



Freedom From Want: The Remarkable Success Story of BRAC, the Global Grassroots Organization That's Winning the Fight Against Poverty

By Ian Smillie



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BRAC, arguably the world's largest, most diverse and most successful NGO, is little known outside Bangladesh, where it formed in 1972. Author Ian Smillie predicts, however, that this is bound to 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 indistinguishable from hundreds of others, 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 vast 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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Freedom From Want: The Remarkable Success Story of BRAC, the Global Grassroots Organization That's Winning the Fight Against Poverty By Ian Smillie Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1057227 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Kumarian Press
- Published on: 2009-04-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .70" h x 5.90" w x 8.90" l, .90 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 300 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"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." --Bill Clinton

"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

"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

"As I was describing how Ian Smillie's excellent book on BRAC helps us to understand the astonishing accomplishments of Fazle Hasan Abed, the spell-check of my computer proposed that I replace "Fazle" with "fable." That could actually work, since it is really fabulous how Abed has been able to help the emergence of a forward-looking and dynamic Bangladesh through his astonishing combination of vision, reason and commitment. The book is a gripping account of how the practical intellect of one 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

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"Ian Smillie shows how BRAC has turned development orthodoxy on its head, challenging 40 years of conventional thinking about how to end poverty and, in the process, how it reached tens of millions of people with good education, better health and sustainable livelihoods." --Mary Robinson, President, Realizing Rights, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and President of Ireland

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