



# Freedom from Want

*The Remarkable Success Story of BRAC, the Global Grassroots Organization that's Winning the Fight Against Poverty*

Ian Smillie

BRAC, arguably the world's largest, most diverse and most successful NGO, is not well known outside of Bangladesh. Author Ian Smillie predicts that will soon change. BRAC's success and the spread of its work in health, education, social enterprise development and microfinance dwarfs any other private, government or non-profit enterprise in its impact on tens of thousands of communities in Asia and Africa.

*Freedom From Want* traces BRAC's evolution from a small relief operation into what is undoubtedly the largest and most variegated social experiment in the developing world. BRAC's story shows how social enterprise can trump corruption and how purpose, innovation and clear thinking can overcome

the most entrenched injustices that society can offer. It is a story that ranges from distant villages in Bangladesh to New York's financial district on 9/11, from war-torn Afghanistan to the plains of East Africa and the ruins of Southern Sudan. Partly an adventure story, partly a lesson in development economics, partly an examination of excellence in management, the book describes one of the world's most remarkable success stories, one that has transformed disaster into development and despair into hope.

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**Ian Smillie** is an Ottawa-based development consultant and writer. He has lived and worked widely in Africa and Asia, and his knowledge of Bangladesh spans more than three decades. Author of several books on international development, he was a founder of the Canadian development organization, Inter Pares, and was Executive Director of CUSO. In addition to his other work, he is associated with the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University and serves as Research Coordinator on Partnership Africa Canada's 'Diamonds and Human Security Project'. He is a participant in the intergovernmental 'Kimberley Process,' which has developed a global certification system for rough diamonds.

"Ian Smillie insightfully chronicles the work of BRAC and its founder, Fazle Hasan Abed, whom I was proud to present with a Clinton Global Citizen Award. BRAC's enormous contributions to health, education, and economic development have improved the lives of over 100 million people across the globe. Dr. Abed's story proves just how much people with vision and commitment can change the world."

-- **Former President Bill Clinton**

"Ian Smillie's excellent book on BRAC is a gripping account of how the practical intellect of a person and the trail-blazing activities of an organization have been able to achieve something close to a miracle."

-- **Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate in Economics**

"The billion dollars in micro loans that BRAC extends each year to poor people is just the beginning of the story of this remarkable organization. Smillie writes about how determination, ingenuity and enterprise can end poverty."

-- **George Soros, Founder, Open Society Institute**

"This book is a must for anyone who thinks that foreign aid doesn't work, that ordinary people can't pull themselves out of poverty, or that sustainable development can't happen at a large scale."

-- **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia**

"BRAC is the most astounding social enterprise in the world. This story combines the raw excitement of how a huge business can spring from one man's acumen with the emotive charge that comes when poverty and oppression are routed. Business can be exhilarating, and reading why can be a pleasure."

-- **Paul Collier, author of The Bottom Billion**



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