A cause to bring Bangladesh together

One Demand
The final eradication of extreme poverty from Bangladesh by 2022
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**Three Actions**
One: Design and implement a national programme of livelihood-transformative initiatives to rapidly eradicate extreme poverty from Bangladesh

Two: Systematically monitor and reform public services and social protection transfers to prioritise the needs of the extreme poor

Three: Promote the institutional, policy and behavioural changes needed to address the root causes of extreme poverty

**Five Process Principles**
Partnerships, Participation, Action, Accountability, Inclusion
This is not a party political manifesto
This is a Manifesto for the Extreme Poor

Combatting poverty is not a party political agenda, it is a national cause that is supported across the political spectrum. The word “extreme” implies severe poverty but it is the nature as well as the depth of this poverty that is significant. Extreme poverty is multi-dimensional and rooted in multiple causes. It is not only about very low income but also an almost total lack of productive assets, poor health and nutrition, food insecurity, illiteracy, extreme susceptibility to shocks and vulnerability in respect of citizen rights. Extreme poverty is often chronic, oppressing people throughout their whole life and being passed from one generation to the next.

This MANIFESTO makes one simple demand, the eradication of extreme poverty in all its forms and dimensions. It describes three actions needed to achieve this objective and presents five process principles that should guide these actions. If the Manifesto recommendations are implemented, and if robust economic growth continues, it should be possible to eradicate extreme poverty from Bangladesh by 2022.

The Manifesto is grounded in 40 years of experience in the design and implementation of poverty reduction policies and projects across Bangladesh and a wealth of research about the dynamics of extreme poverty. While Shiree facilitated the process of developing the Manifesto, building on experience of working with over 2 lac extreme poor households, the Manifesto belongs to the People of Bangladesh and it will only succeed if the People of Bangladesh make it happen.

We are launching an idea. After reading this Manifesto, we ask you to take some specific actions. The solution is here, the choice whether to act is up to YOU.

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The final eradication of extreme poverty from Bangladesh by 2022

*Why this demand?*

because the **progress** of any nation should be **judged** first and foremost by how it treats the **poorest** members of society

because it is a worthy cause that resonates with the **moral, religious and pragmatic sentiments** of all Bangladeshis and can unite the nation

because the **potential** of the nation is being **wasted** by keeping millions of people in a **state of low productivity** through lack of education, poor health and exclusion from economic opportunities

because **economic growth** alone will not eliminate extreme poverty

because it **can be done**—evidence shows that if extreme poor people are given support and opportunity they will lift themselves out of poverty

because Bangladesh is already **leading the world** in poverty reduction and has the potential to extend this lead by being the **first developing country to totally eradicate extreme poverty**
The benefits of eradicating extreme poverty

• national **solidarity and pride** in success
• the **elimination of severe hardship** and suffering for 26 million fellow citizens
• establishing the base from which to achieve a **poverty-free nation**
• **reducing** the severe inequalities and divisions that feed **political and social unrest**
• **enhanced economic benefits for all** as productive potential is released
• **leading the world** and showing others how to achieve similar success
• **regionally** balanced development and mitigation of environmental risks
What is the challenge?

- Government statistics show 17.6% of the population below the lower poverty line in 2010. This threshold is defined by reference to the expenditure necessary to meet basic daily consumption needs.
- In 2010 this represented over 26 million people or about 6 million families. Since then poverty has continued to decline and population to increase. To eradicate extreme poverty by the 50th anniversary of the nation will require lifting up to 1 million families out of extreme poverty every year from 2016 to 2021.
- Extreme poverty is often chronic in that it is long lasting, affecting people not only for their whole life but also passed down from one generation to the next.
- While immense gains have been made in reducing both moderate and extreme poverty over recent years, to continue this rate of progress will become increasingly difficult as a larger proportion of those who remain extreme poor are also chronically poor. To eradicate extreme poverty, persistent chronic poverty must be addressed.
- As indicated in the graph below, the impressive reduction in extreme poverty that has been achieved over recent years is likely to slow for at least three reasons: (a) the proportion of chronic poverty with deep seated structural causes will increase, (b) more people will be catapulted into extreme poverty through the impact of economic, climatic and other shocks and, (c) many of those who rise out of extreme poverty will fail to sustain their ascent and slip back down.
- It cannot be assumed that the overall downward trajectory of extreme poverty will be sustained, a purposeful and well-resourced programme of action is necessary to accelerate the rate of reduction and achieve the final eradication of extreme poverty.
Three actions to achieve the permanent eradication of extreme poverty

One
Design and implement a national programme of livelihood-transformative initiatives to rapidly eradicate extreme poverty from Bangladesh by 2022

Two
Systematically monitor and reform both public services and social protection transfers to prioritise the needs of the poorest members of society

Three
Promote the institutional, policy and behavioural changes needed to address the root causes of extreme poverty

These three actions are not independent. They are all necessary. Taken together they represent an agenda for action that will not only eradicate extreme poverty but also sustain this achievement as a step towards the ultimate objective of creating a poverty free Bangladesh.

This is about deciding what is considered normal for the nation—and that in future the presence of extreme poverty will be deemed unacceptable.
## Timetable for action

|--------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| **One**  
Design and implement a national programme of livelihood-transformative initiatives to rapidly eradicate extreme poverty | Design the national programme to eradicate extreme poverty | National programme for the eradication of extreme poverty implemented | Number of extreme poor families (ref HIES lower poverty line) | Bangladesh free from extreme poverty | |
|  
Raise $3bn resources for implementation | 6m | 5m | 4m | 3m | 2m | 1m | |
| **Two**  
Systematically reform public services and transfers to prioritise the needs of the extreme poor | Dialogue with all public service providers regarding service provision to the extreme poor | Systematic reform of public services to improve targeting and address issues of exclusion | National Social Protection Reform Strategy | A system in place that keeps people out of extreme poverty and supports the recovery of those who fall back | |
|  
A national public policy dialogue about the type of society and economy that Bangladesh wants for the future—with a focus on issues of pro-poorest income distribution, inclusiveness and gender equity | |
| **Three**  
Promote the institutional, policy and behavioural changes needed to address the root causes of extreme poverty | A national consensus and commitment on the principles and measures needed to establish a poverty-free nation | | | | | | |
Some pieces of the jigsaw

Social protection reform

Women’s empowerment

Disability targeted actions

Cash transfers

Anti-corruption measures

Mobile technology

Monitoring database

Inclusive public services

Government and donor resources

Nutrition intervention

Access to rights

Vocational training

Micro enterprise support

Cash transfers
Action one: *Scale up success*

The design and implementation of a national programme to eradicate extreme poverty from Bangladesh in the shortest possible time

This action is the easiest and quickest to implement. **It requires only the application of significant additional resources to further expand approaches that are already working successfully** in the regions of Bangladesh facing the highest incidence of extreme poverty.

Over the last 40 years hundreds of poverty reduction projects have been implemented by both government and NGOs, often with donor support. Now is the time to build on this huge experience and significantly scale up the most successful approaches that have shown proven impact in allowing people to lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

These promotive livelihood projects typically involve asset or cash transfers that provide the poor with the minimal capital needed to establish new income generating activities. When combined with training support and community mobilisation these interventions have the ability to transform the lives of families.

Other programme elements will focus on enabling people to gain employment in rapidly growing industries, for example through vocational training, assistance with relocation and linking to corporate employers.

The routes out of extreme poverty will be different for each household and may involve formal wage employment or self-employment in their own micro business. **Often households that establish several income sources are the most successful.** The extreme poor are a heterogeneous group and programme elements need to be tailored to the needs of different communities, including those living in remote and climatically vulnerable regions.

Key to the success of the national programme would be correct targeting, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation and active participation of all stakeholders including local government and local elites. **Most important is the participation of extreme poor families themselves to ensure that what is provided is what they want and that interventions are tailored to the needs, capacities and circumstances of each household.**

The pieces of the jigsaw are available. The need is to put these pieces together into a well-designed, adequately funded and, critically, well implemented and monitored programme with clear objectives and milestones.

**How much will it cost?**

A process of detailed planning and costing should take place over 2014/2015. As an initial estimate, based on $500 per family\(^1\), it would require $3 billion to achieve the objective of taking 6 million families out of extreme poverty by 2022. With Bangladesh GDP at $116 bn (2012) and rising, this represents considerably less than 0.5% of GDP per year over 6 years, and this action becomes increasingly affordable as GDP grows.

**Who will pay?**

All of those who support this project should be enabled to make a financial contribution and hence to re-affirm

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\(^1\) Based on an estimate of the cost per household of current large scale livelihood transformation projects such as Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (Shiree), BRAC-CFPR: Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction, Chars Livelihood Programme (CLP), Food Security for the Ultra Poor (FSUP), REOPA, Souhado.
their ownership and commitment and to establish the accountability of implementing agencies. An independently managed fund is needed to gather and control these resources and direct them to support implementation ensuring total transparency, accountability and maximum impact for money.

It is **NOT** intended that the funds be taken from entitlement social protection transfers (e.g. school stipends, pensions, disability and widow allowances). As this action is intended as a one-off push to rid the country of extreme poverty it would be appropriate for donor funding as support for national transition and the achievement of post millennium goals. However as **beneficiary families emerge out of extreme poverty they should transition to mainstream government funded social safety nets and public services** (see Action Two).

In addition to donors and the government, corporate sponsors, NGOs, faith-based organisations and private individuals could and should be enabled to be major direct contributors. Hence the national programme requires some new resources as well as better targeting, coordination and more effective use of existing resources.

**Who will implement?**

**Implementation of this programme is not only about dollars!** The nation could be mobilised to take an active role in monitoring and oversight, from local youth groups and faith-based organisations to the local and national media. **The most important contribution will be the time, ideas and motivation of the participant households.**

This programme should be implemented by national agencies including GOs, NGOs and the private sector. The aim should be to use the implementing partners best able to meet the needs of diverse extreme poor client groups, drawing on their specific experience and expertise.

A national monitoring database using digital technology can help ensure rigorous accountability for expenditure and results. To be successful there must be no corruption in programme implementation.

**The overall message is that a national programme to achieve the eradication of extreme poverty by 2022 is both affordable and achievable.**

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2 One suggestion in response to the draft of this Manifesto is a that a new “Extreme Poverty Reduction Tax” be created as a levy on financial transfers or remittances—this could easily yield sufficient funds.

3 In consultation on the draft of this Manifesto emphasis on targeting has been criticised by some as diverting attention from the need for universal social protection transfers that are not targeted but accessed by people as a right or entitlement. The national programme to achieve the rapid eradication of extreme poverty is not intended to be an alternative, but as complementary, to this fundamental social protection reform.
Action two: Public service reform

The systematic reform of public services and social protection transfers to prioritise the needs of the extreme poor

This is a bigger challenge than the first action as it encompasses reform across the full range of public services and hence requires action by many ministries and departments from national down to local level.

There are two sub actions under this heading:

Firstly for service delivery agencies, the largest of which are education and health, the requirement is to recognise and deliberately address the needs of the extreme poor. This means looking at service delivery through an “extreme poverty lens”, going beyond a passive statement that services are available and free, to active measures to overcome the constraints that the poorest face in gaining access to services. Hence overcoming self-exclusion through lack of awareness, fear or disempowerment is a key challenge.

Again there is considerable experience and successes that can be built on in fields such as girls school enrollment and vaccination campaigns. The reform process needs to extend beyond the social services to the economic and administrative services that can support the further development and sustainability of millions of productive
micro enterprises. The responsibility and commitment of public services should be to provide an environment supportive to micro business development, not only big business. This applies to both agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises. The public services can also play a critical role in creating the conditions for wage employment, for example through vocational training provision.

In addition to direct service provision the police and justice systems need to work on behalf of, not against, the poorest members of society.

The Second sub action is the enhancement of the “entitlement social transfers” such as pensions and disability allowances. These are regular transfers in cash or in kind (e.g. subsidised rice) that can provide a stable and predictable contribution to the income of the poorest and most marginalised sections of the community at different phases in the lifecycle. Social Protection benefits on their own may be insufficient to transform the lives of extreme poor households but by providing a predictable additional cash flow they can make socio economic gains more robust, can increase resilience and mitigate risk and potentially spread the benefits of income gains through the household. A national social protection reform strategy is already under development.

**Addressing endemic corruption** in the allocation of public services and transfers is the critical cross cutting challenge requiring a direct and comprehensive strategy. Fighting corruption requires a multi-dimensional approach with measures including: transparency in the allocation of services, participatory monitoring, an active role for local and national media, enhanced political accountability and adequate sanctions and rewards for those who make decisions about the distribution of public resources. A direct and bold approach to tackling corruption is required. The extreme poor suffer most from corruption, they cannot afford to buy their way into public service provision and they lose out because resources that could otherwise be used to address poverty are stolen.

*If the national effort to eradicate extreme poverty can be used as a foundation on which to win the fight against corruption, the whole nation will gain immense additional benefit.*
Elements of a successful anti-corruption strategy

- A zero tolerance policy
- A code of conduct codifying the policy into specific guidelines to which a formal commitment is made via contracts with employees and suppliers
- Clear procedures to reduce the scope for individual discretion and opportunities to engage in rent seeking; systems implementation to embed these procedures and enhance monitoring capability
- Enrollment of the public through “whistle blowing” mechanisms, transparency about entitlements and a public awareness campaign to raise expectations of public services and reduce tolerance of wrong doing
- Re-enforce integrity related activities through intense internal and external communication and staff training
- Formal mechanisms including audit and other investigatory processes
- Senior management and political leadership serves to prevent regression into past practices
- High profile and creative use of mass media to underpin the anti-corruption drive

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4 One suggestion received was for a dedicated anti-corruption TV channel

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Case study

Malati Hembrom (anonymised), Age 44. Since February 2010, Malati has been provided with 20 kgs of rice/wheat, under the VGD programme. The Ward Commissioner was empathetic towards Malati’s deteriorating conditions and followed through on providing her with support. The extra support from the VGD programme has increased her household’s nutritional intake. Malati’s family’s condition did not fall as it usually does during the lean period. “We can now always eat three meals a day. We have also added eggs and occasional chicken and vegetables to our diet”.

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Action three: *Addressing the causes*
Promoting the institutional, policy and behavioural changes needed to address the root causes of extreme poverty

Bangladesh is changing rapidly and the dialogue needs to encompass multiple emerging challenges including that of urbanisation, addressing the needs of slum and street dwellers, as well as demographic challenges such as youth poverty and poverty amongst the elderly. **A national decision to establish a nation free from extreme poverty requires a development policy that prevents the marginalisation and abandonment of any socio economic, cultural or geographic pockets - a fully inclusive development path.**

This action is the most difficult part of the agenda contained in this Manifesto. It requires addressing long standing structural issues such as very unequal gender relations and discrimination against historically excluded groups.

The action requires political elites to accept the basic proposition that the extreme poor are not lazy or irresponsible – and hence that poverty is not their own fault. Achieving the permanent eradication of extreme poverty, including its most chronic forms, implies fundamental reform of the policy and institutional framework. **Countering extreme poverty is not essentially about humanitarian relief, it is central to the national development agenda.**

*This action is about choosing, designing and implementing an inclusive development path for the nation.*
Five Process Principles

It’s not just about what is done, it is about how it is done

1. PARTNERSHIPS (for leadership, planning and action)

National and local action partnerships should be established to oversee the implementation of the triple strategy, to receive monitoring reports and to implement corrective measures.

The eradication of extreme poverty is a big challenge that will require the participation of multiple stakeholders and a strong collective leadership. The private sector will play a key role in job creation and service provision. NGOs will have to further scale up their successful approaches and public agencies will need to greatly improve the targeting of services. Think tanks and researchers will be needed to provide rapid feedback and learning loops, youth, faith-based organisations and the media are also central to the venture. The ambition is national in scope but most practical action needs to take place at local level and to involve local partnerships for planning and action.

2. PARTICIPATION (of the poor)

Participatory forums of the extreme poor should be established to inform project design and reform measures and to provide feedback on project implementation.

A programme to eradicate extreme poverty should include specific measures to address the 6 key challenges faced by the extreme poor (see final section).

The detailed design of both projects and reform measures should draw on the established sectoral expertise that is widely distributed in Bangladesh. Thus, for example, health experts need to design interventions to break the barriers that currently exist to extreme poor people accessing preventative and curative health services. Other technical experts will focus on nutrition and food security, others on the vocational training that is a critical requirement for accessing rapidly emerging employment opportunities. Social protection reform is clearly at the heart of the venture as is addressing issues of water and sanitation. While there is massive expertise in each sector, the common element is that the design of sectoral interventions should be viewed through an “extreme poverty lens” and be informed by the real experience of extreme poor households.

3. ACTION (not words)

The nation should commit itself to the objective of the eradication of extreme poverty and establish a time-bound national agenda for action with this objective.

The first requirement is for those who support the ideas described in this manifesto to buy into the objective and to establish a national movement for the eradication of extreme poverty. The movement should advance the triple strategy: a transformative national programme, a programme of systematic reform of public services and transfers and a national dialogue regarding the future dispensation of distributive justice. All should be managed according to contemporary standards of best practice, should engage all sections of Bangladesh society and be monitored and reported on through transparent processes. There are too many policy commitments that are not translated into action, a specific time-bound agenda for action with close monitoring of results is required.
4. ACCOUNTABILITY (through close monitoring and transparency)

A national, independently managed, database of the extreme poor should be established and used for the purpose of targeting interventions and reporting progress.

For a pledge to eradicate extreme poverty to be meaningful requires a strong framework of monitoring and accountability that extends down to household level. A dynamic and frequently updated database of the extreme poor should be established and used for regular reporting on progress. The database of the poor should be independently managed and capable of providing real time information regarding who are the poor and where they live, allowing well targeted actions to address their poverty. Poverty monitoring reports should be widely publicised, used for progress reporting and progress chasing with local officials and political leaders who are held accountable for achievement within their zone of responsibility. Simple and comprehensible indicators of graduation from extreme poverty should be promoted for public monitoring and the extent to which poor households are able to access the range of public services should also be continuously monitored.

5. INCLUSION (of all of the extreme poor)

The national movement to eradicate extreme poverty in Bangladesh has an inclusive ambition. None of the poorest should be excluded by virtue of their marginalisation, legal status, location, ethnicity, age, gender, physical capacity or other factors.

There is a fundamental difference between the objective of halving extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1) and that of totally eradicating extreme poverty. The former objective could be achieved while still leaving behind the poorest of the poor. The chronically poor are necessarily the most difficult to graduate from poverty.

These people are often outside the mainstream, they may be living in remote locations, be members of traditionally marginalised groups or have very insecure lives on the streets or in the slums of Dhaka and other cities. Traditional public services are not good at reaching these groups, yet to achieve the eradication of extreme poverty requires that their needs are addressed.

The special experience of NGOs in accessing hard to reach groups should be fully utilised. Effective targeting and monitoring is critical to ensuring that all extreme poor people are included in the programme and that resources are not misdirected.
Life history map of Rafeza (40)

The paths into and out of extreme poverty are complex

To see more Life Histories, visit http://www.shiree.org/extreme-poverty-monitor/cms-5-tracking-studies/
What are the key issues that keep people in extreme poverty and how can they be addressed?

The nature of poverty generally and of extreme poverty has been much researched. The causes of extreme poverty are specific to particular households, communities and regions but consultation with the poor themselves identified the following 6 priority challenges.

After a brief summary of each challenge a selection of the specific recommendations received during the development of this Manifesto is listed. These recommendations cut across the three broad actions described in this document. While some can be accommodated within Action One—a national programme to eradicate extreme poverty, others relate to Action Two—systematic reform of public service provision and transfers or Action Three—a change in the underlying political settlement. The process of gathering further recommendations and refining these into an implementable programme should continue over coming months.

1. Insufficient Economic Opportunities

The dynamic Bangladesh economy is creating many thousands of new jobs every year, but the extreme poor cannot access these opportunities. They may be in the wrong place or lack the necessary skills. They may be physically incapacitated or sick, too old or young, lacking secure shelter, part of a marginalised group or already caught up in an exploitative relationship that keeps them in poverty and debt. They will lack productive assets and are usually dependent on uncertain daily labour that barely provides for the daily consumption needs of their family. They have no surplus income with which to build resilience against the impact of shocks through accumulating savings or assets. Extreme poor households have a high dependency ratio with few earning members. Many are female headed and disability or chronic health problems are prevalent limiting the range of potential income earning activities.
2. Poor access to Public Services and Transfers

The nation provides a wide range of public services in Bangladesh and many social safety nets but the poorest of the poor, although entitled to receive these services and benefits, are often excluded. Why? They may live in remote areas that are very poorly served by public services such as the Hill Tracts or the NE Haors. They may be unable to pay the formal or informal fees that are charged for access to these services and transfers. They may simply be unaware of their entitlement or too fearful to make demands from public officials.

Examples of recommendations received

- Improve access to land through enhanced Khas land transfer or provision of Khas land on long term lease
- Scale up successful livelihood transformative programmes (i.e. through transfers of productive assets) that target the poorest of the poor
- Reduce barriers to entry into the labour market through large scale vocational training schemes that target the skills needed by growing industries
- Support individual and collective agricultural enterprises of extreme poor tenant farmers including through input supplies, technical knowledge and market linkages (including access to credit)
- Support the entry of landless labour into agricultural service markets (contract farming, irrigation and ploughing services, post harvest activities)
- Empower local government to support appropriate local economic development including infrastructure and transport, especially targeting the extreme poor
- Pursue decent work conditions for extreme poor workers in the private sector
- Ensure that entrepreneurs get gas and electricity access if they are generating good jobs for the poorest

Examples of recommendations received

- Systemic social protection reform with a re-classification and streamlining of cash/asset transfer programmes
- Greatly improved targeting of safety nets underpinned by comprehensive monitoring
- Address targeting and exclusion from public services more broadly – ensure that all service providers prioritise the needs of extreme poor users
- Poor people need efficient transport provision to enable mobility and migration within both rural and urban areas.
- Migration within the country and externally is a key opportunity for poor people. Government needs to improve the regulation of private sector employers at home and abroad to ensure the principles of decent work, especially at lower levels of skill and productivity where workers are likely to be the most exploited, especially women in the garments and domestic labour sectors.
- The extreme poor live in some of the most difficult and remote areas of the country. Public services capacity needs to be radically enhanced to engage with these access problems, including urban slums and streets, CHT, haors, the coastal belt and chars.
- Access is also about information as a source of greater market autonomy and empowerment for the poor.
- Measures to encourage staying on at school, not only enrolling
- Greatly improve the monitoring of public service provision at the point of delivery and use this information to make providers accountable
- Ensure that enterprise support services (e.g agric extension, livestock, fisheries, business registration, market access) address the needs of micro businesses
- Capacitate local government to provide a service of micro enterprise support
- Remove security related and legal barriers to micro business establishment such as formal or informal fees and collusion between mastaans, market fixers and law enforcers
3. Vulnerability to extreme shocks

The extreme poor suffer most and are least able to recover from major natural disasters. Community level shocks such as the repeated impact of river erosion push thousands into extreme poverty. The Southern coastal belt is especially prone to catastrophic natural disasters the risk of which is increasing with climate change. In urban areas the impact of “man-made disasters” such as slum evictions and fires is no less devastating than natural catastrophes.

Examples of recommendations received

- Focus attention upon the regional concentrations of extreme poverty which coincide with locations vulnerable to climactic shocks
- Develop micro insurance products as a basis for replacing damaged assets
- Register ‘at risk’ households for rapid safety net responses, including for livestock
- Strengthen extension services in preparedness and rehabilitation, especially with regard to agriculture and horticulture
- Improve information quality/reliability and speed predicted extreme climatic events
- Ensure well distributed storage of essential basic needs items and easy access to them
- Store records of occupancy rights away from affected areas
- Support income diversification options, including short term migration
- Ensure the extreme poor are mainstreamed into all disaster risk reduction and preparedness measures
- Promote savings schemes as a source of resilience
4. Health and Nutrition Vulnerability

Poor nutrition is a key mechanism for the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Untreated or inadequately treated chronic health problems are prevalent amongst the poorest and, together with the impact of illness and accidents, are the most common single cause pushing families into extreme poverty and keeping them there.

Examples of recommendations received

- Ensure the rights of the extreme poor to good health and nutrition through lobbying and social action as well functional education
- Reform safety nets to provide a form of social insurance against loss of income due to health shocks
- Widespread health education campaigns, using all appropriate media to target the extreme poor, especially women
- Ensure food security for all through effective monitoring and targeting of interventions to food insecure hotspots
- Ensure that poor and marginalised women have access to comprehensive reproductive health services
- Improve maternal health through recruiting more female doctors and nurses, insisting on minimum periods of rural service
- Direct national action to scale up successful nutrition interventions targeted towards the poorest women, girls and infants, with a particular focus upon early years stunting
- Work with pharmaceutical companies and village doctors to eliminate the widespread over prescription and wrong prescription of drugs
5. Gender Inequity

Issues of gender inequity cut across and amplify the negative impact of the other challenges that cause and sustain extreme poverty. Hence women and girls will find it more difficult to earn a living wage or to access vital services. Female headed households are more likely to be suppressed in an extreme poor state while gender based violence and gender specific issues such as early marriage and dowry have a strong negative impact on women and their families.

6. Marginalised Group specific risks and vulnerabilities

This is a broad category that includes the special challenges faced by a diverse range of marginalised and socially excluded groups. Some groups, such as harijans, dalits or adivasis, are historically disadvantaged facing the impact of discrimination in education, service access and employment opportunities. Other groups like street children or street dwellers are more recent but are no less excluded from the benefits of national economic development. Old age and disability are two causes of marginalisation commonly associated with extreme poverty.

Examples of recommendations received

- Support the financial independence of women through measures to secure women’s rights in ownership and management of assets and family decision making
- Ensure equal pay for women and secure necessary improvements in benefits and working conditions
- End gender based violence and secure the rights of vulnerable and victimised women to social protection benefits
- Adopt measures to prevent early marriage
- Build the capacity for gender disaggregated monitoring data and include gender reporting in all monitoring of poverty reduction programmes
- Overcome barriers to women’s increased participation in the labour market and to successful female entrepreneurship, including access to training opportunities and to input and output markets
- Increase sensitivity to gender issues at the local government level
- Target women and female headed households for livelihood support programmes

Examples of recommendations received

- A national plan of action that recognizes the existence and reaffirms the rights of all marginalised people
- Ensure full access of all marginalised groups to public services and transfers through effective monitoring and immediate corrective action
- Sensitise all marginalised groups of their rights to overcome social exclusion
- Overcome bias and bigotry in the administrative services towards marginalised groups
- Introduce a public plan of action for disability across both the transformative project and the public service reform programme
- Work with corporates to promote training and employment of people with disabilities

The tables above include some strong recommendations received from a variety of sources but this Manifesto does not intend to be prescriptive about detailed actions. The development of a programme to eradicate extreme poverty is a work in progress. The process should involve the extreme poor themselves as well as sectoral experts and service delivery agencies.
What should happen next?

The Manifesto initiative came out of a workshop during 2011 involving a group of NGOs already engaged in extreme poverty reduction projects.

The subsequent process of drafting the Manifesto has already included consultation with extreme poor families, NGO field workers, development experts, Members of Parliament, donors and other stakeholders through round table discussions, focus groups and online. But this process of dialogue is only just starting.

If the objectives of the Manifesto are to be achieved the idea has to be owned by the nation and the task of taking the venture forward has to be led by a big powerful coalition of Bangladeshi institutions and leaders.⁵

At this stage, the Manifesto is not essentially about creating institutional structures, it is about motivating people to act. Hence all those with access to power and resources can start to do something right now to help address extreme poverty. This includes: making the conditions of the poorest more visible in the press and public forums, demanding accountability from government officials and politicians with regard to their poverty reducing actions, for the corporate sector examining what more can be done to overcome barriers to employment, for youth using all means possible, including social media, to keep the issue on the agenda, for NGOs developing interventions to access the hardest to reach groups, for development partners helping to fund such interventions and using their considerable influence to promote a focus on extreme poverty reduction.

These are just some examples. The prize is taking a huge step towards a poverty free Bangladesh.

Do you have access to any power, resources or influence?
What can YOU do?

⁵One idea is to establish a National Commission for the Eradication of Extreme Poverty that would oversee and guide the venture. This would provide an institutional home and source of leadership.
Ask yourself:
*Could you and will you do any of the following?*

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<th>Yes, I could do it</th>
<th>Yes, I will do it</th>
<th>YES! I have done it</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Talk to some extreme poor people and find out more about the challenges they face and their hopes for the future</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Think about the type of future you want for Bangladesh, with a special focus on levels of poverty and inequality, and discuss this in any formal or informal networks to which you belong</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Spread the Manifesto messages so that they start to become a national movement - using whatever influence you have or networks you are part of</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Ask people in positions of power and influence if they are willing to support the objective of the eradication of extreme poverty</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Bring your own organisation on board and get your organisation to commit resources</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Articulate your support for this cause in any events that you attend</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Put some personal savings aside to contribute to an extreme poverty eradication fund</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Take direct action to help some extreme poor people to take steps out of poverty</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Contribute your ideas and knowledge to the further development of a plan of action to eradicate extreme poverty</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Pledge your support by logging on at <a href="http://www.ManifestofortheExtremePoor.com">www.ManifestofortheExtremePoor.com</a></td>
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**One Demand**
The final eradication of extreme poverty from Bangladesh by 2022

**Three Actions**
One: Design and implement a national programme of livelihood-transformative initiatives to rapidly eradicate extreme poverty from Bangladesh

Two: Systematically monitor and reform public services and social protection transfers to prioritise the needs of the extreme poor

Three: Promote the institutional, policy and behavioural changes needed to address the root causes of extreme poverty

**Five Process Principles**
Partnerships, Participation, Action, Accountability, Inclusion

www.manifestofortheextremepoor.com