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BRAC announces Frugal Innovation Forum in Dhaka, March 30-31

The Bangladesh-based development giant's Social Innovation Lab will host social innovators from across South Asia and beyond

On March 30-31, 2013, BRAC's Social Innovation Lab will host South Asian innovators, large and small, public and private, for a weekend of sharing, learning, problem-solving, and connecting, the organization has announced.

BRAC, the world's largest nongovernment organization, will host "Frugal Innovation Forum: Scaling Simple Solutions" to highlight the ways that organizations can come up with creative solutions to social problems without large up-front investments, thereby enabling massive scaling.

"Innovation is over-hyped," the organization's announcement reads. "We get it. Instead of focusing on the new and flashy, we want to make space to look at solutions that are creating transformative social changes. Not those that are theoretically 'scalable' but that have already done it."

Originally known as Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee and later Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, the organization, founded in 1972 by Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, is now known formally as BRAC. Scale and effectiveness are among its hallmarks. Over four decades, the organization has grown from a small relief operation to a development giant that touches the lives of an estimated 126 million people.

"At BRAC, we believe that 'small is beautiful, big is necessary,'" the organization's announcement reads. "Nowhere is this truer than South Asia, where poverty and inequity remain large-scale issues. Yet across the region, innovative organizations have found creative ways to empower and serve poor communities. Often their insights into leveraging social capital and approaching so-called 'beneficiaries' as active partners have enabled them to be effective with very limited budgets. These

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frugal innovators are tackling a broad range of issues, from slum resettlement, to education and youth skills development, to anti-corruption and more.

“The trusted, proven tools and strategies may not be enough for the emerging forms of social issues that we are observing across South Asia. The gains of the past few decades have created a new frontier of unfamiliar and complex challenges. If we giants are to sustain of effectiveness, we must find ways to learn from and partner with promising new organizations with fresh eyes, distinct capabilities, and start-up agility.”

This Forum will take a multifaceted perspective on poverty and invites participants from any sector. Broadly, it will focus on three cross-cutting areas:

- Developing human capital
- Mobilizing communities
- Fostering civic engagement

The event is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and is part of BRAC’s project, “Doing while learning: collaborative models for scaling innovations.”

For more information and to sign up, please write to frugalinnovation@brac.net or go to: <http://www.brac.net/content/frugal-innovation-forum-scaling-simple-solutions>

ABOUT BRAC

BRAC is a development success story, spreading solutions born in Bangladesh to 10 other countries around the world. It has turned into the largest development organisation in the world. Organizing the poor using communities’ own human and material resources, it catalyzes lasting change, creating an ecosystem in which the poor have the chance to seize control of their own lives. It does this with a holistic development approach geared toward inclusion, using tools like microfinance, education, healthcare, legal services, community empowerment and more. Its work now touches the lives of an estimated 126 million people, with staff and BRAC-trained entrepreneurs numbering in the hundreds of thousands, a global movement bringing change to 11 countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. For more information, go to <http://www.brac.net>.

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