-dimensional poverty in the *Haor* area for future scale up.

The project aims to reduce chronic vulnerability by improving access to basic services, creating economic opportunities, particularly for women and other vulnerable groups from the poorest households, and better utilisation of resources through improved intra-household awareness and practices. In addition, the project will monitor and include strategies to address seasonal fluctuations of availability and affordability of food for ultra-poor families. The project will address the underlying causes of poverty, paying attention to social power structure analysis and deploying proven community mobilisation strategies to

address exclusion and discrimination. In addition, the project will build and leverage relationships with local experienced organisations, and the private sector to diversify economic opportunities for the poorest people in the *Haor* region. The action will promote sustainability by drawing attention to improving local governance processes in support of the poorest people, especially women. This will include efforts to improve links between poor women and their local authorities, and to increase the capacity of the community to exercise leadership in promoting pro-poor development (Table 1).

Table 1. Programme coverage by district and *Upazila*

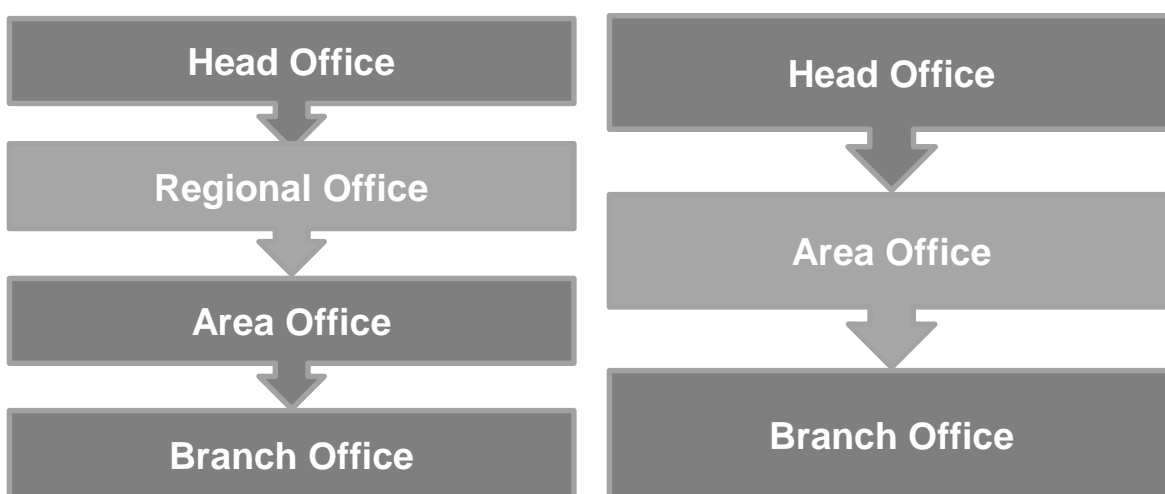
District	<i>Upazila</i>	No of unions	Branch offices	No. of villages	No. of households	Total population
Sunamganj	Derai	5	Derai Sadar ,Bhatipara Dhal Bazar,Jagdal Shyamar Char	238	49,700	202,791
Habiganj	Baniachong	10	Baniachong Sadar,Chowdhury Bazar, Chamakpur, Markully, Kagapasa, Aligonj, Subidpur Ikram, Sujatpur, Muradpur	442	48,854	317,550

Chapter 2. Structure of the integrated development programme

In the early seventies when the leaders of BRAC realised the potential and need for development initiatives around the country, they reinvented their initial organisation goal of providing relief and rehabilitation to development. At the initial phase of development initiatives BRAC followed an integrated model; however, due to a number of reasons the NGO moved to a sectoral approach. In this approach, basic development areas like health, education, and livelihood creation were targeted through separate BRAC programmes. Currently, BRAC operates through about ten mainstream programmes as well as a number of smaller ones. These programmes themselves are quite large in terms of coverage and resources. They are also unique in their approaches and strategies. Consequently, this contributed to BRAC's achievements and reputation as the largest NGO in the world. However, towards the latter end of the 2000s, BRAC reintroduced the integrated approach as the NGO wanted a comprehensive development implementation in the *Haor* region.

BRAC's organisational structure stretches from its head office in Dhaka to its field offices across Bangladesh. The smallest operational units are called branch offices (or BRAC Development Programme (BDP) office or area office), and are normally located at the Union level. Each branch office has a number of programme organisers (POs) who are responsible for the field implementation of BRAC's various programmes. These branch offices are administered by branch managers (BM), who are often from BRAC's Microfinance Programme. The POs are reportable to the BM and there are also accountants, who are in charge of maintaining the overall accounts of the programmes.

Figure 1. Administrative Units of BRAC Sectoral Programmes (left) and IDP (right)



The next level of field implementation is the Area Office at the *Upazila* level where the Area Manager sits and the branch managers (BM) are accountable to them. Regional offices represent BRAC's activity at the district level, headed by regional managers of the

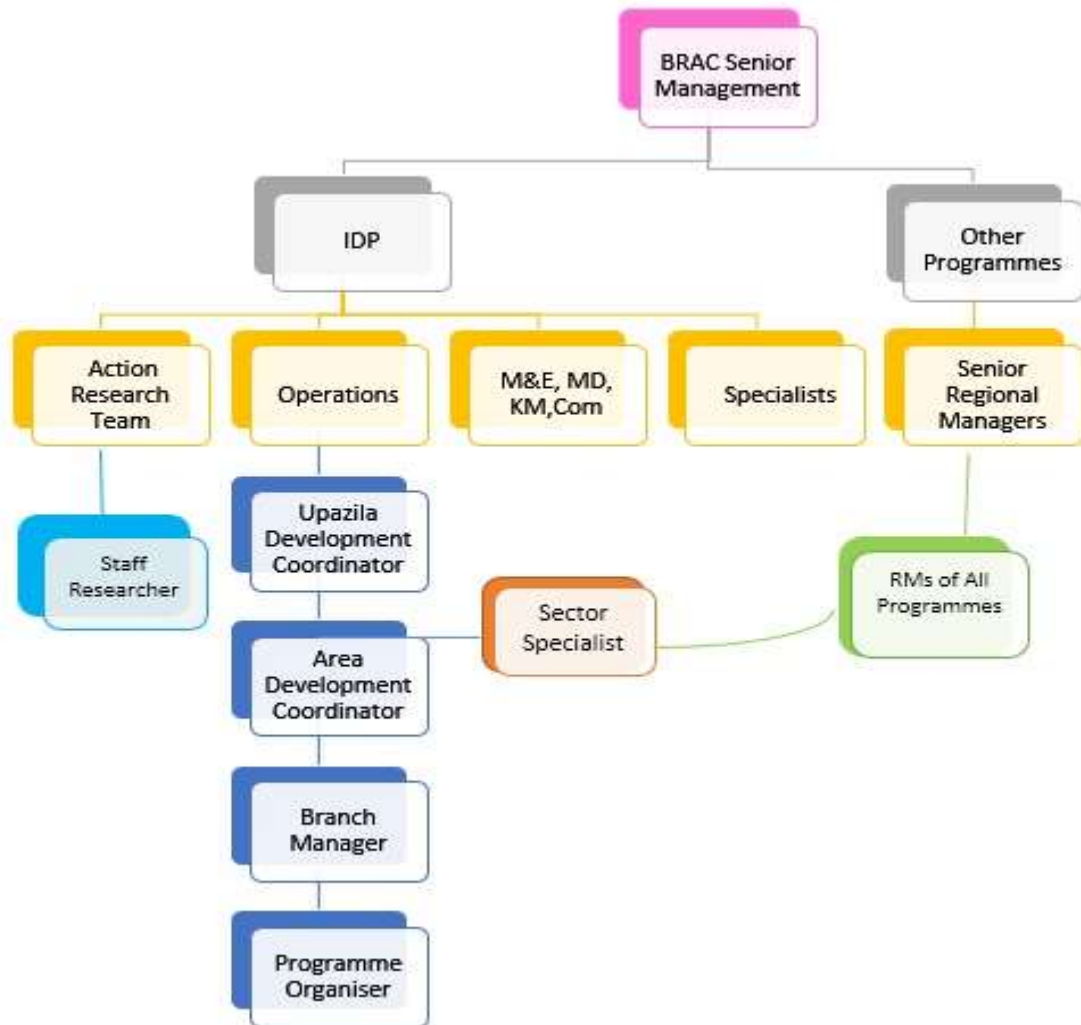
programmes; the Area Managers report to the Regional Managers. The whole of Bangladesh is divided into several regions according to individual programmes' outreach and activity level. Here it is important to mention that all the BRAC programmes in each level of office have their own field staff, budget, target and authorities to whom staff are accountable. Though everything is centrally managed through BRAC's higher management at the Head Office level, the operational management of these components at the field level is completely independent.

The next level after the regional level is the Head Office. At the Head Office, Programme Coordinators/Programme Heads, Senior Regional Managers, Programme Managers, MIS, Senior Sector Specialists and a number of other people carry out work which may vary from programme to programme. Finally, a Director at the head office heads/leads the individual programmes and the body of Directors report to the Executive Director. Therefore, the individual development initiatives taken through the sectoral approach come together at the top management level.

Through IDPBRAC has gone back to an approach where all its development components are being provided through a single package in terms of management and service delivery. Therefore, from the management point of view, the *Upazila* level offices, which are normally considered as regional offices in other BRAC programmes are working as the area offices in IDP. The roles of these offices are also similar to those of the regional offices. The management heads of the office are called the *Upazila* Development Coordinators (UDC), and they report to the Head Office. There is no Area Office in the IDP. While the branch offices are under the responsibility of a BM in other programmes, in the IDP an Area Development Coordinator (ADC) heads the Branch Offices. Therefore, while in other programmes BMs are the administrative heads of the Branch offices, in IDP-*Haor* ADCs are in charge of the branch offices and BMs report to them. All ten ADCs in Baniachong *Upazila* and five ADCs in Derai *Upazila* in turn are accountable to their respective UDCs. It is important to go through the detail of the administrative and operational structure, as it is quite different from BRAC's mainstream programmes.

However, it is important to mention that a lot of the people who are currently working in IDP have previously worked under the sectoral approach. Given their exposure to the sectoral model, in some cases for more than a decade, there have been concerns among the upper management regarding the attitude and adaptability of the staff towards this new implementation approach.

Figure 2. Organogram of IDP Haor



The operational framework of the programme also includes Sector Specialists(SS) who are experts in their individual programme components. The sector specialists provide technical knowledge to the field level operation and work compiling the Management Information System(MIS) dataset. This MIS is then submitted to the UDC. They also submit a copy to the regional managers of the sectoral programmes. The SSs are based on the Area Office from where they regularly travel to all the Branch Offices. This programme also has an action research team with two deputy manager-action researchers in the field, one in each Upazilla, led by a Programme Manager-Action Research. Two action researchers work in the two *Haor Upazilas* and correspond with the Programme Manager-Action Research in the HO. The Action Research Team is constantly working on different operational issues and have also developed many programmatic strategies that have helped in shaping the IDP bit by bit.

It is important to mention that in addition to bringing in changes at management level, BRAC IDP for *Haor* has also brought about changes in the way the organisation reaches out to

the targeted beneficiary households. Consequently, the programme pilot phase used two different management approaches, both of which are different from BRAC's typical management framework. The two approaches are called the 'Co-ordination' Approach and the 'Common Platform' Approach. The main difference between the two approaches is the way they reach out to beneficiaries. In the coordination approach there are different POs for the ten different programme components, who work with the households separately. On the other hand, in the Common Platform Approach, one PO provides all the services to an individual household.

2.1 Coordination approach

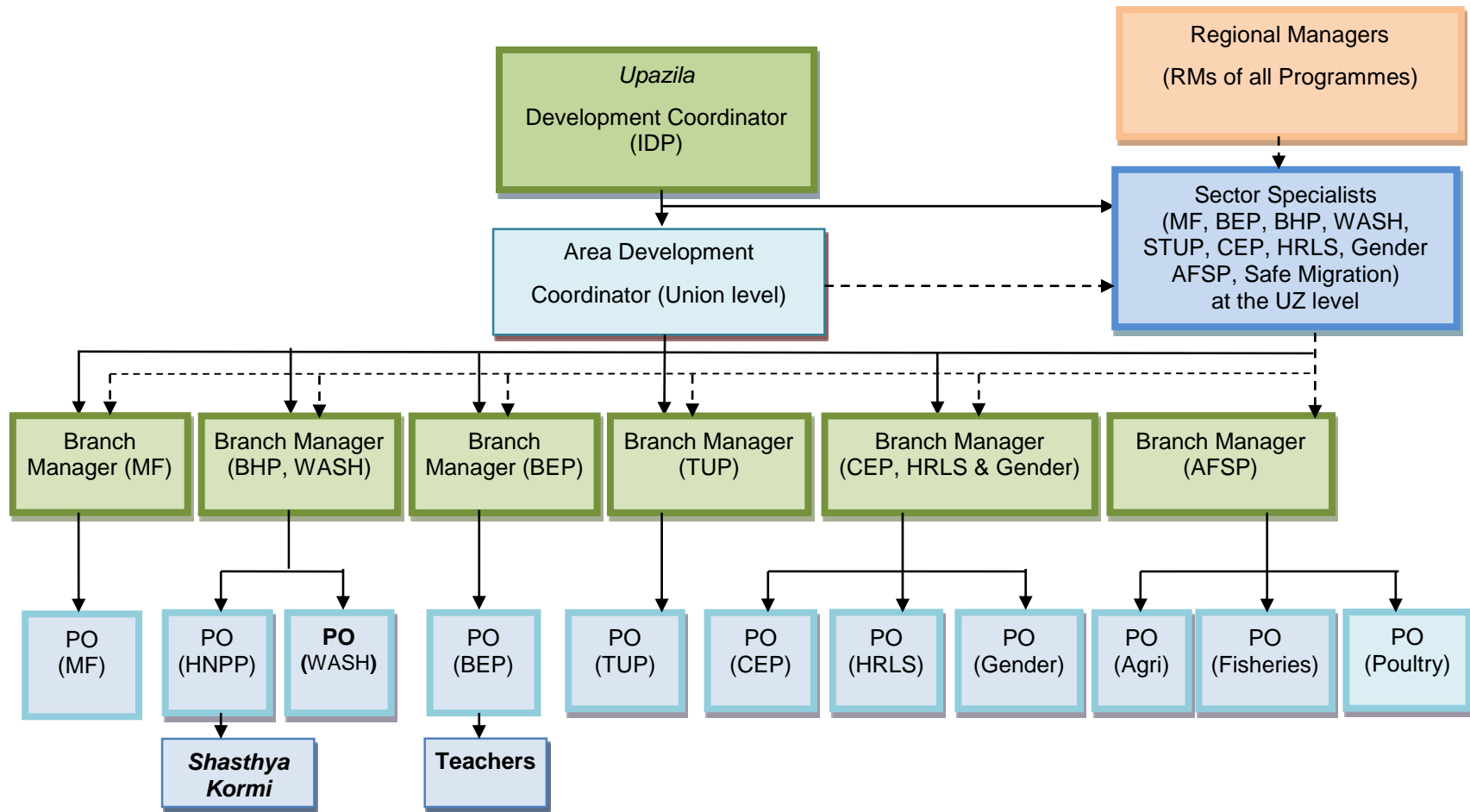
Under both approaches the administrative category of staff are the same, but their roles are somewhat different. In the coordination approach, each branch office is using a matrix management system. Under this system an ADC is in charge of the overall administration of the Branch. Further, synergy is added throughout the different layers of programme components and activities.

In the Coordination approach, some of the programme components are merged based on their similarities, and are overseen by a single BM. For example, the activities of HNPP and WASH components are jointly carried out under the direction of one BM. Similarly, programme activities related to CEP, GJ&D and HRLS are overseen by a single BM. It should be noted however, that each programme component, has its own set of POs.

As for disseminating programme activities and services, all the BRAC Programmes use different platforms. For example, Microfinance Programme uses Village Organisation; while CEP uses *Polli Shomaj* as their platform. The IDP Action Research Team conducted a piece of research and found that across different platforms that are used in the ten components of IDP, the expected members and objectives of the monthly meetings can be merged to make the service delivery more efficient. Consequently, *Gram Daridro Bimochon* Committee (GDBC) of CFPR-TUP, Village WASH Committee (VWC) and the Violence Against Women (VAW) Committee of GJ&D were merged and a new platform was created, which was named the Village Development Committee (VDC).

Furthermore, for field level implementation, BRAC Programmes always communicate and coordinate with the local government and active NGOs in the area. This is formally initiated through an inception meeting. In addition, to the inception meeting, regular workshops and meetings also take place in order to continue smooth relations among different actors. The IDP Action Research team has also looked at this aspect to see if these meetings can be done together to save time, effort and achieve synergy across sectors at the government and NGO levels as well. As a result, the *Upazila* advocacy workshops arranged by CEP, HRLS, WASH, HNPP and SMP that are normally held between one to three times annually, and attended by mostly the same participants, have now been merged into a single meeting under IDP.

Figure 3. IDP coordination organogram

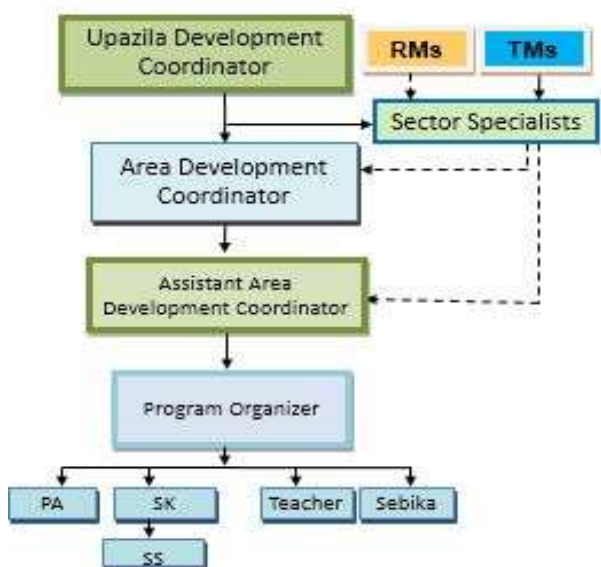


2.2 Common Platform Approach

The Common Platform Approach is a pilot within the pilot of IDP-*Haor*. It is taking place in Chamakpur of Baniachong *Upazila* and Shyamar Char of Derai *Upazila*.

In this approach, different development services (CEP, TUP, HNPP, BEP, and GJ&D etc.) are provided by a single PO. This provides the scope on the part of the PO to build comprehensive knowledge about the overall socioeconomic, health and nutritional condition of the households. Since the POs are giving all the services here instead of individual branch BMs of the separate components, IDP has placed Assistant Area Development Coordinators (AADC) to oversee the field work. The POs remain in close communication with the SSs of the respective programmes, as they themselves are not specialized in any particular discipline.

Figure 4. IDP common platform organogram



Under this single PO approach, the platforms that normally bring together people from different spheres of rural life for community related issues/discussions, are also combined into one common unified platform. This platform is called the 'Village Development Organisations (VDO). However, the common platform areas also have VDCs that work as a support system for the VDOs.

When single POs deliver a certain type of programme component, they follow the relevant programme structure, and checklists. The more experienced POs already have the skills required for this. However, this being a new approach to BRAC's work, it essentially means that the components to be delivered,

household checklist and the competency of the POs (most of whom are newly recruited) in delivering all the components, become key areas of concern. Additionally, the PO's ability to cover all the ten different components to the target households is also a concern since the number of POs in the common platform area are much less experienced compared to the coordination area. To mitigate the issue, IDP is planning to provide comprehensive formal training on these programmes as well as on the job training by sector specialists to the POs.

Chapter 3. The rapid assessment of the IDP

3.1 Study rationale

Both the Coordination and Common Platform approaches represent a shift away from BRAC's traditional sector driven model. The Common Platform system in particular is vastly different from anything the organisation has tried before. Due to the non-conventional nature of both systems, there are some obvious concerns that occur regarding smooth implementation of the programme. Therefore, there is a need to compare these two different approaches in terms of key criteria such as coverage, effectiveness, and relative strengths and weaknesses. This will influence the decision on whether or not BRAC will continue with the IDP, and if they do, what kind of approach will be more sustainable. Most importantly it will help answer questions regarding the scalability of the model, and the extent to which it can be successfully replicated in other areas.

3.2 Study objectives and methodology

The primary objectives for conducting the study were:

- To explore how integration is perceived and practiced by IDP *Haor*.
- To identify the barriers to programme implementation.
- To assess the relative strengths and weakness of coordination and combination strategies.
- To check on programme beneficiaries' perspective on the Programme implementation so far.
- To assess the coverage of IDP components in programme areas in terms of the coordination and combination approach.

3.3 Study design

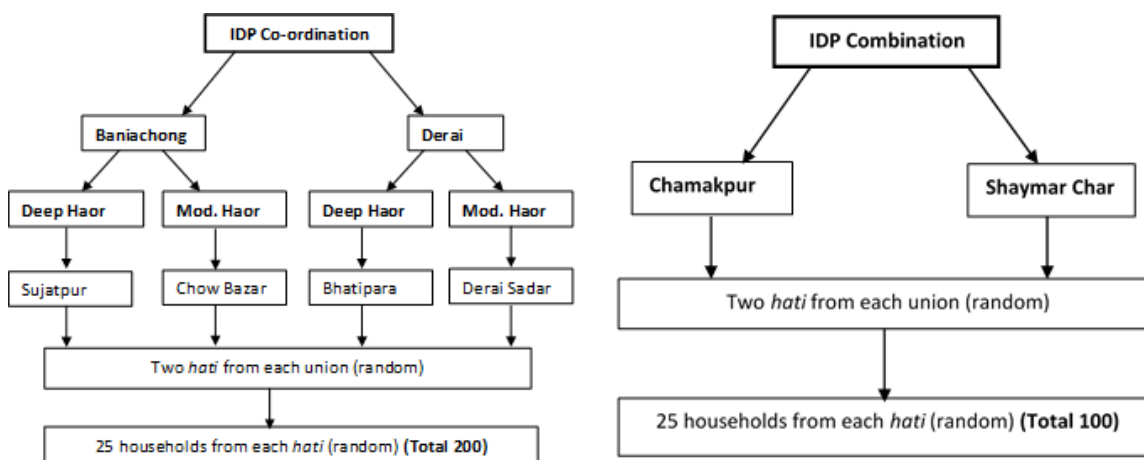
To fulfill the overall objectives of the study, a mixed method strategy was employed. A quantitative survey was carried out to track the comparative coverage of individual programme components between two types of IDP innovations, coordination and combination. On the other hand, qualitative investigation was conducted to verify the perception and practice of integration by the programme staff and participants, barriers to programme implementation and relative strengths and weaknesses between two aforementioned IDP approaches. We also performed a desk calculation to estimate the relative unit cost of implementing these two types of innovations.

3.3.1 Quantitative survey

The population of this study encompasses all the households from Baniachong and Derai *upazilas*. Considering the brevity of the timeline for the study to be completed, it was not possible to use a larger sample size that would ensure sufficient statistical power to make it representative of the entire population. However, the sample groups were selected in a

way so that the population variability in terms of geographical remoteness is minimized and the sample corresponds to the overall characteristics of the study population. For this, a multistage random sampling procedure was adopted. Geographical differences were also considered while sampling the population and finally 200 households were selected for the coordination and 100 households for the combination cohort respectively. The overall sampling procedure is presented in figure 5.

Figure 5. Sampling strategy



3.3.1.1 The survey and survey tools

The survey was administered using a structured questionnaire comprising questions pertaining to the key programme indicators and eligibility criteria for receiving certain programme benefits. Following successive visits to the programme areas and dialogues among group members the survey questionnaire was designed to fit with the objectives of the study. The preliminary designed questionnaire was then circulated among the programme implementation personnel to incorporate their feedback and after necessary modification, data collection was carried out from April till June 2014.

For data collection purposes, ten enumerators were recruited whose selection was based on previous experience in data collection and affirmation of working in remote areas. Following three days of intensive training, six of the enumerators were sent to *Baniachong* considering its remoteness and rest of them were sent to *Derai*. Researchers of IDP research group and members of the field management team of RED ensured the quality of the data collected through frequent field visits during the data collection period.

3.3.1.2 Study variables

The key study variables and their respective measuring indicators are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Key Variables

Variables	Measuring indicators
Demographic and socioeconomic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marital status• Occupation of household head• Family dependency• Land ownership• NGO involvement• Household asset• Age of the children• Education at school going age
Health and nutrition information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Antenatal Care (ANC)• Postnatal Care (PNC)• Safe delivery practices• Feeding practices• Maternal complication• Referral history
Other IDP services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latrine establishment through WASH• STUP services• Provision of high yielding seed, rice and/or technical assistance through AFSP• Courtyard meeting, popular theatre regarding safe migration• Attending Polli Shomaj/VDO/VDC/gender related meeting• Attending HRLE class• Knowledge about ADR by BRAC

3.3.1.3 Data processing and analysis

The survey data was then verified, coded and entered into SPSS (version 17.0). All the variables of SPSS windows were checked for any probable inconsistencies and cross checked with the questionnaire if necessary. A comparative analysis was then performed to track the difference in coverage of certain program components between coordination and combination areas. A composite index using certain predetermined indicators was formed in several cases to detect the eligibility of receiving certain benefits by the program participants and it was then verified whether the eligible participants were actually receiving the benefits or not.

3.3.2 Qualitative study

In-Depth Interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Direct Observation and Informal Interviews were used for the data collection purpose of the study.

Six enumerators were chosen for the qualitative study and they were given five day training on the structure of the programme and the objectives of the study. At the end of the training they were paired in groups of two. One group was sent to Derai and two groups were sent

to Baniachong as the command area under Baniachong is geographically larger and more spread out. Based on the two area offices the Field Researchers travelled to almost all the Branch Offices and collected data. They regularly reported in the area offices that provided scope for rapport building and access to confidential information.

3.3.2.1 Selection Criteria for Qualitative Interviewees:

Table 3. Breakdown of interviews conducted

	IDIs	FGDs
UDC	1	
ADC	1	
AADC	1	
SS	3	1
BM	1	2
PO	11	2
Action Researcher	1	
Community	4	2
Total	23	7
	Male	Female
Percentage	73	27

BRAC Staff and community beneficiaries were selected for IDI's and FGD's based on the following criteria from each level of the operational management framework of IDP *Haor*.

- Level of experience and area of expertise: The logic was that old and experienced staff would be able to compare the integrated approach with the existing sectoral approach. Plus, it would also make it possible to check if new staff are more willing to take up different management level innovations and if the older staff are reluctant to accept new ideas.

- Gender: Considering the geographical context and lack of infrastructure it is essential to check if it was possible for the programme to keep a gender balance among the staff and if there are specific issues for female workers in the locality.
- Local versus non local: Considering the remoteness of the areas that IDP is working in and the local culture and dialect that are rather distinctive, it was thought to be important to see if their ability to cope and carry out the job varies based on them being local or non-local.
- Nature of Programme implementation: Finally, since the two management approaches were to be compared in the study it was absolutely essential to have the qualitative study to focus on respondents from coordination and common platform approach.
- Community: It was ensured while choosing that communities from both deep and moderate *Haor* areas be chosen as well as covering communities from the coordination and common platform areas.

Profile of the staff interviewed:

- Average age of respondents: 30 to 40 Years
- Predominantly male, the location of the project and the nature of the job makes it more difficult to attract female staff.
- Years of experience: 10 Years+, although a lot of staff had experience of a few months to a year.
- Interviewees were also chosen on the basis of how far they worked from their home districts.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 *Haorbashi*: Beneficiaries and the integrated development programme of the *Haor*

4.1.1 *Vulnerabilities of the Haor people*

It was observed that the foremost vulnerability faced by *Haor* people is the combination of annual erosion and flash flood. These disasters damage their homestead, village and crops. People helplessly suffer as their crops submerge under floodwater. Consequently, many households are forced to migrate out as they suffer from food insecurity, which is considered an obstacle to sustainable development. Apart from this, people's development in these areas have been challenged severely by the lack of livelihood opportunities, sanitation and hygiene facilities, low school enrolment, drinkable water crisis, malnutrition, infant mortality, different social ills, particularly early marriage, dowry, divorce, violence against women, lack of awareness of citizens' and women' rights.

Agriculture is the principal profession of *Haor* people. Unfortunately, day-by-day people are forced to give up cultivation-their traditional and oldest profession, and struggle to find new employment, as cultivable land is decreasing due to siltation through flooding. Therefore, employment options are very limited in these villages. As most of the cultivable land is single-crop, agriculture labourers do not have any work during the non-harvesting period. During the lean period, marginal poor people of the area migrate to big cities to look for new livelihood opportunities. A large number of farmers also sit idle in the village during this period.

The low level of agricultural productivity limits agricultural incomes and demand for agricultural wage labour is also low. Therefore, a large proportion of people live largely on seasonal work and wages. Low level of crop production and lack of other employment means that people have little in the way of savings or assets. As a result, they have to borrow from moneylenders, often selling crops and labour in advance at rates of interest exceeding 200% per year, and so get into a cycle of debt from which they cannot escape.

Lack of government's essential services especially in education, health, water and sanitation, communication, and agriculture and livestock and fisheries makes the vulnerability of the *Haor* people worse.

Health and medical services in the *Haor* region are appalling. There are rarely any health facilities at village level. Generally, government health care facilities are at the union level and are very far from the villages. Acute shortages of doctors, medical officers, medical equipment and other medical facilities is a regular phenomenon in the health services. Due to the high distance between the villages and nearest government hospitals, there is an increase in time and transport costs required. With the same travel cost, they rather prefer to go to nearby divisional cities where they can also explore other options of private health service facilities. As a result, poor people are then forced to turn to the so-called local doctors (usually without adequate education or training) or pharmacy shop. But these too are located outside the villages, usually in market places.

During the field visit it seemed that people have little knowledge about the hospital. Many people even do not know that a hospital of this kind even exists. In the given context it is not a surprise that in the FGDs it was revealed that traditional birth attendants deliver the majority of the babies born in the *Haor* area.

Common health problems among the *Haor* people are found to be high mortality rate of children and mothers, malnutrition, lack of birth control, nutritional disease especially among children and pregnant women. Women, especially the poorer ones, do not get pre and post-natal services from the health care centre.

The use of sanitary latrines was found to be limited in that region as most of the households do not have one. Usually they use hanging latrines due to the lack of space for building a proper structure and mud ones are also not possible as they get eroded in the annual flooding.

Just like the health facilities the number of schools in the *Haor* is limited and they are usually quite far from the villages. At the time of natural disasters, schools in these areas become shelters and this hampers the academic calendar.

4.1.2 Glimpse of Haor: community's experience

Table 4. Community's Experience

Natural Condition	River erosion and insufficient lands for all.
	Frequent natural disaster especially flash floods, cyclones and heavy monsoon.
Infrastructural	Lack of adequate transport and communication.
	Lack of schools and health centres
	Lack of adequate flood shelters.
	Lack of access to the common property such as <i>Jalmaha</i> (water body)
Economic	Agriculture and fishing based livelihood opportunities
	Seasonal and single cropping system
	Absence of life skill training
	Lack of non-agriculture based employment opportunities.
	Underdeveloped market system
	Taking loan from local moneylenders
Educational	Unable to manage transport cost due to financial crisis
	School going children roaming here and there
	School going age girls engaged in household chores
	Schooling going age boys involved in low paid day labouring
Social	Schools are very far beyond the community
	Early Marriage
	Practice of Dowry
	Polygamy
	Divorce
	Women's primary role often considered to be doing household chores
	Women cannot take part in decision-making
Violence against Women	
Health	Presence of communicable diseases
	Malnourished mother and children
	Hanging latrines
	Very limited drinkable water sources
	Lack of trained midwives, family planning workers.

In the remote areas in Hobigonj and Sunamganj district, the primary source of safe drinking water is the tubewell. Unfortunately, most of the people in two *Upazilas* do not have sufficient access to safe water. The government sponsored tubewells are not adequate in numbers and due to the lack of proper maintenance and monitoring, most of the tubewells are out of order. In addition, most of the tubewells go under water during rainy season. People are vulnerable to many water-borne diseases due to their limited knowledge about the health risks associated with the use of unsafe and unclean water. Water is in abundance in *Haor* areas, but the *Haor* people face an acute shortage of safe drinking water throughout the year. Most of the households use the water of river, *beel*, canal and *Haors* in their daily activities. At the household level, they use these sources of water for cooking, washing, shower etc. As a result, diarrhoea and dysentery are very prevalent in *Haor* areas.

The physical conditions of the *Haor* and its poor communication infrastructure are the root causes of the high levels of poverty in the region. Transport and communication is very fragile in *Haor* areas. Boats and trawlers navigating through the waterways are the modes of transportation. People have to wait for a long time to travel to different places. This poor transport and communication is the cause of the loss of many lives in *Haor* areas, which is especially true for the incidence of death of children and pregnant women. Poor communication hinders access to schools and markets and limits opportunities to increase production.

The birth of a girl in the *Haor* area often does not make parents happy. The girls are neglected in terms of education, and healthcare; because of this attitude, early marriage of girls is common there. Marriage of girls is a big economic burden on the parents, as they have to give dowry in both cash and kind. After marriage a little girl is expected to turn into a member of her new family and carry on a lot of responsibilities like preparing food, collecting water, washing clothes, taking care of the sick members in the family. Other economic activities that women are engaged in are homestead gardening, looking after ducks, chicken and cattle. Therefore, women are often over burdened with work but with little or no participation in decision-making processes in *Haor* society. Most often, women's voices are neglected, they have to follow men's decisions without arguing and have no say when it comes to decision-making. The main reason why women are not taken as partners in decision-making is that women's economic contribution to the family is not recognised. Income earning is considered as the basis for the power of decision-making while women's contribution in the family remains unnoticed and undervalued as unpaid family labour. Hence, also when it comes to the ownership of assets, including those that the husband gets from the father-in-law as dowry, this lies with the husband alone.

Shortage of schools, especially girls' schools, and lack of proper management of the schools is common in the *Haor* area. Floods affect educational activity regularly and students are at risk during floods and other natural disasters. Girls' enrolment rate is low and the dropout rate is high. Lack of recreational facilities in the school is also a problem. Students find school an uninteresting place in which to learn. The number of educational institutions is much lower than in other regions. Education is poor in the project area and primary and secondary school presence is very limited compared to rest of the country. Thus in most cases, children have to attend school outside their settlement. Poor educational attainment means poorly educated migrants from the *Haor* regions are concentrated at the lower end of the non-agricultural livelihoods, such as rickshaw and van pulling.

Overall, increasing numbers of people in *Haor* areas are sliding into poverty because of the above mentioned economic and social conditions. Therefore, the *Haor* region is often characterised by lack of competitiveness, unemployment, unstable financial systems and non-sustainable use of natural resources.

4.1.3 BRACs IDP at Haor

At present BRAC has been trying to visit door to door and address the basic need of education, health, nutrition, family planning and recreation of the vulnerable *Haor* people, especially children and women. After the identification of household requirements. BRAC provides them with different types of support. The *Haor* community highly praised BRAC's household identification and beneficiary selection process during the FGDs.

This holistic approach of the programme for underdeveloped areas in Bangladesh can rapidly increase the economic income of the community. It also helps people to develop their knowledge, skill and life expectancy. People were pleased to receive assets and health services. The following services were especially mentioned: healthcare for pregnant mothers and antenatal care, tuberculosis treatment, income generating and social and legal awareness training.

They receive help from the *Shasthya Shebika* who provides door-to-door services through providing primary healthcare advice and medicine for women and children, as well as the rest of the family. This is considered the first point of contact for people at the time of urgent crisis. Now they do not need to go far away to the districts or thana level for primary health check-ups or treatment.

The community people consider training in livelihood and capacity building, provided by IDP, one of the most important services. People mentioned that as long as they can enrich themselves with skills that can help in earning, this would in turn reduce their vulnerability during crisis periods.

After IDP intervention, community people have accepted the idea that women can engage in income generating activities. The income opportunities for women are cow and goat rearing, day labour, tailoring, homestead gardening and poultry rearing. A number of them prefer and have been involved cow and poultry rearing. BRAC IDP staff encouraged them to become involved in such activities.

People now have knowledge on legal issues, human rights, citizen rights, social ills like dowry, early marriage, polygamy, illegal divorce and its bad effects, which were appreciated and viewed as an 'eye opening' experience by the *Haor* people. At the beginning, married women's husbands and mothers in law did not accept their participation in the BRAC training. Gradually, they were allowed to participate when they showed their extra knowledge on childcare, family maintenance, and lifesaving skills. Therefore, now they can easily attend the meetings but after completing the household chores.

Respondents of the FGD mentioned tubewells as a source of water for drinking and household chores. However there still seem to be a large number of people who use pond or *Haor* water for these purposes.

Many households in the *Haor* are involved in dairy and poultry farming. Given its unique ecological condition, there is a huge potential for dairy and poultry farming especially duck rearing. Before BRAC's intervention, the *Haor* residents learned about duck rearing and dairy from other NGOs like CARE, SHIREE and local NGOs. A fixed number of locals were also given livestock and other agricultural assets from these NGOs. BRAC's approach has been to provide these assets to their *Haor* beneficiaries based on their needs.

Findings suggest that duck rearing has become one of the major income generation opportunities in the study area. A number of households have identified this as a reliable source of livelihood for the *Haor* areas. From selling ducks and eggs most of the households earn a handsome amount of money. *Haor* women were highly pleased with BRAC for getting the duck rearing opportunity. They considered it good both for poverty alleviation and a source food production, especially for the rural poor women.

BRAC sewing and embroidery training opportunities provided alternative livelihood activities in the *Haor* area especially for women. This engagement helps them to pull themselves out of poverty. However, still there are gaps in terms of product marketing and resolving social issues that are obstacles to women's sustainable livelihood development.

Surprisingly, girls' school attendance was better than the boys as recent BRAC education facilities have reached around the community. BRAC School made them confident and helped in generating new ideas among the students. FGD participants who were the parents of BRAC school students said that now their children can present themselves through group work and they are learning with enjoyment. They also said that BRAC students are arranging extra curriculum activities like wall magazines, cultural activities, and arts. At the present students' knowledge on cleanliness, health and hygiene has increased.

The poor economic conditions of the households at the *Haor* discourage students from attending schools as they are not capable of paying the school fee (Average BDT. 9,000 to 10,000 per year per child). Since most of the families are dependent on seasonal income if a family has more than one child it becomes very difficult for them to bear the educational expenditure for their child. Overall, parents were really happy as their children can go to the school every day at either a boat school or fixed one, provided by the BRAC.

FGDs showed that community people were less informed about migration programmes compared to other programmes. They did not have much insight to offer on the eligibility criteria, how this programme works and how they could take advantage of this opportunity.

4.1.4 Food for thought

Under the coordination approach, each of the programme components is still following its own respective selection criteria. This essentially means that different sets of the selection process are taking place over the same programme area, which are often not done concurrently. Consequently, the households which are eligible for more than one type of services might not receive all these services at the same time and therefore they may miss out on the complementarity of these different development interventions. For instance, GJ&D and CEP both emphasise women rights and work toward reducing the gender gap through awareness building campaigns. Having BEP in this mix would also ensure the

community has the scope to apply this knowledge by sending girls to school. However, since there is a high possibility that all these components were not delivered at the same time to a certain village, the people miss out on the complementarity. So, the ultimate goal of the IDP programme may be hampered. All programmes under IDP should start at the same time to support a single household as well as the community. Household productive assets, which could help to raise household incomes, was very limited before IDP. A few families had poultry, cows and goats before the BRAC intervention. Therefore, the major sources of income for the households were predominantly dependent on one season cultivation, fishing and labour. In areas covered by GO and other NGOs, the number of households receiving IGA training was limited. A few of the beneficiaries received training on marketing their products from IGAs but none of the institutions/organisations provide capacity building training.

Distributing free of cost latrines and tubewells to the poorest of the poor is recommended. Community latrines could be introduced in *hatis*¹ with space shortage. In fact, one community latrine is already working in the area with a committee that is looking after the maintenance of this latrine. Therefore, increasing the numbers of community latrines would be good. A special academic calendar should be introduced in *Haor* areas so that students can help their parents during the harvest time without compromising their school hours. The schedule time for summer vacation could be readjusted so that students can help their parents during the harvest time without compromising their school hours. Although BRAC rents its school buildings from the community, it might be possible to select some of them to serve multiple purposes so, that they can use the school building at the time of natural disaster such as flood and cyclones. There is a need to build more roads approaching schools. Usual loan repayment traditions could be revised for the first couple of years due to lack of earning sources and seasonal income.

¹ Hatis are elevated areas in the *Haor* that become islands when the entire area is submerged underwater during monsoon. Each *hati* can be made up of a few households to a number of neighbourhoods. The term '*hati*' comes from the Bengali word for 'walking.' In the *Haor* it refers to any piece of unsubmerged land where one can walk.

4.1.5 Beneficiaries experience with IDP support

Table 5. Beneficiaries experience with IDP support

Integrated activities	Informed on recent activities	Activities available before IDP	Need for the community	Necessary for the households	Deliver H/H demand	Perception of meeting and training
CFPR	Yes	Limited	Very high	Very high	Need more	In early stage females faced hurdle, participation became low and delayed Male low participation Months later participation ensured, issues discussed and decision taken. Managed household chores and increased participants. Acquired new knowledge, Participation and consideration as an eye-opening door.
BEP	Yes	Very limited in range	Very high	Very high	Satisfied	
Health	Yes	Very limited in range	Appreciated	Especially Mother and children	Satisfied	
WASH	Yes	Rarely	Very high	Very high	Still not covered, expect community latrine	
Agriculture	Yes	Average	Moderately	Very high, home gardening	Satisfied	
Microfinance	Yes	Moderate	Very high	Effective in near future	Very few, less targeted	
Migration	Yes, not so clear	No	Not understood	Seeking way	Not sure	
CEP	Yes	No	Appreciated	Appreciated	Satisfied	
HRLS	Yes	No	Appreciated	Appreciated	Satisfied with few complaints in receiving justice	
GJ&D	Yes	No	Appreciated	Appreciated	Satisfied	

4.2 The Integrated Development Programme Perception and Practice

4.2.1 The Integrated Development Programme as defined by the field staff:

To understand their initial perception of the integrated approach, the programme staff were asked to describe how they would define IDP and to describe the concept of IDP. In this regard, the following responses were found from programme staff of different levels:

Since the POs are the first point of contact to the beneficiary households and they are the ones who conduct the majority of the activities in the field, it is essential to understand their perception of this new management process in order to understand the perception and practice of IDP among the implementers.

4.2.2 POs Understanding of IDP

The overall understanding of IDP by the POs was expressed as 'sommonito *unnayan karmasuchi*'. These services (BRACs development initiatives) are provided separately in different districts but here they are provided together. IDP caters to the whole community based on their individual needs, mentioned one of the POs. Integration is defined as relationship or integration among the staff and in this context overall communication is taking place.

-"Somonnoy ta hochhe kormider modhe relation. Akhetre sarbik jogajog kora sombhob hochhe." (According to this interviewee, integration has allowed for better overall communication among the BRAC staff in the programme)

-"Doshta programme aksathe kaj korbe. Ai tuku dharona nea kaaj shuru korsi." ("Ten programmes would work together" that's how one respondent said the IDP was described to him when he joined)

4.2.3 Management's Understanding of IDP

Most of them mentioned that IDP is a programme where all the development initiatives are taking place at the same time under single management. Prior to IDP this single management concept was not implemented and the BMs thought it was a good system.

"Here all the programmes (as they are called traditionally) work under one management. However, integration in the truest sense is taking place in the combination areas (the common platform approach is known mostly as the combination approach in the field). In these areas it is not only management but also the field workers who are working in an integrated manner, as one PO is giving all the programme services."

"A single PO can offer all services and households are getting all the benefits from a single person. Furthermore, for sustainable development there is no single component that would attain it, there are a number of factors that are important and IDP offers an all-inclusive package that caters towards all these household needs at a time."

In the FGD of BM both angles of IDP, as in: integration from the management angle, and the catering towards all the development needs angle, came through.

4.2.4 Practice of integration in the Integrated Development Programme:

The practice of integration is taking place both formally and informally in IDP. A lot of the respondents mentioned that under the sectoral system, staff from one programme barely knew anything about other programmes even though they were working from the same office. In fact, it was also mentioned that there were even slightly competitive feelings among programmes at times. However, IDP has allowed for greater understanding of household development needs and the nature of BRAC programs. To add on, while previously it was required to search extensively for beneficiaries, under the current programme framework it has become much easier to identify them. For example: A few days ago Microfinance wanted to open a VO for their programme and the BM consulted his counterpart in GJ&D, who suggested introducing the programme in the Gender meeting. So, the Microfinance BM talked about his programme at the end of the meeting and found almost enough potential members to open a VO in that area. Similarly, CEP's platform, *Polli*

Shomaj is mentioned by several interviewees as a medium that is regularly used for disseminating and acquiring information effectively.

The staff mentioned that in the coordination area, identifying beneficiaries and monitoring has become much easier because if a PO finds any eligible household for services in other components, they share it with their colleagues. Additionally, since POs visit all the villages from the ten services on a regular basis, any irregularities are caught easily.

In one incident a female microfinance PO was harassed when she went to collect instalments. Once management heard about it all the BMs and SSs went to the village with their motorbikes. When the villagers saw 15 bikes coming into the village with almost 30 people, they became alert. The village elders came in to resolve the issue and the man apologised to the PO and a neighbour paid off the overdue immediately.

Another great example of integration was seen after a storm when one of the boat schools capsized. BEP staff went into the area and were very worried about how to put it back since it is a huge and heavy structure. However, the management instructed everyone to help and all the staff of the office together were able to set the boat upright.

Based on the interview findings, the formal implementation of integration is said to have two aspects. One is the intervention or component delivery aspect and one is the management aspect. The overall management is administered by the ADC while the SSs provide guidance on acting out the development activities in the field. The ADCs sit with all the BMs on a weekly basis where the BMs provide activity reports. It was mentioned that the post of the ADC is vital because if the ADC can manage everything properly then all the activities in an office run smoothly.

“IDP te ADC post ta vital post. Toh shey jodi thik thake pura jinish ta thik thakbe.” (“The ADCs are the most important people in this programme. If they do their job properly, everything runs smoothly”)

It is important to mention here that the BMs are accountable to both the ADC and the SSs. The ADCs pass on reports to the UDC while the SSs are liable to send reports to the respective regional managers of the individual BRAC Programmes. For example, while the ADCs are only reportable to the UDC, the SSs of different programme components like TUP or BEP have to share their reports with the respective regional managers for each sectorial programme. Findings suggest that in order to maintain a good liaison with the respective sectorial programmes, SSs supply them with their designated reports, and at times, additional material. Consequently, the SSs often put pressure on the BMs who by extension place pressure on the POs to deliver these materials before their designated deadlines. This adds to the already heavy workload of the POs. It also has the potential to create conflict between the ADCs and the SSs.

On a similar topic, the SSs mentioned that now that they do not have any administrative authority over the field staff, the situation is rather tricky as they are liable for producing numbers corresponding to the targets set by the core programme to the UDC. There are examples where the SSs have recommended POs for training for quality improvement but when the ADC is notified he said that he did not hear anything from the SS.

A few further thoughts from different POs regarding the complicated dynamics within IDP:

“Amra sorashori karo sathe kono dorkare jogajog korle ADCra seta mante pare na. Kano tader madhomme jayoa hochhena tai.” (The ADCs do not like it when we communicate with the SSs directly without consulting them)

“Amer hate power nai, liable hobo kano? Target achievement er jobab dihita amake kano korte hoy?” (Why should I be liable for my targets, when I have no power over how the programme is implemented?)

Some SSs, had the following comments on this issue:

“Kono message Jodi kono PO ba BM ke dite hoy ADC der madhhome dilei message bikrito hoye jay” (We cannot communicate directly with the POs and BMs. We have to go through the ADCs, and they sometimes do not convey these messages properly)

“Specific responsibility dorkar SS ar BM der Jonno” (The SSs and BMs should have a definitive sets of responsibilities which will not interfere with the work of the ADCs.)

It is important to mention that the budget and target for programme components are still set by the core programme. It is also applicable for the training manual and the selection criteria of beneficiaries. Consequently, findings from the SS interviews show that though they would ideally want to implement integrated development, often it is not possible, as they have to push for fulfilling their individual targets as the issue of their promotion is related to this.

4.3 Challenges or Barriers to Implementation

One of the biggest challenges facing IDP is the nature of the area it operates in. *Haor* areas in Bangladesh suffer greatly from geographical inaccessibility and under-developed communications systems, and the areas of Baniachong and Derai are no different. This particularly makes it difficult to travel to different areas. Most *hatis* and villages are accessible only by boat or involve traveling over long stretches of unpaved roads. The situation is further exacerbated during the monsoon seasons, when large portions of the *Haor* areas become flooded, and boats become the only option for getting around. The main problem in this regard arises from the erratic schedules of the boats and the long travel times involved in going to different *hatis* and villages. This adds a degree of unpredictability to the job. The boats themselves are not very regular either, so a lot of time might be wasted waiting for transportation. This significantly hampers the time management of field staff and makes their jobs all the more difficult. Missing a boat might mean losing a whole day of work or even being stranded in a remote area with no option of getting back home, as one of the interviewed field staff members remarked,

“Jodi nouka miss koren tahole okhan theke ki bhabe ashben, eka apni janen ar Allah jaane.”
(“If you miss your boat, getting back to land is entirely in God’s hands”)

The uncertainty of *Haor* travel also makes it difficult to formulate proper work plans. When the programme staff design an action plan, they rarely get to work accordingly. The travel times and boat schedules do not exactly align with the plan design. This logistic mismatch is unavoidable, and makes working in the region all the more challenging. For a Programme

Officer (PO) in the IDP, travelling to and from beneficiary areas is only half the job. They also have to prepare detailed field reports at the end of the day, which in itself is not an easy task after a day spent travelling and working under difficult conditions. BRAC's branch office in Chamakpur attempted to work around the issue of travel by renting a trawler for its staff to travel in. However, this too comes with its own set of complications. Time management and coordination can become quite difficult when multiple staff have to be dropped off at different *hatis*. POs working in comparatively more remote areas get dropped off later, and picked up earlier. This severely limits both their time and effectiveness in the field. At the moment this is the closest solution to the problem of travel, since renting multiple boats is not financially feasible.

In the cases where a village or *hati* is accessible by road, the situation is still far from ideal. There are no paved roadways, only long stretches of unpaved dirt roads that must usually be crossed on foot. The conditions are often not even suitable for cycling. Additionally, there is little or no greenery on the roadsides themselves and therefore no shelter from the heat during the warmer seasons. All of these factors make traveling in the region not only time consuming, but also physically taxing. Doing actual effective work becomes a highly difficult prospect under these circumstances. The core characteristics of the *Haor* region therefore present the biggest challenges in terms of carrying out effective development work there. The characteristics of the *Haor* and how it is markedly different from the mainland is a theme that came up frequently among programme staff respondents when talking about the challenges of working with the IDP. The problems of underdeveloped communications and infrastructure are not just limited to travelling only, but also relate to living conditions. Several areas do not have regular access to electricity or running water, making it difficult for staff to maintain normal living conditions. Collectively, conditions like these might discourage many to work in the area and have an adverse effect on employee morale. This will make long-term employee retention quite difficult. However, the programme might not always take these factors into account. While this situation presents a challenge, programme management themselves have so far played an integral role in retaining employees, although this still remains an area of pressing concern.

As the programme concludes its pilot phase in Baniachong and Derai and prepares to expand to other similar areas, one thing is clear. In order for the IDP to function as proper comprehensive poverty alleviation initiative, the specific characteristics of the *Haor* region would need to be integrated into the programme design with greater attention to the challenges of working in the area. One way of achieving this may be through proper training and orientation. Specialised training can help prepare potential programme staff for the realities and challenges of working in the remote *haor* regions. It can also help them truly understand the nature of their work and potentially curb the rate of employee dropout.

The importance of training in helping programme staff truly understand the IDP is another factor to consider when talking about the programme's challenges. The IDP is a new initiative that is somewhat non-conventional compared to BRAC's normal approach to development. Unlike traditional programmes that tend to focus on a single aspect of poverty and development, the IDP involves a multifaceted approach that combines elements of BRAC's main poverty alleviation initiatives under a single umbrella. It represents a shift from BRAC's sector specific approach towards a more holistic design. The novel nature of this approach itself may present a challenge to many, particularly those in the programme who have always done things a certain way and are set in their attitudes. Changing the

mind sets and practices of the people working for the programme is crucial to its success and long-term sustainability.

Many of the staff involved in the IDP identified the aforementioned lack of adaptability as one of the main barriers to full integration. The core philosophy of the IDP is that it is 10 different development programmes working together as a joint poverty alleviation initiative. Integration and togetherness are essential to the success of this approach. While there is cooperation among the different programmes, for many staff, especially at the field level, there is still a disconnected feeling overall. An SS with the programme stated,

“Staff level sommonoyer khetre gap ache. Nij programme er kaj korte gea IDP er kaj kora hoy na. Arekta jeta amer mone hoy je akhan ekta protijogita toiri hoye geche. Karon prottekei BRAC er achievement er cheye nijeder target achievement ke boro kore dekhche.”

-There are gaps in integration at the staff level. We can either do our own programme work or the IDP work, not both. It also feels like there is a sense of competition now, with everyone prioritising his or her own programme targets over BRAC's achievements as a whole.

Additionally, a PO we interviewed said that he understood what is meant by 'programme er kaj' however it is difficult to understand what is meant by 'IDP'r kaj'. There appears to be a certain level of disconnect between the concepts of 'IDP vs. Programme', and this is acting as a major barrier to full-fledged integration. It was also mentioned that some of the programmes that are merged in IDP as one component as in Gender, HRLS, CEP and WASH and HNPP have good integration within themselves and the POs, BMs and SAs of each programme work well together. However, the scope for similar integration with other components is somewhat limited despite occasional meetings that are arranged for facilitating this type of cooperation.

The problem again lies in the fact that this is a very new way of doing things. The entire system within BRAC is optimised for a sector specific approach, and it has been working this way for decades. The concept of sector specific targets has become ingrained in the minds of both staff and management, making it quite challenging to adapt to a new 'integrated' system. This highlights the urgent need for an IDP-centric training for new programme staff; although given the extent of this problem; this might only be part of the solution to a much larger issue. The IDP field staff can only help out their colleagues if they are not constantly pressurised by their superiors to concentrate on their own targets. Therefore, there needs to be a change in the attitude of upper management within BRAC. There is also the issue of identity. As long as the IDP components are informally referred to as 'programmes' it might not be possible to attain the level of synergy or mingling required to work as a part of one programme under the identity of IDP.

Many believe that cooperation at the field staff level is virtually non-existent. The upper level personnel (BMs, ADCs, UDCs and Sector Specialists) meet regularly to discuss their programmes and activities. However, this type of coordinated teamwork does not travel down the chain of command. A PO we spoke to felt that he and his programme counterparts simply receive marching orders from the top, which they are expected to follow. The feeling of camaraderie and the need to work together is pretty much absent. He further stated that this issue could be resolved by regularly holding joint meetings incorporating all staff

members from the top to bottom level. This could potentially clear up any confusion regarding the nature of work to be done, and at the same time make it easier for everyone to coordinate his or her work. This was suggested to the field management, but not addressed. This is apparently not uncommon, since suggestions and ideas given by the field staff to their supervisors, rarely get relayed back to higher management in the Head Office. Without honest feedback from the field staff, improving the programme becomes more of a difficult challenge.

Further adding to this dilemma, are issues with the chain of command. POs are placed quite low in the overall chain of command, and they feel this in terms of work pressure sometimes. One PO stated, "Sometimes on Thursdays when I'm sitting down to record data from my PRA questionnaires, my BM might come in and ask me to submit a report very quickly. This creates unnecessary additional pressure, and keeps me from doing a good job." Unfortunately for a PO, being at the bottom of the chain means doing a lot of extra work for very little visible gain. This can be quite disheartening and can have a negative impact on employee morale.

Working for the IDP in the remotest parts of Bangladesh is a challenge in itself. The hours are long and the working conditions are far from ideal. Given these problems, it is quite discouraging for employees if their efforts are not duly recognised or appreciated. This is how some staff seem to feel, as stated by one respondent, "All of us who work here have the right degrees and qualifications. We were brought here to work as part of the IDP. The work we do is quite important; however, I do not think we are personally valued as employees. This is reflected in the way we are treated by superiors, especially given the long hours we put in. We have to start work as soon as the sun is up. Our workday and hours are literally dictated by the number of hours the sun is up. This seems both strange and unfair. We are also not supposed to work on the weekends, but given the intense workload, I find myself having to work on my days off, just to cover everything. After all this however, I feel our efforts are not appreciated. This makes me feel undervalued by BRAC." The field staff work on the frontlines of BRAC's poverty alleviation initiatives. Their hard work and dedication is instrumental to the continued success of programmes such as IDP. A little recognition and reward for effort can go a long way to motivate employees and guaranteeing both loyalty and good work in the future. Getting people to work in remote *Haor* areas is difficult enough as it is. If the organisation fails to make its employees feel like they matter, like they are not simply replaceable parts of a bigger machine; it risks losing some of its most valuable resources.

For field staff such as the IDP's POs, one of the biggest challenges is not just dealing with management, but also balancing the demands of both field and desk work. The job is predominantly fieldwork based. For field staff, the working day starts at 7:30 am in the field, and continues until 5:00 pm. In addition to the fieldwork, they have to put in hours at the desk, writing reports and doing other miscellaneous duties. With a bulk of the day spent in the field, managing time for deskwork becomes quite a challenge. Pressure and lack of support from management, only serve to add to the strenuous demands of the job, creating a difficult work environment that is not sustainable in the long run.

4.4. Coverage of the Programme in the coordination and common platform area

4.4.1 Household characteristics

Very little difference was observed in terms of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the households between coordination and common platform areas (Table 6). Mean household size was just below six and the majority of the households were dependent on farming or agriculture day labour in both areas. Due to long-term inundation, nine out of ten families had to rely on irregular sources of income and nearly 10% of the families were dependent on begging or selling women's labour in both areas. More than 60% of the households were either landless or with less than 50 decimal of land and no significant difference was observed between the two comparison areas. However, considering the possession of any productive assets in the household, the coordination area was found relatively well off, in spite of the fact that more people are taking loans from NGOs in the common platform area.

Table 6. Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the household

	Coordination	Combination
N	200	100
Household size (mean)	5.76	5.77
Main occupation of Household Head (%)		
• Farming	36	37
• Day labourer (agri)	34	22
• Day labourer (non-agri)	11	16
• Others	19	25
Reliable on irregular income source (%)	89	91
Reliable on begging/selling woman's labour (%)	10	9
Amount of land (%)		
• None	5	6
• <50 decimal	60	55
• ≥50 decimal	35	39
Have any productive asset (%)	78	68
Member of any MF NGO (%)	30	45

4.4.2 Service delivery and awareness building

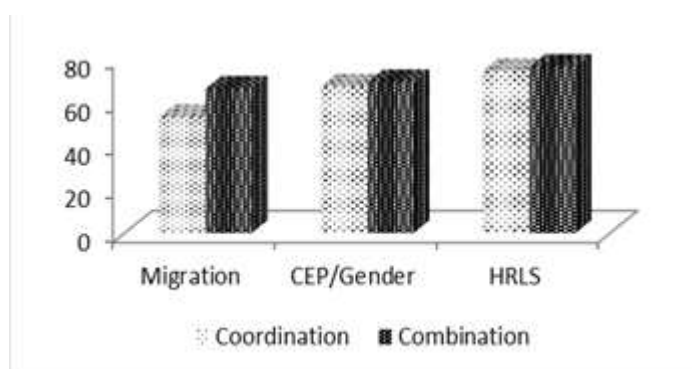
The performance of the microfinance component of IDP has been substantially improved in the common platform area and 37% of people were reported to receive loans from BRAC microfinance, which was only 17% in the coordination area. No significant difference was observed in the schooling rate among school age children between the comparison groups, which was above 70% in both areas, though would have been much lower in the common platform area if not increased by a high BRAC schooling rate of 20%. HNPP is a major component of the IDP intervention. However, there was no significant difference in terms of coverage between the two comparison areas. In both areas, around 70% of the pregnant mothers received antenatal check-ups during their pregnancy by BRAC SK in the last year preceding the survey. During the same period, nearly four out of ten births were assisted by BRAC NHWs and around 60% received postnatal check-ups by BRAC SK irrespective of the study location (Table 7).

Table 7. Coverage of service delivery components between comparison groups

	Coordination % (n)	Combination % (n)
Received loan from BRAC MF	17 (200)	37 (100)
Schooling (pre-primary and primary)	77 (217)	73 (121)
BRAC schooling rate	10 (217)	20 (121)
Received ANC from BRAC SK	73 (48)	72 (18)
Delivery (NHW)	39 (39)	40 (15)
PNC (SK)	67 (39)	60 (15)

The DP encompasses certain programme components which concentrate on raising awareness regarding key social issues and the survey revealed that the coverage level of those components was relatively higher in common platform areas compared to that of the coordination areas.

Figure 6. Coverage of awareness building components



Around half of the respondents in coordination areas reported that they were present in BRAC organised migration related courtyard meetings and/or popular theatre. This was nearly 70% in common platform areas. The coverage level of CEP/Gender as well as HRLS components were around 75% in all areas and though not by a greater margin, still comparatively higher in common platform areas compared to that of coordination areas (Figure 6).

4.4.3 Coverage of asset transfer components

BRAC IDP possesses certain programme components delivering assets to selected households in the programme areas entitled to receive those benefits. The eligibility criteria were set based on the economic status of the households and/or the usability of those assets with greater effect by the households. The current study collected information regarding the eligibility criteria of households to receive the programme benefits.

Through the STUP component, IDP provides production assets, health benefits and technical assistance to the hardcore poor households. Hardcore poverty is defined using a composite index constructed using five indicators i.e., family depends on selling labour/begging of female members, having less than 10 decimal of land, no active member in the family, family is maintained employing children of school going age, no productive assets in the family and a family is termed as ultra-poor when it satisfies at least three of

these criteria. In the present study, the delivery of STUP services against the eligibility criteria was verified and it was found that though the coverage was very similar between the two comparison groups, a significant proportion of the services were found to have been delivered to comparatively well off households in both areas (Table 8).

Likewise, sanitary latrines of WASH component ought to have been delivered to the hardcore poor households, yet a large proportion of the latrines were found to have been delivered among comparatively rich people in both coordination and common platform areas. Meanwhile, the major service of the Agriculture and Food Security (AFS) component of IDP is to provide high yielding varieties of fruits and vegetable seeds for homestead gardening to the households having at least 1 decimal of cultivable land at their homestead. Here again though there is very little difference in terms of coverage between the two comparison groups; there was some mis-targeting of the benefits where some people with less than 1 decimal land also received the benefits (Table 8).

Table 8. TUP eligible house holds and coverage

	Coordination % (n)		Combination % (n)	
	Among eligible	Among ineligible	Among eligible	Among ineligible
Specially Targeted Ultra Poor (STUP)	16.1 (31)	2.9 (137)	13.3 (15)	2.0 (50)
Sanitary Latrine	2.9 (35)	9.1 (165)	0.0 (23)	2.6 (77)
Agriculture and Food Security (AFS)	20 (135)	4.6 (65)	14.3 (56)	13.6 (44)

4.5 Comparison between Coordination and Common Platform Approach:

“Ashol integration dekhte hole apnake chamapure jete hobe” (If you want to see integration in its truest sense, you should go to Chamakpur, where the Combination pilot is taking place”) said one of the interviewees.

In fact, most of the staff feel that integration in the true sense is taking place in the common platform areas as it is looking at household’s development needs. When compared to the common platform approach, the coordination approach has also been able to achieve some level of synergy through the different innovations as well as the spill over affects discussed above. Integration in this approach is mainly happening from the management angle. On the other hand, in the common platform approach integration is taking place both on the implementer’s side and the receiver’s side. Since in the common platform approach one PO is liable for providing all sorts of services that a household may need for its development, the intrinsic scope for prioritising household needs rather than fulfilling targets is higher.

Dissemination, also in terms of MIS data collection, which is very useful in keeping track of the programme progress and updates the common platform area, is much better. The reason behind this is that, in the coordination areas, MIS is maintained based on the core programmes guideline and the branch area definition does not match with the government’s definition of *unions* or *upazilas* as they are divided according to the programme’s convenience. Furthermore, the working area for different components of IDP is different in the coordination area. Consequently, it is impossible to see an overall picture of the work

progress or the level of changes in the households. During the research, the initial plan was to use MIS to check IDP’s programme coverage in the areas and see where the programme is standing at that moment. However, due to the structural differences it was not possible to do so. Consequently, the survey was used for that purpose. On the other hand, the common platform approach is designed in a manner that allows for keeping track of the baseline situation as well as progress on a household basis. The initial findings from the quantitative survey using a survey of 300 households suggests that the combination area is achieving similar if not better coverage (i.e. provision of services to eligible households).

Table 9. Experience and gender-wise breakdown of IDP *haor* staff

Experience and gender wise breakdown of IDP <i>haor</i> staff			
	Male	Female	Total
New Staff	320 (69%)	141 (31%)	461 (60%)
Old Staff	257 (85%)	46 (15%)	303 (40%)
Total	577 (76%)	187 (24%)	764
Coordination	Combination		
Total Staff: 718 (13 branches) Per Branch: 55	Total Staff: 46 (2 branches)		

In the IDP programme, about 60% of the staff are new to BRAC and most of them are working in the common platform area. This is a good thing in the sense that it is harder to introduce this completely new approach to more experienced staff. The reason behind this is that they are perhaps too used to the area that they have been working for and have vast knowledge, experience and affinity for it and consequently might not be able to keep a balance between providing a well-rounded development intervention to the households.

4.5.1 Cost analysis of coordination versus combination approaches

For analysing the cost difference of the two methods a simple comparison between the coordination and common platform approach was used. For the two common platform areas Chamakpur and Shyamar Char, two coordination areas were chosen as points of comparison ensuring that these Branches are comparable in terms of geography, size and population covered. Aside from the staff, like accountants and others, who are the same for any BRAC branch office, the salary cost was compared between the coordination and common platform area. However, since this costing is a very rough indicator of the cost in these styles of implementation, instead of using implementation cost per household, cost per thousand households was used.

It was seen from the comparison that between Chamakpur and Sujatpur cost was 27% lower in Chamakpur and as for the cost different between Shayamar Char and Jagdal it was 32%. In fact, during the presentation findings of this study at Sylhet, the Chief Financial Officer of BRAC mentioned that his team has found the cost difference to be 42% lower in the combination area compared with the coordination area. It is important to note that these cost differences do not draw any conclusions concerning the quality of the services provided in the two areas.

Table 10. Overall Cost Comparison of Combination vs. Coordination Approaches

Combination	Coordination
Chamakpur: Tk. 129,800	Sujatpur: Tk. 178,095
Costs in Combination area are 27% lower	
Shyamar char: Tk. 94,957	Jagdal : Tk.140,172
Costs in Combination area are 32% lower	
On average Combination is 29.5 % cheaper per 1000 HH	

Table 11. Detailed cost breakdown of combination vs. coordination approaches

Combination						Coordination					
Chamakpur Area Office (HH 2,750)						Sujatpur Area Office (HH 3,234)					
Designation	Number of staff			Staff cost		Designation	Number of staff			Staff cost	
	Male	Female	Total	Unit	Total		Male	Female	Total	Unit	Total
ADC	1	0	1	32,010	32,010	ADC	1	0	1	32,010	32,010
AADC/BM	2	0	2	25,850	51,700	AADC/BM	6	0	6	25,850	155,100
PO	10	2	12	22,770	273,240	PO	9	1	10	22,770	227,700
FO	0	0	0	14,960	-	FO	8	2	10	14,960	149,600
JFO	0	0	0	11,550	-	JFO	0	1	1	11,550	11,550
Total	13	2	15	-	356,950	Total	24	4	28	-	575,960
*SK=4, SS=18						*SK=05, SS=28					
Shyamarchar Area Office (HH 6,669)						Jagdal Area Office (HH 5,902)					
Designation	Number of staff			Staff cost		Designation	Number of staff			Staff cost	
	Male	Female	Total	Unit	Total		Male	Female	Total	Unit	Total
ADC	1	0	1	32,010	32,010	ADC	1	0	1	32,010	32,010
AADC/BM	3	0	3	25,850	77,550	AADC/BM	5	0	5	25,850	129,250
PO	19	4	23	22,770	523,710	PO	15	1	16	22,770	364,320
FO	0	0	0	14,960	-	FO	13	4	17	14,960	254,320
JFO	0	0	0	11,550	-	JFO	5	3	8	11,550	92,400
Total	23	4	27	-	633,270	Total	39	8	47	-	872,300
*SK=10, SS=53						*SK=7, SS=42					

Drawing on the ‘Barriers to implementation’ part of this report, it is evident that the unique geographical nature of the programme area already makes it difficult for the staff to balance deskwork and field work if they are to meet the programme’s demand. Therefore, though converting whole programme areas to a combination or common platform approach makes more sense from a management, MIS, beneficiary selection and operational cost angle it would call for a serious consideration of the barriers. Otherwise these serious issues might be further aggravated if the number of staff is to be dramatically reduced while converting into the common platform approach.

Furthermore, considering the fact that the study took place only one year into the implementation of the programme it was not possible to look at the quality of the programme delivery for the two different programme approaches. Therefore, this study makes no claim as to which method is superior when the quality of the delivery of services and outcome indicators are analysed. It is highly recommended that there should be a close look into the outcome of the different approaches once the identified issues are resolved.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

The qualitative research findings based on beneficiary interviews suggest that the *haor* region as described in the programme proposal of IDP is behind in almost all development aspects. The adverse natural setup, lack of infrastructure, income generating activities, educational opportunities, health care facilities and backward social conditions indicate a dire need for development activity in the area. The community's response to the services provided so far, is that they are quite satisfied with BEP, HNPP, AFSP, CEP and GJ&D. However, considering the fact that there were hardly any of the interventions available there before IDP and the short time that programme has worked in the area, there are enough reasons to believe that the outcomes are expected to be positive in future.

The inquiries with programme staff about understanding the definition of integration, the motto of the programme and the way they are implementing programmes reveals that IDP allows for a greater understanding of household development needs, and of the nature of the programmes, and enables better programme implementation and monitoring. The synergy achieved by the programme is the result of a combination of programme innovation, the matrix management system, and a number of positive unintentional outcomes. In this regard, community forums, specifically '*Polli Shomaj*' play a substantial role as a connectivity platform for identifying beneficiaries, crosschecking beneficiary selection and other different programme delivery related aspects.

Furthermore, as far as programme implementation is concerned, it is seen that the *haor* region is inherently different from rest of the country, which the field staff described as 'plain land'. It is clear from the study that the specific characteristics of the *haor* basin would need to be integrated into the programme design to fully address the challenges of working in the area. However, the field staff are well aware of these differences and constantly working hard to meet their targets despite the difficulties faced while working in this region. In this regard, the IDP management is playing a key role in keeping employees motivated. As for their perception of integration, most of the interviewees mentioned that integration in the truest sense is taking place in the combination area. They also mentioned that extensive IDP-specific training would be helpful.

Last but not the least of the key findings was that there was slight unease among staff about the duration of IDP as they are under the impression that the programme is going to be in operation only until 2015, and not beyond that. It was assumed that this could work as a potential disincentive towards their overall performance. However, as soon as the initial findings from the study were shared with the management it was decided in a seminar in Sylhet that IDP is going to carry on and was even scaled up to two more unions of the *haor* region.

In keeping with these findings and the core philosophy of the IDP, it may be more efficient to convert the entire initiative into the combination approach. If this were done it would be crucial to address issues such as the difficulties of working in the *haor* region and ensuring the availability of basic needs of the field staff. Furthermore, adjustments would be needed in the programme selection criteria, training manual and implementation strategies that would allow for integration in a real sense and cater for holistic development of beneficiary

households. Finally, since the study was not designed to measure the quality difference of the two approaches in terms of outcome and impact, perhaps in-depth research needs to be conducted which would allow for identifying more specifically the scalability and quality of programme delivery in the *haor* area.

Chapter 6. Post script

The findings from the 'Rapid Assessment of IDP *haor*' were presented in front of the higher management in August 2014. This was followed by a seminar delivered in front of all the IDP *haor* field staff as well as several BRAC Directors, the CFO and the Chairperson Sir Fazle Hasan Abed at the Sylhet BLC in September 2014. A number of important management related decisions were taken following this findings presentation.

The research initiative and its findings were highly appreciated by both the senior management and the field staff. In fact, the CFO commented that this study could be one of the studies that has had a high impact on management decisions, since the OTEP study. Based on the findings it was decided that firstly, the entire management style of IDP will convert to the combination or the common platform strategy.

Secondly, since converting to the combination approach was found to be more cost-effective in terms of service delivery, the money saved will be utilised in scaling the programme in two new *upzilas*. After discussion over a number of possible *upzilas* it was decided that IDP *haor* will start operating in Itna *upzila* of Kishorganj district and the Khaliajuri *upzila* of Netrokona district.

Among a number of others, one of the findings from the study is that it might be more effective to convert the whole system into the combination management approach along with a number of other suggestions that were identified as crucial for the effective implementation of the programme. In retrospect, although the conversion recommendation has been adopted, a number of the other research recommendations still remain to be taken-up and implemented on a similarly large scale.