

DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA

A Resource Tool Kit



UNICEF REGIONAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH ASIA



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Foreword

Countries in South Asia have achieved impressive progress towards the goal of education for all. The current focus is now on how to reach the children who are still not in school or those who are in school but not learning. The 2010 UNICEF Progress for Children Report estimated that there are 33 million children of primary school age out of school in South Asia. Most of these children are not in school because they face challenges linked to income, gender, ethnicity/caste, language, and where they live. Often, not just one category of disparity keeps a child out of school, but an interaction of multiple disadvantages.

It is well known that a positive educational experience can play a key role in helping people break out of the cycle of poverty and disadvantage. Ironically, those children and young people in South Asia who could most benefit from education are also the ones who are least likely to enrol in or succeed in school.

Despite the significant statistical progress in terms of national averages towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including goals 2 and 3 of primary education for all and gender equality, there is uneven progress and increasing disparities in many countries. Even if we find ourselves having reached a high national average rate of children in school in 2015, it is critical that we reached the hardest to reach children.

The UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia has produced a number of publications over the last few years that provide in-depth analysis of disparities related to the fulfilment of education rights and strategies that can be applied to address inequalities in education. The aim of this Resource Tool Kit is to synthesize this body of work, as well as other key publications by other organizations and research groups, in order to provide a brief overview of disparities in education in South Asia and the potential strategies to reduce disparities, and propose further reading on these issues to guide us in our continued work.



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What is in the Resource Tool Kit

This Resource Tool Kit has been developed for UNICEF Education Officers in South Asia, and presents a synthesis of key issues related to disparities in education in the region and potential strategies to overcome or reduce these disparities. The document also includes references for further readings. The Tool Kit is a contribution to UNICEF's renewed focus on reaching the most disadvantaged children by taking stock of what we already know in education in South Asia from a number of publications produced by UNICEF ROSA, research groups and other organisations over the last few years.

The brief but composite account of dynamics which challenge the fulfilment of the right to education for all children and examples of interventions to help alleviate it provides a basis for reflection on equity in UNICEF's current work in education. The synthesis also includes the voices of children, parents, teachers and education workers through direct quotes collected through qualitative research.

The Tool Kit is also meant for people working in education in other UN agencies, government and NGO partners. It has six chapters, each of which has a list of resources for further reading at the end of the chapter. The resources included in this Tool Kit are not exhaustive and UNICEF ROSA welcomes submissions of additional resources for future consolidation. The resources can be accessed on the internet, and UNICEF ROSA publications can be accessed through the UNICEF ROSA website: http://www.unicef.org/rosa/what_we_do.html

Chapter 1: Overview of disparities in education

Based on UNICEF's human rights approach to education, Chapter One introduces the complexity of equity in access *to* education, equality of opportunity when *in* school, and quality teaching to ensure enhanced learning outcomes and successful progression *through* education. The Chapter provides an overview of profiles of children who are out of school in South Asia, and illustrates disparities across factors of gender, wealth and location.

Chapter 2: Access to Education

Chapter Two presents a selection of interventions used to address different barriers to access to education such as financial and attitudinal barriers, barriers specific to girls, and structural barriers in the formal school structure.

Chapter 3: Equality of Opportunity in Education

Getting disadvantaged children into school is not sufficient unless they are also treated equally while in school leading to equitable opportunities through education. Chapter Three provides an overview of how schools can be made into protective, non-discriminatory environments.

Chapter 4: Equality in Access to Quality Education

While the two previous chapters look at disparity of access *to* education and inequality *within* education, Chapter Four looks at how disparity in learning outcomes can be addressed.

Chapter 5: Access to Education in Emergencies

Emergency and conflict throughout the South Asia region provides one of the key reasons for children not being in school. Chapter Five focuses specifically on the obstacles to access to education for children in emergencies, but also highlights the opportunities that can be created in crisis situations.

Chapter 6: Effective Planning – Internal and Cross-sectoral

Chapter Six consolidates a number of resources on good practice examples of effective cross-sectoral work of education SWAPs in the South Asia region.

Acronyms

ASER	Annual Status of Education Report (India)
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BEHTRUWC	Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (Bangladesh)
BEP	BRAC Education Programme
BOS	Bangladesh Open School
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education (Bangladesh)
C-EMIS	Community-based Education Management Information System
CFS	Child Friendly School
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
COPE	Community Organized Primary Education (Initiative)
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DME	Deprivation and Marginalization in Education
ECD	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EFAInfo	Database using Devinfo software, used for EFA reporting
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPI	Education Parity Index
GEEI	Gender Equality in Education Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GoN	Government of Nepal
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
MVF	Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (India)
NAR	Net Attendance Rate
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIOS	National Indian Open School
NIOS	National Institute for Open Schooling (India)
NIOS	National Institute of Open Schooling (India)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OBE	Open Basic Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
PBA	Programme-Based Approach
POS	Pakistan Open School
RECOUNP	Research Consortium on Education Outcomes and Poverty
RIVER	The Rishi Valley for Education Resources (India)
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF)
SC	Save the Children
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIP	Sector Investment Programme
SLOS	Sri Lanka Open School
SPEA	School-Based Parents Education and Awareness (Initiative) (Bhutan)
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease

SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TB	Tuberculosis
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education Programme (Bangladesh)
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Educational Programmes (Bangladesh)
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
WFP	World Food Programme

Chapter 1: Overview of disparities in education

Between 1999 and 2010 the South and West Asia region has achieved significant success in halving its number of out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2010a).¹ However, this still leaves a large number of children without access to education. There are widely varying definitions of the precise number of out-of-school children in the region, depending on the different methodologies used. According to UNICEF's *Progress for Children Report 2010*, South Asia has 33 million children of primary school age out of school along with many children of lower secondary school age. UNESCO data on 'Out of School Adolescents' speaks of 71 million lower secondary school age children out of school globally, 40 per cent of whom are in South Asia (UNESCO, 2010a). In addition to those children who are not enrolled, many more children do not receive the full benefits of education because of early dropout or low attendance.

1.1 What defines 'access to education'?

Before analysing which children do not have access to education in South Asia and the reasons for this, it is important to define what precisely is meant by 'access to education'. In 1990 the World Declaration on Education for All recognized that enrolment on its own was not a sufficient measure of successful education, but needs to be complemented by a focus on learning outcomes.

This commitment is reinforced by the UN Millennium Development Goal No. 2 which focuses not just on enrolment but on ensuring that *'all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education'*. A focus on getting all children into primary school can detract from the need to look more closely at the type of education children receive when in school, whether children stay in school, the quality of education they receive in school and the extent to which they are able to complete their schooling (UNESCO 2010a).

Children require not simply access **to** education but also equality of opportunity when **in** education, and quality teaching to ensure enhanced learning outcomes and successful progression **through** education.

The Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) has produced *'an expanded vision of access'* (CREATE, 2008a) which shows that access

needs to be approached not simply by looking at enrolment figures but also at other indicators such as survival rates, completion rates and assessment about educational quality and process. They emphasize that exclusion should not be seen as a one-off event but as a gradual process. This requires not only looking at children who have already dropped out but also at those at risk of dropping out and not completing a full cycle of education – children who are *'silently excluded'* within school, children whose attendance is spasmodic and who often sit at the back of the class receiving little attention from the teacher. Therefore, in this document, access to education will not only be defined as enrolment, but also the ability to remain enrolled in school and to learn while present.

The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children by UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) uses a conceptual framework which captures and analyses the problem of out-of-school children through Five Dimensions of Exclusion (Figure 1). The model brings together both the CREATE model and the UIS typology of out-of-school children.

The Five Dimensions of Exclusion include two dimensions that capture the out-of-school population of both primary school age (Dimension 2) and lower secondary school age (Dimension 3). The importance of pre-primary education for school readiness is represented by Dimension 1, which highlights children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary education.

¹ While UNICEF defines the South Asia Region as including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, UNESCO's South and West Asia Region includes these countries and also the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The focus of basic education must, therefore, be on actual learning acquisition and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment.

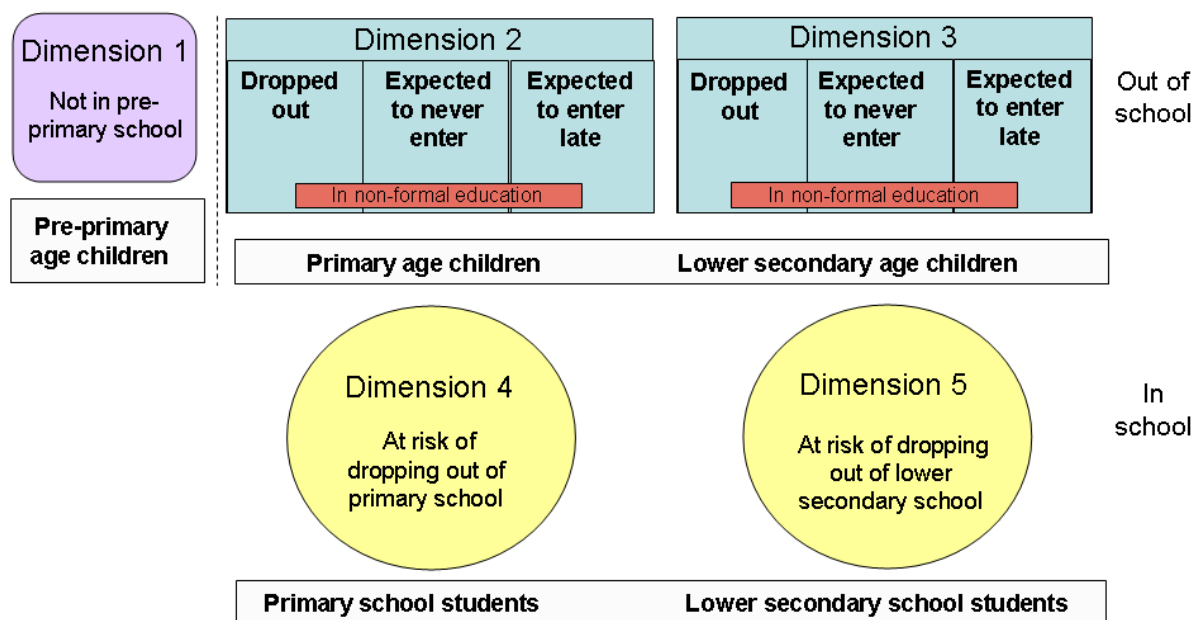
- *World Declaration on Education for All, 1990*

Current monitoring tools do not provide an integrated way of measuring the three things that count in progress towards universal primary education: entering school at an appropriate age, progressing smoothly through the system and completing school.

- *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010*

Additionally, the approach includes two dimensions that focus on children who are in school but at risk of dropping out. Dimension 4 covers children in primary school at risk of dropping out, and Dimension 5 covers children in lower secondary school who are at risk. In summary, the Five Dimensions of Exclusion, through both the out-of-school and at-risk dimensions, describe children who are not participating in the intended level of education for the intended duration and at the intended age.

Figure 1: Five Dimensions of Exclusion



Source: Global Initiative on Out of School Children, Conceptual and Methodological Framework, UNICEF and UNESCO UIS, Nov 2010

Different countries in South Asia will be at different stages in relation to analysing and addressing these dimensions of exclusion and each country needs to determine which aspects of improved access require most immediate attention.

1.2 Who are the excluded children in South Asia and why?

Throughout the push for universal primary education, categories of children who are most likely to be excluded from education in South Asia have been generated. Some of these categories are related with 'demand' factors inherent to the children. Others are linked to 'supply' factors related to the education system, while several relate to both supply and demand.

These categories are not static. Recent studies in Bangladesh reveal that while the number of girls attending school has increased dramatically there is an increasing problem of boys' exclusion (e.g. SIDA, 2010). Other studies have shown that the rapid rate of urbanization in many countries in the region can mean that an increasing number of children living in large cities now do not have access to school. Global economic and financial crises can result in many new children entering the ranks of the excluded: *'in 2007–08 the sharp rise in food prices forced half of the poor households surveyed in Bangladesh to remove children from school'* (Raihan, 2009, cited in UNESCO, 2010b). This evidence from Bangladesh has been reinforced by more recent findings which show how the worsening food security situation has resulted in parents having to remove children from school in order to work (Education Watch Nepal, 2009–10; Food Security Monitoring Task Force, Nepal, 2010).

Children are more likely to be excluded from education if they are:

- Girls
- Children from marginalized ethnic or caste communities
- Children whose first language is different from that used in school
- Children from socially excluded groups
- Children without birth registration, which means they are not always deemed to be entitled to a place at school
- Children whose parents have not received education
- Children with disabilities or special learning needs
- Children who are above the average age for their class
- Children from very poor families who cannot afford the costs of education or the opportunity costs it would entail
- Children who are chronically ill or malnourished
- Children with inadequate care and protection – orphans or children living with one or no parents
- Working children
- Children from socially excluded families such as sex workers and HIV/AIDS infected

Other categories are determined by where the children live:

- Children living in very remote areas
- Children living in slums, often part of illegally settled groups
- Children who have been displaced or are in refugee camps
- Children of migrant workers

Children who face temporary exclusion

Some children face temporary periods of exclusion from school, the repercussions of which can often lead to permanent dropout. They include:

- Children in countries which experience conflict or emergencies when children can be recruited as child soldiers, forced into early marriage, or are away from school for long periods of time
- Children whose parents seasonally migrate for work
- Girls during menstruation. In a 2009 qualitative study, a majority of teenage girls interviewed in four countries across the region said that the lack of privacy and adequately functioning sanitation facilities meant that they regularly missed several days of schooling each month (UNICEF, 2009c)

Complex and cross-cutting factors which lead to exclusion

Listing categories of children who might face exclusion gives only a partial picture. By far the majority of children who are excluded from school experience multiple disparities with key cross-cutting factors being poverty, gender, malnutrition or illness, and low levels of parental education. Research on disparity shows a growing realization of the need to rethink the concept of solely targeting excluded groups as *'poverty, gender, ethnicity, minority language and disability do not automatically consign children to a marginalized future in education or beyond'* (UNESCO, 2010b). It is a complex interaction of factors which result in children not attending school.

Interaction of demand and supply factors

There are different ways in which the provision of schooling can affect the potential for children's exclusion such as: education not being free or affordable; schools that are an inaccessible distance to

The intricate way in which different demand and supply factors intertwine to result in children not attending school are given in this list of reasons cited by Dalit children and their families in Nepal:

- Parents unable to afford ancillary costs of education or the opportunity costs
- Families being unaware of incentive schemes for Dalits or, where they were aware of these, children not liking the stigmatization that goes with a 'Dalit scholarship'
- Dalit parents not seeing school as an advantage since they perceive jobs as coming from social advantage and also fear that education will lead children away from traditional Dalit employment opportunities
- Many Dalit children not being registered at birth which can lead to difficulties in school registration
- Fear amongst children that if they attend school they will be ridiculed by children of their own community who do not go to school
- Fear of possible negative attitudes of teachers and other students towards Dalits
- Curriculum and teaching materials which are not seen as relevant by Dalits
- Children feeling uncomfortable as language used at school is more hierarchical than that used in their home
- When parents do see education as valuable, a belief that it is more valuable for boys than girls

(adapted from Acharya, 2007)

children; schools not being equally welcoming to all children; unequal quality of schooling; and schools not providing equality of opportunity (Durstun *et al.*, 2008). Some of these barriers may be obvious – for instance, there is no school available near enough for a child living in a remote region to walk to. Others are more subtle – for instance, a tacit assumption by teachers that some children are less able to benefit from education than others.

The list of reasons cited by Dalit children and families in Nepal described in the box, shows the complex interaction of demand and supply factors and also the merging of a range of disincentives which may be *economic* (parents cannot afford the costs associated with schooling), *societal* (a belief amongst some families that education is not relevant for Dalits), *pedagogical* (curriculum and teaching not seen as appropriate for Dalits) and

psychological (fear of negative attitudes of others and also sensitivity about the stigmatization of incentive schemes).

1.3 Cross-cutting factors of gender, wealth and location

Analysis of international education data demonstrates that three key cross-cutting factors which contribute to disparity in access to education are *gender*, *wealth* and *location*. However, these issues do not have a uniform impact in the countries of the region.

Gender disparity

South Asia has experienced a positive development in narrowing the gap in gender parity in primary education enrolment, but at the same time two countries in the region have the steepest gender disparity in the world: Afghanistan with a net enrolment rate for girls of 46 per cent and Pakistan with a rate of 60 per cent (UNICEF SOWC 2011). Girls are also disadvantaged at the secondary education level, particularly in some countries. Although in Bangladesh, Maldives, and Bhutan, slightly more girls than boys are in secondary school. Figure 4 in the Appendix shows education disparities by gender by comparing the Gender Parity Index (GPI) at primary and secondary education level.

However, in all countries, including those where gender parity in education has been largely achieved, another form of exclusion of girls and women exists; gender parity in basic education has not contributed to girls' social and political empowerment (Chitrakar, 2009). This can be illustrated by the Gender Inequality Index in Figure 5 in the Appendix, which measures gender equality across the areas of reproductive health, empowerment (secondary education and above, and parliamentary representation) and labour force participation.

Disparity by location and wealth

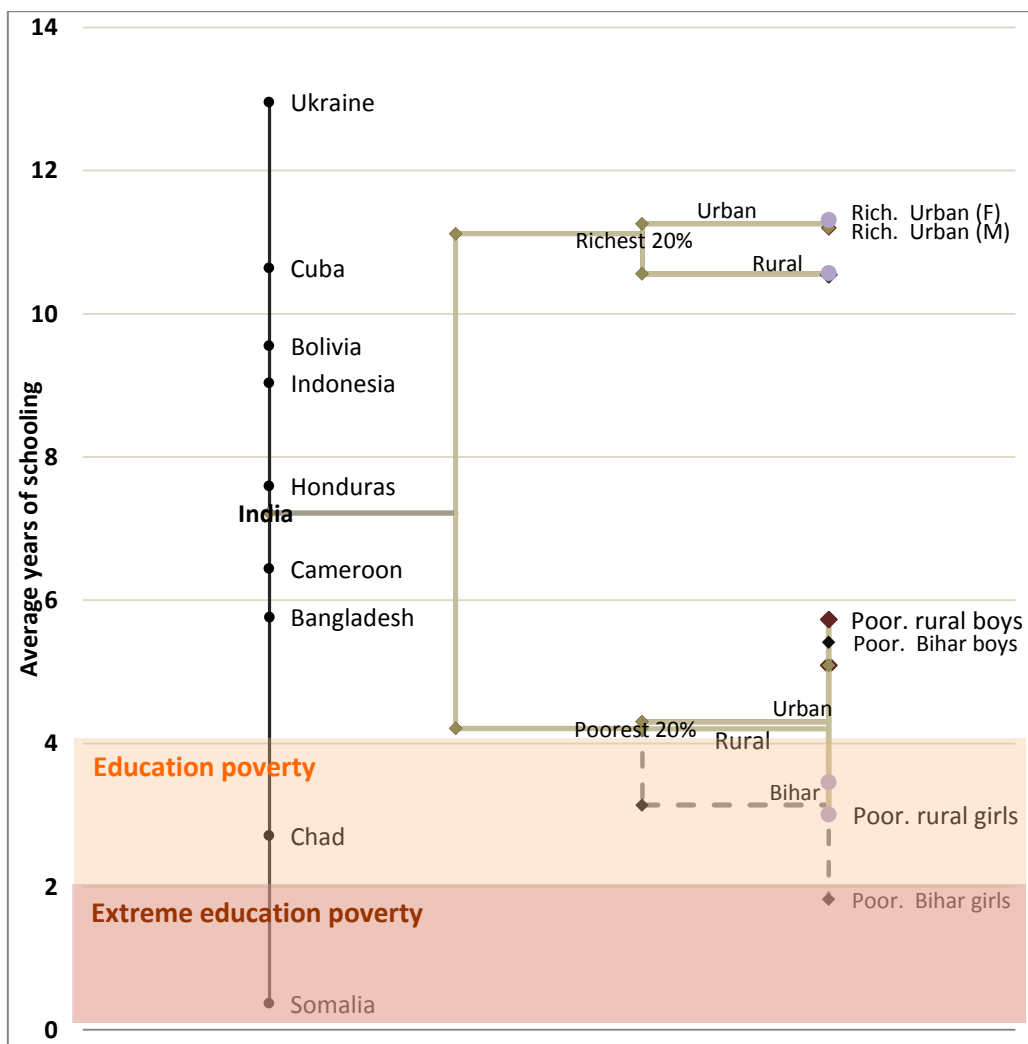
For five countries in the region – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan – data is available from household surveys showing disparities in primary and secondary net attendance rate (NAR) by wealth quintile (Figures 6 and 7 in the Appendix). At the primary education level the

disparities between the wealth quintiles are less marked than at secondary education level (except for Afghanistan and Pakistan). At secondary education level, disparity by wealth quintile does seem to have a greater impact, although within a context of very low enrolment even for the richest.

The Education Parity Index (EPI), illustrated with household survey data in Figure 8 in the Appendix, shows that in each country the disparity by wealth is greatest, as indicated by the low value of the wealth parity index. In all countries, except Bangladesh, gender disparity is smaller than disparity linked to the area of residence and household wealth. In Bangladesh, the disparity between urban and rural areas is smaller than the disparities linked to other groups of disaggregation (Huebler, 2008).

Figure 2: Education Inequality Tree: mapping of marginalization in India

Average number of years of education in India by wealth, location and gender with special reference to Bihar region, 2005



Sources: Macro International, calculations by Misselhorn et al. from database UNESCO-DME, 2009 Data Set on Deprivation and Marginalization in Education. Paris: UNESCO

The Deprivation and Marginalization in Education (DME) data set developed by UNESCO is a tool which can also be used to illustrate the interaction between multiple disparities. The data set uses three categories of educational poverty in young adults aged between 17 and 22 based on the number of years in school: 'Education Poverty', those with less than four years education; 'Extreme Education Poverty', those with less than two years of education; and 'The Bottom 20%', those with the fewest years of education in a given society.

In Figure 2 the DME data set for India was used in a tree analysis to show the education disparities by wealth, location and gender, for India in general and the Bihar region in particular. While the richest 20 per cent average over 11 years in school, the poorest's average education expectancy is just above the four-year 'education poverty line'. Poor rural females are well below that line – averaging three years in education. The average poor rural woman aged 17 to 22 in Bihar averages less than two years of education (UNESCO, 2010b).

1.4 Conclusion

Different countries in the South Asia region have different patterns of exclusion. For example India and Bangladesh are both facing a vast increase in urbanization which means that increasing numbers of out-of-school children are to be found in cities, while in Afghanistan and Bhutan the majority of children who have unequal access to education are in rural districts. It is important that policy makers and planners move away from lists of assumed categories of excluded children and carry out in-depth, country-specific analyses on the actual situation within their own particular country context. This is particularly important considering that the majority of children who are excluded from school experience multiple deprivations.

A further key factor in exclusion is discrimination once children are enrolled in school. This includes discrimination both from other children and from teachers, and tends to reflect the attitudes of the wider community. However, the situation is complex – for example, while caste is clearly a factor in discrimination in some schools in India and Nepal, in others it is not evident (UNICEF, 2009c, India and Nepal Country Reports).

UNICEF needs to focus more on cross-sectoral analysis and use of data in its work, especially as country programmes are moving towards greater convergence between the sectors. Education, as an enabling right, provides the opportunity to explore the impact of education on other MDGs. In this context, there is a growing body of evidence that show that MDGs are reached more quickly when more investment is provided for education, for example the link between malnutrition rates and the education level of mothers. In Nepal, household survey data shows that the percentage of children who are severely underweight is more than five times as high for children whose mothers have no education as opposed to children whose mothers have at least secondary education or above (Nepal DHS 2006).

1.5 Resources

Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) (2008a). *Reconceptualizing Access to Education*. Policy Brief No. 1. Sussex, UK: University of Sussex/DFID

CREATE is a five-year (2005–2010) DFID funded research programme with partners in Bangladesh, Ghana, India, South Africa and the UK. The aims of the programme are to increase knowledge and understanding of the reasons why many children fail to access and complete basic education successfully. A series of research monographs, country analytic reviews and policy briefings produced by the consortium can be found on www.create-rpc.org

Education Watch Nepal (2009–10). *3F Crisis: Impact on Education: Quarterly Monitoring Reports*. Kathmandu: Research Input and Development Action (RIDA), Department of Education, UNICEF <http://groups.google.com/group/NeKSAP/web/education-watch>

The monitoring mechanism assessing the impacts of the food, fuel and financial (3F) crisis on children's education in Nepal is facilitated by RIDA with support from UNICEF and in coordination with the Department of Education, District Education Offices, and schools. Monitoring takes place at three levels: (i) community (through focus group discussions (FGDs) with mothers, children and teachers); (ii) household (based on WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping quarterly household survey data from 52 districts); and (iii) school (through monthly information collected from a sample of 22 schools in 11 districts).

Huebler, F. (2008). *Beyond Gender: Measuring Disparity in South Asia using an Education Parity Index*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

In this paper Friedrich Huebler presents a new tool, the Education Parity Index (EPI), which combines information on disparities across different education indicators and across different groups of disaggregation. The result is a tool for countries in South Asia, which can be modified according to national priorities, which brings together data on disparity in primary and secondary education by gender, area of residence and household wealth.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (2010). *Reality Check Bangladesh 2009: Listening to Poor People's Realities about Primary Healthcare and Primary Education*. Stockholm and Dhaka: SIDA

The Reality Check initiative was established by the Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh in 2007 as an important contribution to their Country Strategy for Cooperation with Bangladesh (2008–12). This Strategy emphasises the value of supporting platforms for dialogue 'from below', i.e. interacting with people living in poverty as well as with those providing services to the poor. This principle is drawn from Sweden's Policy for Global Development adopted by the Swedish Parliament in 2003, which highlights two underlying perspectives which are to permeate all of Swedish development co-operation.

UNDP (2010). *Human Development Report*. New York: UNDP

This report surveys critical aspects of human development, from political freedoms and empowerment to sustainability and human security, and outlines a broader agenda for research and policies to respond to these challenges. Three new tools have been introduced – the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index, the Gender Inequality Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index. The Gender Empowerment Index (GEM) is now replaced by Gender Inequality Index which is a composite index measuring loss in achievements in three dimensions of human development—reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market, due to inequality between genders. For more details, read pp. 89-94.

UNESCO (2010a). *Reaching the Marginalized. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010: Regional Overview for South and West Asia*. Paris and Oxford: UNESCO and Oxford University Press

The South and West Asia Regional Overview (which includes all countries in the South Asia region and also Iran) notes the progress made in access to education in many countries of the region, in particular India. However, it also shows how these gains are under threat both because of the global economic downturn and also the ongoing conflict situation in many countries in the region.

UNESCO (2010b). *Reaching the Marginalized. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010*. Paris and Oxford: UNESCO and Oxford University Press

The 2010 Education for All monitoring report focuses specifically on those children who are marginalized from education opportunities for a variety of reasons including increased poverty resulting from the global economic downturn. The report examines who these children are, why they are being left behind, and what solutions are required to ensure that all children gain access to education. This report includes a new tool, the Deprivation and Marginalization in Education (DME) data set, which provides a window on the scale of marginalization within countries and on the social composition of marginalized groups (for details go to Chapter 3, pag135-213).

UNICEF (2009a). *A Matter of Magnitude: The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Women and Children in South Asia*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This report states that 100 million more people in the region are going hungry compared to two years ago, and cites the worst affected areas as Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The report urges governments for "urgent and inclusive" response and adds that their fiscal stimulation packages as well as donor assistance are key opportunities to strengthen and improve health and education services and enhance long-term social protection programmes to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised. While urging governments to address the enormous problem of malnutrition in the region, the report also stresses the need for enhancing publicly – financed employment and training schemes, particularly for young people.

UNICEF (2009c). *Equity in School Water and Sanitation: Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination in South Asia*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

Regional report and Bhutan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh case studies (5 documents). These studies go beyond simply looking at the importance of schools providing toilets and safe drinking water and also examine other ways in which school children can be discriminated against for issues related to

water and sanitation and to perceived notions of cleanliness. The four country case studies used qualitative research methods in order to elicit the views of children, families and teachers.

Chapter 2: Access to Education

In order for all children to have access **to** education, education systems need to take proactive steps to reach out to and include all children. This chapter on 'Access to Education' will focus on some of the key barriers to access to education, and will examine some practices which have attempted to reduce them.

2.1 Addressing financial barriers to education

Social exclusion and gender inequality are deeply related to poverty in South Asia (Seel, 2007). Costs of schooling, a main cause of exclusion, fall into three categories:

1. **Actual school fees.** Even when countries have official policies for free primary education, a global World Bank report in 2005 found that 'of 93 countries ... most of which had official provision for free primary education, only 16 charged no fees at all' (Cited in World Bank/UNICEF, 2009, p.3).

Chitrakar (2009) states that in many South Asian countries poverty tends to impact girls' education more than boys: '... if parents needed to make a hard choice they would send their sons to school first' as it is their sons rather than their daughters who will be the ones who ultimately bring income back to the family (p.23). Moreover, while in a middle class South Asian family an educated girl might be seen as an asset in marriage, traditionally, in less affluent families, girls are expected to marry a groom who is better educated than the bride, hence 'an educated girl is likely to be more expensive to marry off' (Dreze and Sen, 1995).

2. **Hidden costs.** These include costs of admission fees, examination fees, uniform, textbooks, stationery, transport, extra tuition demanded by teachers.

3. **Opportunity costs.** These commonly represent the income that families often lose if they send their child to school. Opportunity costs take different forms, especially depending on the sex of the child. While boys may be more likely to

perform paid work, girls often have to carry out domestic tasks such as looking after younger children thus freeing their parents up for work.

In order to address the barriers faced by different types of education costs, policies are needed which will benefit everyone, but also targeted policies, e.g. scholarships for girls, or Dalits, or very poor children, which are aimed at creating greater equity (UNICEF, 2007a).

Making schooling free for all children

Evidence has shown that 'school fee abolition is a bold and demonstrably effective initiative for accelerating the attainment of the EFA goals' (World Bank/UNICEF, 2009). Abolition of school fees has increased enrolment rates in a wide range of countries. Enrolment of poor children is especially sensitive to fees: after abolishing school fees, enrolment rates grew more quickly among the poor in Cambodia, Malawi, Timor-Leste, Uganda and Zambia. In Malawi, the gap between poor and non-poor narrowed from 36 to 11 percentage points (UNICEF, 2007a). Thus, school fee abolition is an important step, but additional measures are needed to address barriers to education for excluded and marginalised children. School fee abolition does not always address the hidden costs of education, nor does it help parents alleviate the opportunity costs. In order to address this, countries throughout the region have introduced a number of special incentive measures.

Incentive schemes

Incentives which encourage families to send their children to school can take different forms. Several countries in the region provide some kind of financial recompense; in other instances the incentives given are food products such as cooking oil or rice. Some incentive schemes target a particular group of children such as girls or Dalit children; in other instances the incentive is given to all children in the school – for example the Indian Midday Meal programme (UNICEF, 2009f).

One often cited example of a successful incentive scheme is the Female Stipend Programme in Bangladesh whereby all rural secondary age girls are eligible for a monthly stipend in return for 75 per cent attendance rate, 45 per cent attainment in examinations and an agreement not to marry until they are eighteen (Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2008, p.25). It is largely acknowledged that this programme has been a major contribution for Bangladesh having achieved parity between girls and boys in terms of access to education.

However, valuable as many of these programmes are, critiques show that they do not provide a universal panacea and can have unintended negative consequences. While the quotation in the box shows how positively one young disabled girl felt about her stipend, other examples in the Nepal Case Study show how the amount of money offered is often simply not enough to make any real difference to the family, and also how stipend schemes can be mismanaged with awards going to the wrong people, with entitled families being unaware of their existence. Other critiques have raised the issue of the negative stigma which can be created through the existence of targeted incentives.

Another concern about stipend programmes is that while they can be successful in reducing disparity in enrolment, they do not automatically lead to equality of outcome. Financial motivation for sending children to school does not automatically result in a commitment to education; hence it has been recognized that stipend programmes need to be matched by strong advocacy campaigns which raise the awareness of the potential benefits of sending children to school. There is a need to address not just financial but also attitudinal barriers to education, which will be addressed in the following section.

2.2 Addressing attitudinal barriers to education

Addressing financial barriers to education is not sufficient on its own to ensure that all children attend school, but also a change in attitudes to schooling must take place. It is widely recognized that *'discriminatory attitudes and practices are a significant barrier to the participation and achievement of some children'* (Seel, 2007, p.90). Attitudinal barriers occur both on the 'demand' side when families or children feel that 'school is not for us' and on the supply side when teachers or officials feel that 'school is not for them'. The examples below show some of the ways in which attempts have been made to create an ethos in which all children are encouraged to attend school.

Outreach work and school mapping

Children who are out of school are often invisible children. They include street children, household servants, working children and migrant children. A child-seeking approach, which proactively encourages these children to attend school, needs to include outreach programmes. In some countries this outreach work is carried out by schools themselves. Several schools in Nepal have instigated a school mapping procedure whereby teachers and children draw up a map of the community and use it to trace which children are in school and which are not. Also in Bhutan and India (with the Right to Education Act) schools have responsibility for reaching out to children in the school's vicinity who are not in school.

'It is a great help to me and my parents because they are poor and I can't work like my other siblings. I want to help them a lot. Now I feel that after the completion of my studies I will be a teacher and able to help my family. This support has inspired me to continue my studies. Now my parents will have less tension about my studies.'
(Disability Scholarship recipient Usha Kumari Bhagat from Grade 4, in Nepal, cited in Acharya, 2007, p.49)

'I was never really conscious of being a Dalit. My best friend was Imal Lama. While I was in the Child Club, I used to go to his house, and we would eat and play and work together. Our families also spent time together. Now my younger brother and Imal's younger brother are also friends. ... Recently our school provided extra tuition classes for Dalit students. They wanted to go together but Imal's brother couldn't go because it was only for Dalit children. Before this they had no idea of Dalit or non-Dalit. Now they know all about caste differences. It's not good.' (Chitrakar, 2009, Nepal country-specific scenario, p.79)

... in this effort, people in the school and the community, with the help of authorities or NGOs, try to establish who does not come to school, or who drops out, and why, and to recruit them by providing various kinds of incentives. (CIER, 2009, p.16, example from Maldives)

Initiatives with community involvement

Community involvement, meaning engaging people in a local area in a programme or intervention, is essential if deep-seated prejudice against certain children attending school is to be overcome. There are several examples of community-based projects which have made a substantial difference to changing girls' attendance at school in South Asia. For example, in Baluchistan in Pakistan girls' enrolment in primary school in 1990 was around 14 per cent. A Community Support programme was developed to help communities start schools for girls with the help of a local NGO. Two years after the programme was started, girls' enrolment had risen to an astonishing 87 per cent. Similar successes can be seen in the Jansala project which works in nine states in India focusing on the education of girls and children from disadvantaged groups. The project, which is managed by elected leaders from the villages, is based on the strategy of identifying and enrolling every child (Herz, 2006, Chapter 4).

'We cannot send our daughters to far-away villages for studies as it is not safe to travel 3–4 kilometres on foot. Nazma is an intelligent girl and I feel bad when I see my daughter wanting to go to school and I cannot do anything.' (Example from India in Narayan *et al.*, 2010, p.2)

Programmes are often more sustainable when involving those who have an influence over community attitudes such as religious or community leaders. However, it is important to ensure such projects do not suffer from what has been termed *'elite capture'* (Seel, 2007, p.95) when community participation actually becomes a disguise for the perpetuation of the power of existing elites.

Awareness-raising initiatives

Another strategy is awareness-raising or Communication for Development (C4D) initiatives which specifically target out-of-school children and their families. For example, Meena, a UNICEF ROSA communication initiative, devised a cartoon girl who overcomes countless obstacles in her efforts to attend school. The Meena communication packages consist of cartoon books, animated films, posters, teachers' guidance materials and a radio programme. The Meena tool has been used in disaster risk reduction work and in emergency situations such as in Pakistan as part of psycho-social trauma counselling after the devastating floods in 2010.

Child Clubs

One innovation in Nepal, which has been successful in helping to empower disadvantaged children and change entrenched attitudes, has been the Child Club movement. These clubs carry out a range of activities within their schools and communities including identifying out-of-school children and supporting them in coming back to school. There are indications that discrimination towards Dalit children is less amongst child club members and also that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have considerably raised self-esteem as a result of belonging to the clubs (Barr *et al.*, 2007, pp.27–28).

2.3 Addressing barriers specific to girl students

In several countries of South Asia, including parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, social norms and the status of women often exclude girls, in particular adolescent girls, from education.

Barriers related to safety and 'honour'

A major concern expressed in some countries in the region is about the safety of girls travelling to school. Issues of safety include concerns both about actual physical safety and a cultural perception that the honour of the family rests in the honour of its women. It is perceived that a girl, particularly after she has reached puberty, is violating her family's honour by walking un-chaperoned outside her immediate neighbourhood. This means that girls in more remote areas are more likely to be affected by distance from a school than boys, and that travel costs for girls and female teachers are likely to be higher.

Social norms can influence families to prefer single-sex rather than gender-integrated schools. Building separate schools with clear boundary walls for boys and girls can cause significant additional expense. A compromise solution has been adopted in areas of Northern Pakistan where a shift system is operated allowing both boys and girls to attend school but at separate times (Herz, 2006, p.27).

Another gender-related aspect of access to education is the fact that, in many countries in the region, parents prefer their daughters to be taught by a female teacher. An Indian NGO, Seva Mandir, which serves a highly disadvantaged population of children, found that *'placing a woman teacher in a classroom boosted girls' attendance by half'* (Herz, 2006, p.27). In order to provide female teachers, Pakistan has adopted a system in Baluchistan whereby women with a middle or secondary school education have been selected to teach in their home villages. They are provided with additional training and, after a three-month period of successful teaching, hired as regular government teachers (Herz, 2006, p.26).

To make sure girls are safe going to school and to observe cultural traditions, daughters may require more protection than boys (a male relative to escort them to school, for instance), or more expensive transport (rather than walking). When schools are not close to homes – within easy walking distance – children are much less likely to attend, and the impact on girls far exceeds that on boys. (Herz, 2006, p.15)

Barriers facing girls during menstruation

According to the UNICEF Country Offices' Annual Reports, the proportion of primary schools with adequate sanitation facilities for girls ranges from 30 per cent in Afghanistan to 98 per cent in the Maldives. The lack of separate toilets for girls deters girls from attending school. Therefore a menstruating girl often faces temporary exclusion from school for part of each month. In a UNICEF ROSA study carried out in 2009 which looked at issues of equity in school water and sanitation, researchers found that a majority of girls in the four countries included in the study regularly missed school for 4–5 days per month. The young people interviewed during this study were all attending schools with toilets. However, either the poor maintenance of the facilities, or that no thought appeared to have been given to the specific needs of girls during menstruation, meant that girls felt they had no privacy and nowhere they could change pads or wash out sanitary rags. This study clearly showed that it is not sufficient to provide schools with toilets. In addition girls need to be consulted on their particular needs during menstruation and care given to ensuring that toilet facilities are regularly cleaned and maintained (UNICEF, 2009c).

'During menstruation many girls remain absent from school and cannot prepare the lesson for the next class. That may make them feel inferior and have less interest in study. Consequently they might continuously miss school and drop out' (School Management Committee members, Bangladesh, UNICEF, 2009c, p.17)

2.4 Addressing barriers to education in the formal school structure

The children in South Asia that are being excluded from education cannot always be easily integrated into a formal school structure. If education is to be fully inclusive, educational provision needs to be designed flexibly so that it fits the requirements of all children..

Positive examples of alternative education provision

The South Asia region contains a wealth of alternative forms of education. Figure 9 in the Appendix shows some of these, along with the exclusions they address, as tabulated in the research report *Open and Distance Learning for Basic Education in South Asia* (CDEC, 2009, Table 3.2). Examples are Open Schools, community-based schools, low-cost private schools, faith-based schools, and schools run by charitable organisations.

While the quality of these alternative education provisions may vary, many of them have been successful in reaching children previously excluded from education. The diversity of this kind of provision, and also the success it has had in bringing together a range of different providers in order to create education opportunities specifically tailored for children facing particular access barriers, is shown in Figures 10 and 11 in the Appendix. However, it is important that alternative education forms are accredited with the formal system so that it does not become secondary rank education for excluded groups and hence perpetuating disparities.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter cited some examples of interventions addressing attitudinal barriers to education. However, they remain isolated projects. One of the findings in the UNICEF Social Inclusion SWAp Synthesis Report was that overall plans to address attitudinal barriers were not strongly featured in individual country plans (Seel, 2007, p.64) and the report speaks of how individual successful projects need to be integrated fully in the education sector plans if access issues are to be fully addressed.

Much could be gained on both sides if the formal and non-formal systems, if state and non-state providers, could find a way of working together. ... NGOs, for example, often excel at small-scale, highly contextualized non-formal approaches. State systems, on the other hand, can draw on a much wider range of state infrastructures, resources and recognized accreditation frameworks. (CDEC, 2009, p.13)

Moreover, initiatives which encourage children to attend school do not necessarily alter negative attitudes about who has the right to education. Deep-rooted socio-psychological barriers require more than simply developing initiatives to expand access to education. Instead they require individual countries to: *'embark upon serious and systematic level efforts to gradually address the socio-cultural barriers that pose serious challenges to achieving targets for girls' education in terms of educational access and equity'* (Chitrakar, 2009, p.6).

Non-formal and para-formal learning has had significant success in challenging some of the barriers which prevent children in South Asia from accessing education. These

initiatives have had the freedom to work outside the formal system and to create flexible structures which fit the particular needs of learners, this has been key to their success. However, there can be limitations to non-formal approaches in terms of their lack of overall co-ordination, funding, prestige, absence of quality control and inability to allow students to access formal qualifications. Although perceptions are now changing, traditionally non-formal education tended to be regarded as second best. This has led to a dichotomy between formal and non-formal which has not allowed the two approaches to learn from each other and together create an inclusive spectrum of education provision.

School readiness is also an important area to consider in order to improve access to education for disadvantaged children. Increasingly ECD programmes are being recognized as a high impact strategy for improving child enrolment and child retention at primary school level. By addressing the holistic needs of the child, ECD programmes help to prepare children both physically and psychologically for school. A study in Nepal showed that 93 per cent of Dalit children who had attended an ECD programme by Save the Children went on to become enrolled in school compared with only 30.5 per cent of Dalit children who had received ECD services. Repetition and dropout rates among these children were also lower (Barr *et al.*, 2007, pp.25–26).

2.6 Resources

Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)

<http://www.arnec.net/>

ARNEC is a network established to build strong partnerships across sectors and different disciplines, organizations, agencies and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to advance the agenda on and investment in early childhood. ARNEC covers a wide geographical area from Central Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Pacific, totaling 47 countries.

Barr, E., Durston, S., Jenkins, R., Onada, E. and Pradhan, A. (2007). *Dalits in India and Nepal: Policy Options for Improving Social Inclusion in Education*. UNICEF South Asia: Nepal and India in conjunction with Maastricht University

This paper looks at the educational situation of Dalits in India and Nepal; the complex range of reasons which leads to their exclusion from education; and what lessons can be learnt from current practice in order to develop a comprehensive approach which addresses all barriers to access.

Cambridge Distance Education Consultancy (CDEC) (2009). *Open and Distance Learning for*

***Basic Education in South Asia: Its potential for hard-to-reach children and children in conflict and disaster areas.* Cambridge: CDEC; and Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA**

This study examines the range of different ways in which open and distance education might extend educational options for hard to reach children. The two case studies carried out in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka look specifically at the way in which open learning might facilitate ongoing access to education at times of emergency and conflict.

Chitrakar, R. (2009). *Overcoming Barriers to Girls' Education in South Asia: Deepening the Analysis.* Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

The analysis of the documentary evidence for this study is informed by the need to investigate more deeply the barriers to girls' education and gender equality in South Asian countries. The study contains a detailed description and analysis of the educational situation for girls in each of the eight countries. It particularly focuses on the way in which, even when countries have progressed in terms of parity of girls having access to education, education still tends not to play a transformational role for girls and is yet to lead to a more gender equal society.

European Commission, UNICEF, International Center for Research on Women - ICRW (2011). *ICRW Report to UNICEF, Delaying Marriage for Girls in India: A Formative Research to Design Interventions for Changing Norms.* UNICEF

Govinda R. (Ed.) (2011). *Who Goes to School?: Exploring Exclusion in Indian Education.* Oxford University Press India

As a result of the boom in private-sector education and the attempts to universalize elementary education, there has been an unprecedented increase in school enrolment in India. Still, large numbers of children, especially from disadvantaged communities, are deprived of quality education, which has thwarted the equitable access to basic education. This book explores such exclusion and the policies and actions required to develop an inclusive education system. It focuses on aspects ranging from malnutrition, gender and social equity, migration, drop out, and differentiation in schooling provisions to matters of teaching and governance.

Gunawardena C. and Jayaweera S. (2008), *Gender Mainstreaming: Does it happen in education in South Asia?* Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This publication begins with summarizing the international context of gender mainstreaming and then goes on to examine the extent of gender mainstreaming policies in the countries of South Asia. The effectiveness of these policies in education is then examined and a concern expressed that while all countries show the positive impact of international commitments in regard to education indicators there has been less success in envisaging policies that will extend beyond gender parity and embrace the issue of gender equality. The publication ends with some examples of good practice and a list of lessons learnt which could be inputs to facilitate the formulation of policies and programmes to achieve mainstreaming within a framework of gender equality.

Herz, B. (2006). *Educating Girls in South Asia: Promising Approaches.* Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This publication articulates the case for girls' education and also the reasons why more girls in South Asia are not in school. This is followed by a longer section with many practical examples from across the region on approaches which have been successful in furthering girls' education.

Huxley S. (2008), *Progress in Girls' Education: The Challenge of Gender Equality in South Asia.* Kathmandu: Issues Paper. UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This publication starts by looking at both the progress achieved by South Asia and the challenges it faces in relation to promoting girls' education. It examines the various barriers to girls' education and focuses on the need for national mainstreaming approaches. In particular it emphasizes the need for a more integrated approach between education and health and the need for more attention to be paid to the quality dimension of girls' education.

Jamil, B.R. (2011). *Partnerships for equity in Education in South Asia: Prospects and Challenges.* SAFED

This study, commissioned by the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) was undertaken to address gaps in gender equality through the emergent paradigm on partnerships through PPPs and CSR and, in response to a call for guidelines on promoting PPPs and enhancing resources for

realization of EFA goals by 2015 through an internal collaborative fund, development partners and corporate sector (Dhaka Declaration Ministerial South Asia EFA Forum Meeting December 2009).

Jandhyala, K. and Ramachandran, V. (eds.) (2006). *Enabling the most deprived children to learn: lessons from promising practices*. Report commissioned by Department of Elementary Education, MHRD, GOI, and International Labour Organization. New Delhi: ILO

Recognising that the poorest go to government schools and to ensure that the most deprived get a chance to learn and to complete elementary education the government and NGOs have initiated a range of programmes and projects. India has witnessed a number of promising initiatives from which administrators and practitioners can draw important lessons. It is in this backdrop that the Government of India (Department of Education) and the International Labour Organisation decided to study programmes and projects that have successfully addressed issues of quality in government schools – especially for children at risk of dropping out. 17 promising practices dealing with different dimensions of school improvement were identified for in-depth study out of larger set of about 48 programmes identified through a scanning of secondary published and unpublished material.

Kidd S., Calder R., Wylde E. (2011): *Assessing Targeting Options for Nepal's Social Grants: What Does the Evidence Tell Us?* DFID

This paper describes the different types of Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) that can be found across the world. It examines whether the imposition of conditions adds value and, indeed, whether there is an evidence-based rationale for the use of conditions. The paper also discusses some key design issues that are specific to CCTs and examine the extent to which the administrative complexity of CCTs can be managed in low-income countries such as Nepal. It concludes by presenting a decision-tree that may help decision makers assess the suitability of CCTs for Nepal.

Kidd S., Calder R. (2011): *Conditional Cash transfer Programmes: Their Relevance for Nepal*. DFID

This discussion paper is the first in a series of papers that aim to fill the evidence gaps in Nepal by situating the country's experiences within a wider international context. It is hoped that it will help policy makers take more informed choices on how to target social protection on benefits. A broader aim, however, is to contribute to the global debate on targeting social protection.

Malhotra A., Warner A., McGonagle A., Lee-Rife S. (2011). *What the Evidence Shows: Solutions to End Child Marriage: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)*

ICRW summarizes a systematic review of child marriage prevention programs that have documented evaluations. Based on this synthesis of evaluated programs, the authors offer an analysis of the broader implications for viable solutions to child marriage.

Mujahid-Mukhtar, E. (2008). *Poverty and Economic Vulnerability in South Asia: Does it Impact Girls' Education?* Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This publication brings together a socio-economic profile of South Asian countries and a profile of their educational data. It shows how economic policies matter for girls' education and ends with recommendations in terms of both macro-economic policies and education policies if the issue of girls' education is to be fully addressed.

Narayan, S., Rao, N. and Lourdes A. Khan, M. (2010). *Gender, Equality and Education: A Report Card on South Asia*. Mumbai: Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education/UNGEI

This report uses a gender lens to score and grade countries across South Asia based on their respective abilities to distinctly nurture gender equality in education. The quantitative framework and the specific indices chosen for the report reflect some of the priorities of civil societies and UNGEI partners for basic education, and serve as a call to action to national governments to ensure that every woman and girl receives her right to a meaningful education.

Subrahmanian R. (2006), *Mainstreaming Gender for Better Girls' Education: Policy and Institutional Issues*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This paper addresses the challenge of linking together the lessons learnt in furthering girls' education and how to bring these together into a 'total' approach. It looks at the systematic changes which need to occur if gender is to be mainstreamed within national government systems.

UNICEF (2009b). *Child Friendly Schools Manual*. New York: UNICEF

The UNICEF Child Friendly Schools Manual contains a wealth of practical guidance on how to further the development of child-friendly schools. It includes sections on the design and construction of schools; the school and its relationship with the community; schools as a protective environment; the process of teaching and learning; costs and benefits; and monitoring and evaluation. It also includes a range of examples of how child-friendly principles have been put into practice in various countries.

UNICEF (2009c). *Equity in School Water and Sanitation: Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination in South Asia*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

Regional report and Bhutan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh case studies (5 documents). These studies go beyond simply looking at the importance of schools providing toilets and safe drinking water and also examine other ways in which school children can be discriminated against for issues related to water and sanitation and to perceived notions of cleanliness. The four country case studies used qualitative research methods in order to elicit the views of children, families and teachers.

UNICEF (2007a). *Education Policy and the Right to Education, Towards More Equitable Outcomes for South Asia's Children*. Report of Meeting, 17–20 September 2007, Kathmandu, Nepal. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This report describes the presentations, discussions and outcomes of this meeting which examined the complex range of issues which inhibit children from maximizing their participation in education and from achieving good learning outcomes. Issues are summarized into sections which include looking at: *Where are we now in South Asia, The wider context, Excluded groups and inclusive systems, Different dimensions of inclusive education, Government policies and Making equitable choices*. Sections refer to additional further reading and the report has an accompanying CD which includes full presentations of speakers and also additional background papers.

UNICEF (2005). *2005 and Beyond: and Beyond: Accelerating Girls' Education in South Asia*. Report of Meeting. 7–9 February 2005

This report brings together the presentations, discussions and outcomes of a 2005 regional meeting on girls' education. Its starting point was a concern that South Asia would not reach gender parity by 2005 and unless significant changes were made was unlikely to achieve universal primary education by 2015. It examines the clear case for girls' education, measures which are more effective than simply girls' parity in education, and the components which are needed to constitute a worthwhile education for girls.

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

<http://www.ungei.org/>

UNGEI is a partnership of organizations committed to narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education. It also seeks to ensure that, by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to free, quality education. UNGEI was launched in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, by then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in response to a troubling reality: Of the millions of children worldwide who were not in school, more than half were girls – a reality that continues today.

Unterhalter, E. (2006). *Measuring Gender Inequality in Education in South Asia*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

Beginning by describing existing ways of measuring gender equality in education, this paper shows how there is now a need to find more effective ways of measuring progress in gender equality rather than simply gender parity. The approach suggested is the Gender Equality in Education Index (GEEI) which brings together existing quantitative measures into a more composite attempt to assess the extent to which education has contributed to increased gender equality.

Weiner M. (1990). *The Child and the State in India: Child Labor and Education Policy in Comparative Perspective*. Princeton University Press

India has the largest number of non-schoolgoing working children in the world. Why has the government not removed them from the labour force and required that they attend school, as have the governments of all developed and many developing countries? To answer this question, this major comparative study first looks at why and when other states have intervened to protect children against parents and employers. By examining Europe of the nineteenth century, the United States, Japan, and a number of developing countries, Myron Weiner rejects the argument that children were

removed from the labour force only when the incomes of the poor rose and employers needed a more skilled labour force.

World Bank/UNICEF (2009): *Six Steps to Abolishing Primary School Fees: Operational Guide*. Washington: World Bank

This Operational Guide is one of the main outputs of the School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI). SFAI is designed to significantly advance efforts to ensure access to quality basic education by supporting policies that remove the education cost barriers to parents and households. Launched by UNICEF and the World Bank in 2005, the Initiative has grown into a broad partnership that involves other key development partners and constituencies as well as research and academic institutions.

Chapter 3: Equality of Opportunity in Education

Getting disadvantaged children into school is only sufficient if they are also given equal opportunities **within** school. Access **to** and **in** education are inevitably linked – children will not want to go to school if they know that they will not be welcomed. Increasingly there is recognition of the need *‘to achieve a balance between access and quality strategies’* (Seel, 2007, p.89) and that *‘there can be no quality without equality, and equality without quality is not worth having’* (Save the Children, 2008a). This chapter will examine equality in education and how to achieve a learning environment where all children feel equally secure, accepted and able to participate.

3.1 School as a protective environment

A safe and happy school environment is a prerequisite for children staying in school and learning.²

Corporal punishment and safety in schools

The 2001 UN Violence against Children study found that forms of violence in schools are both physical and psychological. The acceptability of physical punishment is widespread in the region and its elimination requires adults to unlearn deeply rooted patterns of behaviour. Addressing this requires changes to take place at many levels. Change needs to come about through a structured programme which involves governments, advocacy workers and the media, teachers and teacher trainers, parents and community members and children themselves. UNESCO, Save the Children and Plan International have produced guidance documents to help teachers and others recognize the harm which can be perpetrated by physical punishment and to explore how to use alternative forms of

discipline (UNESCO Bangkok, 2006; Save the Children, 2007a; Plan, 2009). The ideas presented in these guidance documents are based on Article 28.2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that school discipline must be *‘consistent with the child’s human dignity’*. They do not advocate permissive teaching, but instead focus on the need for clear expectations and agreed rules.

‘If I was unable to do my lesson, the teacher would hit me with a cane and pass humiliating remarks such as, “such a big girl and she still doesn’t know how to do this ...”.’ (Girl from Bangladesh, cited in Save the Children, 2001, p.29)

‘I am afraid of the cruel teachers. I am afraid of my teacher’s anger.’ (Eight-year-old boy from Afghanistan, cited in Save the Children, 2006)

Children themselves often articulate fear of cruel or degrading punishment as a prime reason for them not wanting to attend school. The constant presence of this kind of punishment is not only *‘destructive to a child’s self-esteem’* but also gives the message that *‘violence is acceptable in settling conflicts’*. There are indications that disadvantaged children, whose families are not in a position in the community to speak out

against abuse of their children, are more subject to harsh punishment than other children (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.29). If harsh punishment is to stop, it is essential that school management, head teachers and teachers recognize the destructive nature of this behaviour and take active measures to prevent it. In South Asia only India has imposed a complete ban on corporal punishment in schools; however, the challenge is to implement the ban.

Another reality in some countries in South Asia is that at school, children are vulnerable to external attacks. In 2011 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1998, which recognises attacks against schools and hospitals as a grave violation of children’s rights. The resolution also calls for the perpetrators of such violence to be listed in the UN Secretary-General’s annual report on Children and Armed Conflict.

² A framework for ensuring safety within school is spelt out in considerable detail in UNICEF (2009b), Chapter 5, ‘Schools as Protective Environments’.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Bearing in mind that all children must be able to learn free from violence, that schools should be safe and child friendly and curricula should be rights based, and also that schools provide an environment in which attitudes that condone violence can be changed and non-violent values and behaviour learned, I recommend that States:

- a) Encourage schools to adopt and implement codes of conduct applicable to all staff and students that confront all forms of violence, taking into account gender-based stereotypes and behaviour and other forms of discrimination;
- b) Ensure that school principals and teachers use non-violent teaching and learning strategies and adopt classroom management and disciplinary measures that are not based on fear, threats, humiliation or physical force;
- c) Prevent and reduce violence in schools through specific programmes which address the whole school environment including through encouraging the building of skills such as non-violent approaches to conflict resolution, implementing anti-bullying policies and promoting respect for all members of the school community;
- d) Ensure that curricula, teaching processes and other practices are in full conformity with the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, free from references actively or passively promoting violence and discrimination in any of its manifestations.

Source: United Nations (2006). *UN Study on Violence against Children*. New York: UN.

Creating health-promoting schools, including water and sanitation

Education has a role not just to protect children from violence but also to help protect them from ill health. Factors which can support this include having effective health policies, having safe water and sanitation facilities, providing skills-based health education and providing school-based health and nutrition services.

FOCUSING RESOURCES ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL HEALTH (FRESH)

A framework developed by four agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank) identifies four essential health components to be available in all schools in order to ensure child-friendliness. These are:

1. **Health-related policies** in schools that help ensure a safe and secure physical environment and a positive psychosocial environment, and address all types of school violence, such as the abuse of students, sexual harassment and bullying, and that help maintain the education system in the face of HIV and AIDS.
2. **Provision of safe water and sanitation facilities**, as first steps in creating a healthy school environment that reinforces hygienic skills and behaviours; providing separate sanitation facilities and privacy for girls is an important contributing factor in reducing absences during and before menses.
3. **Skills-based health education** that focuses on the development of knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills needed to make appropriate positive decisions, to establish lifelong healthy practices, and to reduce vulnerability to substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.
4. **School-based health and nutrition services** that are simple, safe and familiar, and address problems that are prevalent and recognized as important in the community, including the provision of counselling to cope with the AIDS epidemic.

Source: *Assessing Child-Friendly Schools: A guide for programme managers in East Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: UNICEF EAPRO, 2006.

The 2009 UNICEF's Equity in School Water and Sanitation study shows positive examples of how some schools are actively ensuring that children's health is a high priority. In Bhutan schools have an appointed Health Co-ordinator whose role is to raise awareness of good hygiene practices and also

collaborate with health units in order to monitor students' health and distribute supplements where necessary (UNICEF, 2009c, A Regional Perspective). The study also includes positive examples of how good hygiene practices are transferred to the community.

'One day I found that some ash was kept in the toilet in a pot. I found that my granddaughter had kept ash in the toilet after learning about proper sanitation from her school. The same day, I brought soap and arranged for a place for keeping it near the water pot.' (citation of grandfather, UNICEF, 2009c, Bangladesh Country Report)

In some cases schools have formal structures in place for sharing good health practice with parents. For example, in Bhutan the School-Based Parents Education and Awareness (SPEA) Initiative runs a programme to raise parents' awareness of issues facing adolescents such as STDs and HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, relationships and menstruation (UNICEF, 2009c, A Regional Perspective, pp.55–56).

However, these examples of good practice are far from universal. In many schools, even when there were water and sanitation facilities, these were often unusable because of lack of maintenance or regular cleaning. In some schools, even

when health topics were on the curriculum, they were not being covered by teachers. The conclusions and recommendations of the study show how a far more structured programme of implementation, and also a more universal commitment to the school's role in supporting the health of all children, are required if all children are to have access to ongoing health protection while at school.

3.2 School as a non-discriminatory environment

Discrimination in schools in South Asia

Recently there has been greater emphasis on the relational dimension of social exclusion and the *'causal dynamics of exclusion, especially as they relate to intentional actions by certain groups to limit opportunities for others'* (Marshal and Calderon, 2006, cited in Barr *et al.*, 2007). Discrimination can be both overt – name calling, abusive remarks, etc.; or tacit – a perception that certain groups of

children are less important and inevitably will do less well. These negative attitudes easily become absorbed by children themselves affecting their self-esteem and their ability to learn. Such a culture of discrimination will only be eliminated through a conscious commitment to create an environment where all children are equally respected.

Several of the children showed a clear distinction between the sort of behaviour they could carry out with friends at school and what they could do at home; as one group of upper primary children said, 'everything goes in friendship, we just do not talk about it at home.' (India case study, UNICEF, 2009c, A Regional Perspective, p.21)

'In our school, the water is stored in a separate bucket for the use of girls from one community. They are very dirty and we do not allow them to use the hand pump.' (UNICEF, 2009c, India Country Report)

'If we ask for the glass, the guard says, "You will crack the glasses," and he does not give us the glass. But gives it to other "Bengali" and Monipuri girls and boys as they are rich.' (UNICEF, 2009c, Bangladesh Country Report)

Discriminatory attitudes in school tend to reflect attitudes and behaviour in the wider community. The school has potential to overcome these attitudes and to provide a safe place in which children can be free from the limitations placed on them at home and in the community. However, the Equity in School Water and Sanitation study, which covered India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, also found many other examples where this openness did not exist and where there were clear examples of discrimination in school, particularly by teachers against children.

One interesting finding was that it was not always easy to make clear distinctions about which groups faced discrimination. While caste was obviously a factor in some Indian schools, it did not feature as a major factor in other Indian schools and also did not appear to be the major factor of discrimination in the Nepali schools which were studied. In Bangladesh, while children from some ethnic groups faced discrimination, children from other groups did not.

However, one overriding factor, across all four countries, appeared to be poverty, which was particularly apparent in the way certain groups of children were given preferential treatment and were exempt from cleaning duties.

Another finding which was apparent across the four countries in the study was that perceptions of cleanliness played a large part in teachers' attitudes towards students. Children who were seen as dirty, often because they were poor, were also often perceived to be unintelligent and uninterested in studying.

'We clean classrooms in a group by rotation, but there are three girls ... two whose parents are government official and NGO worker, are rich. Another girl from Monipuri community whose parents are doing business is also rich. ... they never clean the classroom.' (Student comment, UNICEF, 2009c, Bangladesh Country Report)

'Saharyia children are dirty and dull, they do not like coming to school.' (Teacher comment, UNICEF, 2009c, India Country Report)

3.3 School as an environment where all children can participate equally

Unequal participation

There are many other examples where children may not be actively discriminated against, yet they are nevertheless denied full participation in learning. For example learners who are silently excluded with teachers allowing them to sit at the back of the class having little expectation that they will ever succeed. Students who are in this situation tend to fall into a vicious cycle of low expectations leading to poor performance.

Sometimes teachers appear aware that the students were being excluded. However, there are instances when it is likely that teachers are unaware of the way in which they ignore a large proportion of children in their class. This is particularly true with girl students.

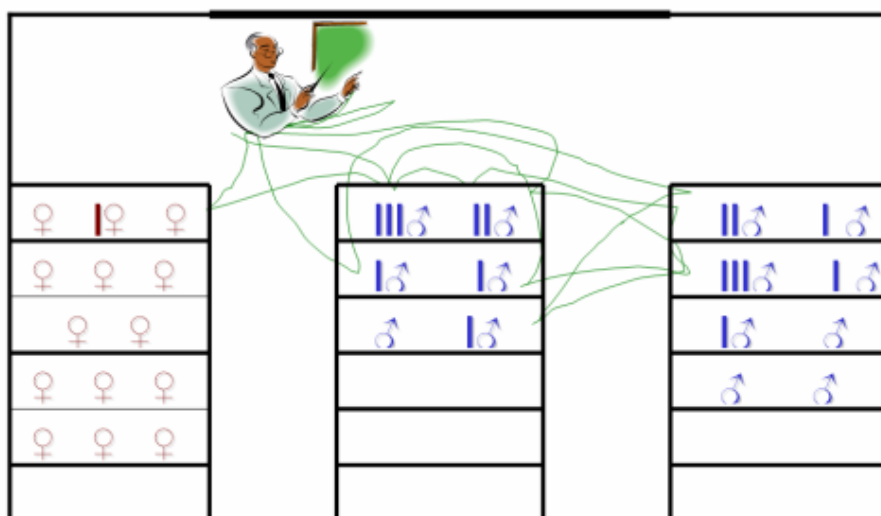
An appraisal carried out in Bangladesh gives a clear description of how this can happen (Kassem *et al.*, 2003). Figure 3 is a representation of a Grade 9 maths lesson in a rural school in Dhaka division. According to the observation the male teacher stood with most of his attention and body language directed towards the boys. Although there were equal numbers of girls and boys in the class the girls were sitting huddled into one third of the space. The vertical bars represent numbers of interactions between pupil and teacher and show how during the lesson only one girl spoke while most boys spoke at least once. The green lines show the monitoring by the teacher and reveal that except for one instance all his interaction was with the boys.

In a recent visit to rural schools in Ajmer District, the children sitting in the last couple of rows were in a world of their own, as back-benchers often are. They paid little attention to the teacher, rarely participated in group recitations or volunteered an answer to a question, and were never once called upon by the teacher. In general they were totally out of sync with the teacher-led, recitation-dominated activity taking place in the class – which was largely with the participation of the first two rows of students.

What was heart breaking was the fact that almost every one of these students was working. They were quiet and serious. Some copied English while the rest of the class was copying from the Hindi text book. Others copied from the maths text book while the rest of the class were copying word meanings from the blackboard. Almost without exception, they were engaged with one or other academic task throughout the class – but not the ones everyone else was engaged in. There was no doubt that they were trying to learn. And without exception they were ignored by the teacher from beginning to end.

... In conversation with the teacher, we learnt that these were the children who weren't keeping up academically. (Bhattacharjea, 2010)

Figure 3: Typical classroom interaction in Bangladesh



Source: CDEC (2009), *Country Studies*, p.15

Additional barriers to participation

Children from minority language groups

In addition to the barriers to equal participation looked at above, certain children face additional barriers to participation. These include the children in the region whose first language is different from the language used at school. More attention has been given recently to the importance of first language education and several schools are beginning to establish first language teaching. UNESCO has produced several guidance documents on multilingual education including an *Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded* (UNESCO Bangkok, 2007) which has been translated into other languages in the Asia region. Advocates of first language education emphasize that the issue is not simply about children not understanding the teacher's language but also that without first language education many children are taught by teachers who do not share their culture, are faced with information which is unfamiliar to them, and have their own knowledge and experience disregarded (UNICEF, 2007a, p.21)

Research on first language education suggests that children who are taught in their first language learn better and have a stronger basis from which to learn other languages (Malone, 2007). Some of the schools which have managed to instigate first language education have achieved significant success. First language education requires significant investment in terms of recruiting and training teachers from other language groups and the production of teaching materials. Moreover, with increased urbanization and mobilization of communities, schools are increasingly likely to include children from different language groups. Provision should be made for how best to accommodate more than one language within a school. In addition, there can be mixed feelings within communities themselves as to whether first language education is the most appropriate form of teaching. It is argued that parents often want their children to learn in the country's official language, or even in English, as they feel this will enhance their prospects of employment.

Children with disabilities or learning difficulties

Children who have disabilities are often excluded both from and within the traditional classroom. Different definitions of what constitutes a disability mean that estimated figures of the proportion of disabled children in school vary. Even if the most favourable data is taken, they still represent large numbers of children with disabilities who do not attend school. Views in South Asia continue to be divided as to whether inclusive education provision within a mainstream setting is preferable, or the provision of special schools; while policy statements tend to advocate the importance of inclusion, there has also, for example in India, been a large growth in recent years in the number of special schools (Singhal, 2008). What is clear is that if children with significant impairments are to be successfully included in quality education, sufficient support must be available for them.

Examples of disabled children being included in regular schools are few in South Asia. Similarly, with children with special learning needs, additional support is seen to have made a substantial difference to certain groups of children. The below box illustrates one example. However, such projects are not universal.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN INDIA

A community-based education programme in two Indian cities (Mumbai and Vadodara) has involved 15,000 students. It hires young women from the community with a high school education to teach basic literacy and numeracy skills to children who have not mastered them by grade three. It has boosted achievement scores by one quarter, with the most gains among poor children, at low cost.

Source: Herz, B. (2006). *Educating Girls in South Asia: Promising Approaches*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI.

There is also limited structured support for children with more substantial learning difficulties or mental handicaps. The Equity in School Water and Sanitation study found a few examples where disabled children or children with mental handicaps were socially integrated into their local school. This '*casual integration*' (Miles, 1997) can occur particularly in rural areas where there is no alternative provision and all children are expected to attend the same school. However, even when these children do attend school, there is as yet little in the form of trained support to respond to their specific learning requirements.

3.4 Teacher recruitment, training, support and management

Teachers as partners

Teachers are the key to addressing the issues of discrimination and non-participation described in the previous sections. Both individual teachers and head teachers act as a '*custodian of child-friendly school values*' and provide '*an excellent barometer of a school's child-friendliness*' (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 4.2.1). It is they who have the potential to cultivate an ethos which respects diversity and acknowledges and supports the right of all children to equal participation in school. It is also they who can act as a bridge between school and parents and help to enable the transference of school values to the wider community.

Countries in the region should expand the base from which teachers are recruited and to include more teachers from previously under-represented groups. Earlier sections in this synthesis (e.g. Section 2.3) showed the positive value of recruiting more female teachers. Similar encouragement and proactive schemes need to be in place to allow for the recruitment of teachers from different social and ethnic groups, including those who speak minority languages, so that over time the teacher body has more similarities with the student body.

However, creating new patterns in recruitment is not on its own sufficient. If fundamental changes in the attitudes within schools are to occur, teachers need to be actively involved in decisions about how best to implement these changes. Too often teachers are regarded solely as the implementers of top-down strategies. Ensuring that all children receive equal respect means altering deeply-rooted social and cultural attitudes. Simply adding another policy is insufficient to deal with such fundamental changes (Seel, 2007, p.xvii). They will only be effective if teachers are themselves convinced and recognized as equal partners. Senior staff in Education Departments need to ask themselves:

How much are teachers included in planning reform as opposed to simply being asked to implement it? Research suggests that practitioners will implement innovations if they believe in them and are committed to the promising outcomes. Involving practitioners during the planning process is one of the most effective ways of getting them to believe in and commit to reform. Without this teachers tend to perceive innovations such as child-friendly schools as just added work often with little or no additional compensation or reduction in their existing workload. On the other hand, when teachers feel they have taken part in planning a reform

and that their views have been taken into account, they will have a stake in its successful implementation. (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 6.2)

Teacher training and ongoing support

Fundamental changes in the way in which teachers regard their students and the styles in which they teach will require significant teacher training and continuous learning input. Throughout South Asia, teacher training and ongoing professional development of teachers (in-service training) has become a priority area in the quality improvement of education (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.15).

However, too often this training is largely focused on curriculum content and is *'theoretical and lacking opportunities for supervised practice'* (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.16). If fundamental issues of discrimination and non-participation are to be challenged, teacher training needs to ensure that it pays equal attention to these issues and how to adapt child-centred and active teaching methods in order to enable all children to participate equally. This can be challenging to teachers and requires more than one-off training modules. Methods need to be devised which enable teachers to receive ongoing support as they attempt to put new methods into practice. This support could be in the form of staff within their own school or from staff in neighbouring schools, or a designated resource teacher or supervisor.

In addition to teacher training, effective school management is a key area that needs to receive focus and investment in order to uphold a high standard of principles and administration that can create an enabling environment for teaching.

A SUCCESSFUL CHILD-CENTRED INITIATIVE

The Rishi Valley for Education Resources (RIVER) began in the 1980s with experiments on creating child-led learning in line with the beliefs of the Indian philosopher Krishnamurti. It grew out of concern with the predominant teacher-led method of education and advocated child-centred methods based around different classroom organization, group work, much oral participation, singing and dancing and the use of learner-led materials. Children were only introduced to regular textbooks when they had established basic skills in these other ways. The success of these methodologies can be seen through the extent to which these methods have been copied in other schools in India, most recently being spread out on a large scale in all government primary schools in Tamil Nadu. One of the major successes of the Rishi valley approach is that it has restructured the sequence and type of learning activities for children but still remains in line with the overall Indian National Curriculum objectives.

Source: Little, A.W. (April 2008). *Size Matters for EFA*. CREATE Pathways to Access, Research Monograph No. 26. Sussex, UK: University of Sussex/DFID.

Where they are available, technologies such as IT, television or radio can be valuable in providing teachers with structured support. The research study on Open and Distance Education noted that, although Open University institutions are now firmly established in several countries in South Asia, they were not always being exploited to provide important, ongoing staff development for teachers (CDEC, 2009, p.120)

3.5 Conclusion

When looking at how to change attitudes towards discrimination it was noted that this required a deeply held conviction which permeates the whole ethos of the school. The same is true for changing teaching approaches and developing a situation where all children receive equal attention. In the Equity in School Water and Sanitation study there were instances of teachers who genuinely wanted to create more egalitarian structures of classroom organization.

Even when teachers are aware of the need to make changes, when children have experienced a continual atmosphere of discrimination they will want to sit with their own group amongst whom they feel safe. If they are always perceived as being less able than others they will over time internalize this perception and consequently perform less well. Changing deeply internalized practices requires a

whole school commitment where all teachers are aware of which students are not participating fully, and work together to put in place ongoing strategies which will ensure the equal participation of all children.

In addition to this, ensuring equal participation in education involves recognizing that children learn in different ways and adopting strategies which respond to different learning styles. Rote learning still predominates in many South Asian schools. However, if the divisive situations described above are going to change, there is a need for interactive learning environments where children can *'express their views, thoughts and ideas to participate fully and to feel comfortable about who they are, where they come from, and what they believe in'* (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.30).

While the ideas behind new approaches in education might be welcomed by countries in South Asia, there is also the likelihood that they can be perceived as Western and *'culturally alien'* by those who would benefit by implementing them (Seel, 2007, p.70). The *Child Friendly Schools Manual* itself is clear about the need to move away from a belief that *'there is a fixed set of CFS characteristics'* and instead to focus on *'key principles that can create a planning dialogue'* (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 2.2). This *'planning dialogue'*, as we have seen above, needs to be carried out in partnership with the school community including teachers within a local context. It needs to involve teachers and others in looking at what a child-friendly school might mean in a specific social and cultural situation and then to examine ways of how to make this work. There are *'flexible pathways'* leading to quality schools. They do not come about by the imposition of a fixed set of attributes but by policy makers and practitioners discovering their own pathway and following it through by *'cumulative improvements'* (UNICEF, 2009b, Introduction).

A teacher in Bhutan, speaking of the Uranois students in her class, says:

'Sometimes it is so difficult to make them mix around that one time I had to literally pull them one by one and make them sit next to other students.' (UNICEF, 2009c, A Regional Perspective, p.33)

Similarly, a girl student in Bangladesh from the tea garden community says:

'Sometimes our teacher changes our sitting arrangement and makes sure that we sit by other students, but after the class is over, we again sit together in a group with our friends from the tea garden.' (UNICEF, 2009c, A Regional Perspective, p.33)

3.6 Resources

Bhattacharjea, S. (2010). *Where the Buck Stops. Annual Status of Education Report (Rural)*. New Delhi: ASER

The Annual Status of Education Report, facilitated by Pratham, is the largest independent survey of children's learning done in India. Conducted by a local organization in every rural district, the survey uses a series of simple tools to assess children's ability to read and do basic arithmetic. This year for the first time ASER recorded the schooling level of both parents of children in the sampled households. These data reveal that a quarter of all children studying in Std 1-5 in government schools are first generation learners.

Cambridge Distance Education Consultancy (CDEC) (2009). *Open and Distance Learning for Basic Education in South Asia: Its potential for hard-to-reach children and children in conflict and disaster areas*. Cambridge: CDEC; and Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This study examines the range of different ways in which open and distance education might extend educational options for hard to reach children. The two case studies carried out in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka look specifically at the way in which open learning might facilitate ongoing access to education at times of emergency and conflict.

Chitrakar, R. (2009). *Overcoming Barriers to Girls' Education in South Asia: Deepening the Analysis*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

The analysis of the documentary evidence for this study is informed by the need to investigate more deeply the barriers to girls' education and gender equality in South Asian countries. The study contains a detailed description and analysis of the educational situation for girls in each of the eight countries.

Heijnen-Maathuis, E. (2008). *From Parity to Equality in Girls' Education: How Are We Doing in South Asia?* Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

Starting from the belief that education is a fundamental human right this publication examines in a very practical way what is needed at national, regional and school levels to ensure that girls' right to quality education is ensured. As well as giving many examples of good practice from across the South Asian region, the publication also has three useful annexes: *'How children learn and implications for school practice'*, *'What makes a good teacher'* and *'Is your classroom inclusive and child-friendly? A self-assessment tool for teachers to use in their classroom'*.

Herz, B. (2006). *Educating Girls in South Asia: Promising Approaches*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This publication articulates the case for girls' education and also the reasons why more girls in South Asia are not in school. This is followed by a longer section with many practical examples from across the region on approaches which have been successful in furthering girls' education.

Little, A.W. (April 2008). *Size Matters for EFA. CREATE Pathways to Access, Research Monograph No. 26*. Sussex, UK: University of Sussex/DFID

This research monograph explores different aspects of size and their implications for access. Size does matter not least because extending access to the 'last 20%' in many low income countries will mean reaching out to new groups of children, some of whom will be in low population density areas. This will be an issue at lower secondary levels as well as primary, especially where national guidelines seek to ensure that schools are available within 3-5 km of households. The review notes that small schools often, but not always, have higher costs than those closer to average size. Where they do have higher costs, imaginative use of multigrade patterns of learning and teaching can mitigate unsustainable costs.

Malone, S. (2007). *Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education: Implications for Education Policy*. Paper presented at *Education Policy and the Right to Education, Towards More Equitable Outcomes for South Asia's Children, 17–20 September 2007, Kathmandu, Nepal*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This paper gives definition and rationale for mother tongue-based multilingual education. Planning, implementing and sustaining mother tongue-based multilingual education programmes in multiple language communities is certainly challenging, especially in multi-lingual countries lacking extensive financial resources. Is it worth the effort? Perhaps the best people to answer that question are the members of the ethnic minority communities themselves.

RECOUP

RECOUP (Research Consortium on Education Outcomes and Poverty) is a five year research partnership (2005–2010) between seven institutions in the UK, Africa and India, funded by DFID. Its research examines the impact of education on the lives and livelihoods of people in developing countries, particularly those from the poorest households. One strand looks specifically at issues of disability and poverty. Policy and working papers are available on www.recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk

Save the Children (2008a). *The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Quality Education: Concept Paper*. Kathmandu: Save the Children Sweden

This paper, developed in collaboration with Save the Children colleagues in the South Asia region, places the notion of quality education firmly within the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It examines the various dimensions of quality education and then goes on to list each of the articles which has relevance for educational providers and articulates what these rights should mean in terms of educational provision.

Save the Children (2008). *From Curriculum Delivery to Quality Education: Know your students to improve (e)quality of learning through effective teaching and classroom management*. Discussion Paper

This discussion paper recognizes the importance of acknowledging the 'whole child' and of addressing behavioural difficulties in the context of overall classroom management. It includes sections on recognizing that children learn differently, linking behaviour to learning outcomes, teacher expectations, and how to create a responsive learning environment.

Save the Children (2007a). *A Toolkit on Positive Discipline, with particular emphasis on South and Central Asia*. Kathmandu: Save the Children Sweden

This toolkit is the result of a regional inclusive process developed in the South and Central Asia region

to work against physical and psychological punishment. Material in it has been developed out of a series of regional workshops on advocacy and the promotion of alternative forms of discipline. The toolkit, which provides an overall framework followed by a series of practical activities, includes sections on self-esteem, respect, responsibilities, decision-making, communication skills, skills to manage aggressive behaviour and forgiveness skills.

Save the Children (2006). *Betrayal of Trust*. Kathmandu: Save the Children Sweden

In this report Save the Children calls for urgent action to end violence against children. Children from 40 countries have their say, highlighting how millions of children worldwide live in fear of being physically beaten and punished, humiliated and sexually abused. Investment in public awareness and education on the impact of violence against children, the establishment of active, informed child protection systems, violence-free educational environments and child participation are key to breaking the cycle of violence.

Save the Children (2001). *Ending Corporal Punishment of Children: Making it happen*. Kathmandu: Save the Children Sweden

This paper has been produced as a submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for its General Discussion Day on Violence against Children in Schools and within the Family. The paper addresses the corporal punishment of children within families and schools. It demonstrates that this is a significant violation of children's human rights, and explores the reasons why it is common to almost every culture, despite being extraordinarily damaging to children's development. It analyses the impact of corporal punishment on children, and offers perspectives on how corporal punishment might be eliminated. Throughout the paper, children's perspectives and experiences of corporal punishment are integrated into the analysis. Children's own insights frequently demolish adult assumptions about the necessity and justifiability of corporal punishment, and point towards the power of positive alternative forms of discipline.

Singhal, N. (January 2008). *Forgotten Youth: Disability and Development in India*. RECOUP (Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty) Working Paper No. 14. Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge/DFID

In 2001, it is estimated that 270 million Indians belonged in the 12-24 years age group. While attention is being focused on these young people's potential for social transformation, some of them – such as those with disabilities – remain alienated from mainstream debates on development. Little is known about their experiences, however, nor how they and the others around them make sense of their lives and perceive their transition to adulthood as their surrounding milieu is transformed. In this paper, the writer has adapted the framework of transitions proposed by the World Bank's World Development Report 2007 to examine opportunities for young people with disabilities in the areas of learning, work and citizenship. Existing literature to review secondary data and to analyse the lived experiences of young people with disabilities has been used. What are their prospects in a time of optimism for Indian youth?

UNESCO (2010b). *Reaching the Marginalized*. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010. Paris and Oxford: UNESCO and Oxford University Press

The 2010 Education for All monitoring report focuses specifically on those children who are marginalized from education opportunities for a variety of reasons including increased poverty resulting from the global economic downturn. The report examines who these children are, why they are being left behind, and what solutions are required to ensure that all children gain access to education.

UNESCO (2009). *Towards Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities: A Guideline*. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok

This manual contains guidelines for action to include children with disabilities in school systems and the EFA monitoring process. The guideline is the result of a process that started in 2004 when the UIS-AIMS Unit at UNESCO Bangkok developed a project to address the issue of children with disabilities. The goal of the project was to analyse the complex interplay of factors which result in exclusion and to obtain detailed information about education systems in selected countries where a specific commitment has been made to include children with disabilities in schools.

UNESCO Bangkok (2007). *Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded*. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok

This kit has the aim of raising awareness of the importance of mother-tongue based multilingual education to reach the goals of Education for All. It shows the value and benefits of multilingual education and is targeted at policy makers, educational practitioners and specialists. It has subsequently been translated into several local languages.

UNESCO Bangkok (2006). *Positive Discipline in the Inclusive, Learning-Friendly classroom: A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators*. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok

This guide focuses on abolishing corporal punishment through the use of alternative positive discipline methods. It presents a range of positive discipline tools that can provide teachers with realistic and positive alternatives to either physical punishment or psychological humiliation.

UNICEF (2009b). *Child Friendly Schools Manual*. New York: UNICEF

The UNICEF Child Friendly Schools Manual contains a wealth of practical guidance on how to further the development of child-friendly schools. It includes sections on the design and construction of schools; the school and its relationship with the community; schools as a protective environment; the process of teaching and learning; costs and benefits; and monitoring and evaluation. It also includes a range of examples of how child-friendly principles have been put into practice in various countries.

UNICEF (2009c). *Equity in School Water and Sanitation: Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination in South Asia*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

Regional report and Bhutan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh case studies (5 documents). These studies go beyond simply looking at the importance of schools providing toilets and safe drinking water and also examine other ways in which school children can be discriminated against for issues related to water and sanitation and to perceived notions of cleanliness. The four country case studies used qualitative research methods in order to elicit the views of children, families and teachers.

UNICEF (2007a). *Education Policy and the Right to Education, Towards More Equitable Outcomes for South Asia's Children*. Report of Meeting, 17–20 September 2007, Kathmandu, Nepal. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This report describes the presentations, discussions and outcomes of this meeting which examined the complex range of issues which inhibit children from maximizing their participation in education and from achieving good learning outcomes. Issues are summarized into sections which include looking at: *Where are we now in South Asia, The wider context, Excluded groups and inclusive systems, Different dimensions of inclusive education, Government policies and Making equitable choices*.

UNICEF (2006). *Assessing Child-Friendly Schools: A guide for programme managers in East Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: UNICEF EAPRO

This document is the executive summary of a larger review of Child Friendly Schools in East Asia and the Pacific Region, which was supported by the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. The Review was carried out by a consultant (Dr. Anne Bernard) and culminated in a regional Child Friendly School workshop, held in Yangon, Myanmar, in December 2003.

UNICEF (2005, 2003). *Children with Disabilities: Towards inclusive education in South Asia, 2005, and Examples of Inclusive Education in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, 2003 (6 documents)* Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This regional consolidated report has been prepared based on the information provided by the country reports. An attempt is made to analyse the status of special and inclusive education in South Asian countries; national legislation and policies related to meeting the educational needs of disabled children; and educational practices for disabled children over the years.

United Nations (2006). *UN Study on Violence Against Children*. New York: UN

The United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children has been a global effort to paint a detailed picture of the nature, extent and causes of violence against children, and to propose clear recommendations for action to prevent and respond to it. This is the first time that an attempt has been made to document the reality of violence against children around the world, and to map out what is being done to stop it. Since 2003, many thousands of people have contributed to the study in consultations and working groups, through questionnaires and in other ways. Children and young people have been active at every level.

UNICEF, Deshkal Society, CARE (2010). *National Report on Inclusive Classrooms, Social*

Chapter 4: Equality in Access to Quality Education

This chapter will focus on the extent to which all children are getting equal access to quality education and to the skills which they will require for the next stage of their lives. Research on disparity in access to education is increasingly pointing to the risk of *'educational expansion ... at the expense of quality'* (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.xv). Research shows that the pressure to get all children into school can lead governments to focus on *'access first vs quality later'* which leads to a situation in which *'quality is being compromised as something that can wait for future consideration'*. The reality is that it is *'deprived children, the majority of whom are girls'* who are *'precisely the ones who are offered this quality-compromised free education'* (Rampal, 2005, cited in Chitrakar, 2009, p.63). Such a situation not only denies equal opportunities to the children who most need quality education, but also can backfire and lead to children dropping out.

4.1 Are all children receiving equal quality of education and having the opportunity to do equally well at school?

Equality of resources

Equality of outcome will not be achieved unless there is a context of equality of school resourcing. Research reveals that there is a discrepancy in the allocation of the educational budget with areas of countries which had the highest number of disadvantaged children (Seel, 2007). While many countries are now recognizing the need to address this discrepancy, practical issues of distribution and ensuring that resources are actually spent in ways which best support disadvantaged children still remain. UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009*, which specifically addressed issues of governance, also recognizes that, while decentralization of governance is important, it needs to be matched by a strong central commitment to ensuring equality of distribution of resources. The Report states that: *'In an equitable system, allocation of educational finance would be inversely related to current outcomes, with those in greatest need receiving most support.'* However, the reality is that it is *'relatively rare to find a clear link between students' needs, as defined by equity criteria, and per-student expenditure.'* (UNESCO, 2009, p.143)

Devolving resource mobilization in countries marked by large regional wealth gaps can lead to increased inequality in education financing. ... While decentralization is important, central government should retain a strong role in equalizing the distribution of educational finance. (UNESCO, 2009, p.131)

Equal access to formally recognized accreditation

Different modes of non-formal education often provide the most flexible and appropriate route for certain groups of disadvantaged learners. However, one problem with these different pathways is that they often do not allow their students to access formal accreditation.

The Open and Distance Learning study describes ways in which the issue of formal accreditation might be addressed without losing the important flexibility and child-centred approach of alternative education provision. One way is by ensuring easy transition routes between non-formal and formal provision as is achieved by BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) where the high quality and high reputation of BRAC provision allows students *'to negotiate easy transitions from its primary schools into government funded secondary schools'*

One area often given low priority for these groups is access to formal qualifications and accreditation (or other means of nationally recognized learning achievement) even though it is an important aspect of equality and fundamental to opening up progression routes to more education and better jobs.

The missing element can contribute to the low acceptability of the provision among children, parents and carers, employers, government and teachers. A lack of emphasis on recognized or valued achievement gives the impression of a lack of government commitment, that what is on offer is a 'cheap way of containing educational demand without meeting it.' (Perraton, 2007, p.207)

(CDEC, 2009, p.40). Another positive example is shown in the Open Basic Education Programme (OBE) co-ordinated by NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling, India). The OBE programme provides an equivalency programme for children and adults who are seeking basic education courses which are complementary to the formal system.. While NIOS is a provider in its own right it also: *'acts to accredit, support and train other providing agencies (NGOs) wanting to extend basic education to children'* (CDEC, 2009, p.80). Its priority groups include children aged 6–14 who have dropped out of school and also adults, many of whom live below the poverty line and come from scheduled castes or tribes in both rural and urban areas.

NIOS provides its delivery agents with the curriculum and sample materials (text, audio and visual) and each agency has the freedom to either develop its own materials or accept NIOS materials for every subject. The NIOS OBE programme made a conscious attempt to develop its curriculum and learning materials so that they are equivalent to the formal education system and has been recognized as such by the government. However, it has still maintained some of the essential flexibility of non-formal education provision. Learners have a choice of whether to study in Hindi, English or a regional language. There is no upper age limit for learners. Exams are conducted twice a year and, very importantly, credit accumulation is available. Some kind of flexible access to accreditation is essential if learners from disadvantaged groups are to have equal access to the potential outcomes of education, and there is an urgent need for:

... governments to accept the need for alternative and flexible routes to access formal qualifications, and to actively establish such a route, which is built on a system of credit accumulation and transfer. This on its own will have a significant impact on opening up access for hard-to-reach groups, and has the potential to provide a route to recognized qualifications for NGOs and other NFE providers. (CDEC, 2009, p.119)

Equal access to learning within school

Pedagogy, which places children at the centre of the learning experience, requires recognition that children will enter learning with different abilities and at different stages. Within the standard curriculum there is a need for teachers to plan lessons so that they are differentiated for children who are at different learning stages. This is particularly true when teachers are working in multigrade classrooms. Child-centred learning acknowledges that an important facet of learning is for children to work together and learn from each other rather than seeing the teacher as the sole source of learning.

The question needs to be asked whether children from disadvantaged groups are learning as well as other children. The rather scant evidence which is available seems to suggest this is not necessarily the case. For example, case studies carried out for the report on *Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in Education SWAps in South Asia* revealed that even in Sri Lanka, which has achieved very high levels of enrolment, figures on attainment in literacy and numeracy showed *'considerable disparity by region, but even more variation between rural and urban areas'* (Seel, 2007, p.28).

Children go to school to learn. However, while considerable attention has been paid to monitoring enrolment and retention, less time has been given to finding out the extent to which learning outcomes are being achieved. The common assumption is often that, because children are attending school, they must be learning. (UNICEF, 2009d, p.19)

There is recognition in all countries in the region that there is an urgent need for more data on the attainment levels of children beyond that which is available from end-of-school certificates.

A leading proponent in advocating and carrying out surveys on learning achievement has been ASER (Annual Status of Education Report), an autonomous research wing of Pratham in India. The innovative aspect of ASER is that it is not a project but a participatory tracking system where citizens are trained to monitor the learning achievement of their children. ASER has developed language and maths assessment tests at Levels 1 and 2 and tools for testing comprehension and higher level learning. Interested citizens are trained for two days then spend two days collecting information in a village which is randomly selected using PPS (Probability Proportional to Size) methodology. The data gathered is owned by the community who, (refer to Figure 12 in the Appendix), look at what it tells them and work together to respond to what it reveals (UNICEF, 2009d, p.20). ASER's 2009 report reveals that, despite progress in some districts, *'the proportion of children in Standard 3 who*

can read at Standard 1 level is still less than 50%' (Pratham, 2010, ASER 2009 Provisional Report, p.1).

ASER has contributed significantly at local level by allowing communities to own and make use of data on achievement, and its evidence is also helping the government to formulate national plans. However, it is clear in all countries in the region that far more attention needs to be paid to looking at how well children are achieving in school and that this data should be thoroughly disaggregated before a clear picture can be gained of whether disadvantaged children are underachieving in education.

There are several factors which need to be taken into account both in devising assessment tests and in analysing results. A 2009 World Bank study which required measuring student achievement recognized the importance of devising tests which measured not just *'mechanical learning'* but also *'conceptual learning'*. Tests need to match the curriculum being taught but they also need to ensure that children are being measured according to the extent to which they have understood underlying concepts rather than simply being groomed to perform well in tests (UNICEF, 2009d, p.12). There is a danger that tests can lead to too much focus on measurable outcomes such as literacy and numeracy and a neglect of other important but less easily measurable aspects of the curriculum. *'The kind of assessment that dominates in most schools in South Asia is summative assessment of learning'* (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.34). While this kind of test-based assessment is important, it increases the risk of teachers teaching to the test, and it needs to be balanced by *'formative assessment'* which is ongoing assessment of how well the child is progressing and takes the form of observation, ongoing review, discussion with the child and feedback.

Other unintended negative consequences of too much emphasis on tests can be a failure to acknowledge that children do not start at the same point. An over-emphasis on outcomes can detract from the need to look at the *'value-added'* aspect which requires seeing how far an individual child has progressed from the point at which they started. In analysing the results of tests several individual variables need to be taken into account including both the resources that are going into individual schools and the extent to which a child's home background is supportive of their educational achievement.³

4.2 Is education providing all children with the skills they want and need?

The previous section looked at the extent to which all children had equal access to achieving successful outcomes through their education. However, there is also a need to ask the larger question which is whether current curriculum content and delivery is actually the most appropriate for all children and whether it will enable them both to gain meaningful employment and also to transform their current social situation.

Curriculum content

There have been developments, both in the non-formal and the formal sectors, to make curriculum content more relevant to children's lives and more likely to help them find future employment. For example, both the Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) and the Underprivileged Children's Education Programme (UCEP) in Bangladesh emphasize the importance of vocational as well as academic skills and help students make the transition to relevant vocational training programmes. Within the formal sector, too, several countries have made efforts to create a more relevant curriculum focused on the needs of all learners (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.33). However, much education provision throughout South Asia is still based upon a highly theoretical model which does not always allow for the development of practical skills which could lead to employment.

The skills required by children will be constantly changing, and thus curriculum content should also be continually reviewed and updated to ensure that it provides *'learning relevant to*

What country data cannot tell us ... is what the pedagogy and content of education does to cultivate capacities that are crucial to women's empowerment and, indeed, to the cultivation of active democratic citizenship for us all. (Narayan et al., 2010, p.viii)

³ For a fuller account of these issues see UNICEF (2009d, p.21) and background papers by Dr Margaret Forster on the CD which accompanies the report.

current and future needs' (UNICEF, 2007a, p.29). A 2010 report by Plan International looks specifically at the additional skills increasingly required by girls as they move from a rural to an urban environment. These include not only new vocational skills but also the skills of how to keep themselves safe in a very different and often threatening context including how to be able to protect themselves in the new world of cyber space (Plan International, 2010). However, the introduction of a more practical or vocational curriculum may not automatically be welcomed by children or parents. South Asia has a strong tradition of formal and academic education. Changing this to more practical education may be confusing for many families who can see it as not constituting 'real education'. In making changes to the curriculum there is a need to ensure that any new and more practical elements are well resourced, accorded equal status and not seen as 'second best'.

Education as a transformative strategy

Quality education should do more than just respond to children's academic and vocational needs. It should also address *'personal and social aspects of their lives'* (UNICEF, 2007a, p.29).

Recently the development discourse has placed increasing emphasis on the need to address not just economic development but also the development of 'capabilities' and 'social capital'. The ASPBAE *Gender, Equality and Education Report Card* states that the three essential domains of education for girls are security, access to resources and opportunities and also *'capabilities'* (Narayan *et al.*, 2010, p.2).⁴ It is recognized that simply gaining new knowledge and skills is not on its own sufficient as some individuals and groups have greater opportunity to make use of these than others. It is only by having access to equal social relations that individuals or groups will achieve the capability to make positive changes in their lives.

Good quality education, by its very nature, has a rather special role as a vehicle for advancing and promoting wider rights and reducing discrimination and exclusion. (Durstun *et al.*, 2008, p.12)

Care India has designed a Social Learning Package which, alongside the training that teachers receive, seeks to enable children to: *'Understand the diversities that different cultures have in family structures and practices, and recognize the inequalities that are prevalent in their families and in society at large'* (Care India, n.d.).

The Care Social Learning Package has modules on a range of topics dealing with health and social issues and has the aim of *'developing children into self-confident individuals, who could think critically, visualize their own potentials and be conscious of their social responsibilities.'* The approach of these learning materials is to help children to understand both their own identity and their relationship with others and the emphasis is always on celebrating the positive aspects of diversity at the same time as recognizing the importance of everyone sharing universal rights and responsibilities (UNICEF, 2007a, p.24).

If education is to play a *'transformative'* and *'empowering'* role (Chitrakar, 2009, p.63) it needs to recognize that its role is not merely to pass on knowledge and skills, but also to act as an agent of change. One important way in which this is already being addressed in many countries in the region is through a careful analysis of existing learning materials to ensure that these do not perpetuate traditional discrimination – for example in their depiction of girls or of different castes or ethnic groups. Some schools have gone further than this and have proactively introduced social learning into the school curriculum.

As well as having a role to play in terms of social aspects of the curriculum, education has an important role to play in terms of health. The Equity in School Water and Sanitation study has several positive examples of schools which automatically included health education within the curriculum.

They (the children) are aware about various sources of potable water, difference between clean and dirty water, harmful effects of using dirty water, benefits of using toilets, etc. (UNICEF, 2009c, A Regional Perspective, p.30)

However, these positive examples are far from universal. In one of the Bangladeshi schools a girl reports that, even in an all-girl school, the female teacher:

never teaches the chapter that includes 'personal care and hygiene of adolescent girls during menstruation'. She teaches an alternative chapter instead of that one. The alternative chapter is actually excluded from the school syllabus and no questions are asked from that particular chapter in school examinations. (UNICEF, 2009c, Bangladesh Country Report,

⁴ Which they define in Sen's words as *'the substantive freedoms (a person) enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value'* (Sen, 1999)

Similar exclusion is mentioned in relation to TB and AIDS. When these topics are included, as they were in Bhutan both with children and in a programme for parents, the response appears to be very positive. As one Bhutanese father says: *'It will help to bridge the information gap between parents and children'*, and *'I am a father of many children who had no idea of menstrual cycle and other reproductive issues. It helped me a lot'* (UNICEF, 2009c, Bhutan Country Report, p.18).

Pedagogy which challenges discrimination

While it is important that curriculum content covers social issues, it is also important to recognize that issues of discrimination need to be addressed not just through what is taught but also through the way in which teaching takes place. If children from disadvantaged backgrounds are to gain the skills to challenge discrimination and become confident and active participants in society, they need to be taught in ways which encourage them to be active, questioning participants in the learning process. There needs to be not just relevant curriculum but also: *'pedagogy that challenges discrimination based on gender, ethnicity or social background'* (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 1, p.4).

It is a *'child-centred pedagogy'* which is *'more likely to produce independent thinkers who can make constructive contributions to a participatory democracy and adapt to changing circumstance'* (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 1, p.10). Such pedagogy needs to start from a basis of respect and a belief that learning is an interactive process which builds upon the strengths which all children can bring to the classroom.

Another important way in which children learn the enabling skills of working together is by the development of extra-curricular activities which give children additional responsibilities and involve them in discussing issues and coming to their own decisions. Nepal has implemented a successful initiative of Child Clubs and Child Rights Forums which involve children in working together to decide how to deal with issues which are affecting them in negative ways.

4.3 Monitoring quality and equality in learning

A picture of some of the diverse factors which need to be brought together in order to gain a holistic picture of how well an education system is catering for disadvantaged groups of learners is contained in the 2009 Workshop Report, *Evidence for Education Policy Advocacy and Planning: Keeping Children at the Centre* (UNICEF, 2009d). Education Management Information System (EMIS) has become well established across the region and provides an important baseline for countries. However, valuable as it is, concerns are expressed in relation to certain limitations of the current EMIS approach. It is recognized that EMIS could do little in terms of monitoring the extent to which countries were addressing the issue of disparity in education unless the information gathered was thoroughly disaggregated. Other important concerns were that EMIS does not as it stands tell us how well children are doing at school, nor does it enable us to measure the quality of experience of children.

Children are not empty vessels to be filled with information, but young people with personalities, names and knowledge to share. The new knowledge they acquire in school builds on their learning from home and the community. (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 4, p.9)

The children's ability to keep themselves involved is a function of group dynamics created in a class whereby mixed groups of children with different abilities often provide the incentive and space for facilitating peer learning ... Students have taken charge in assisting their peers in either solving a mathematical problem or teaching them to spell correctly. This change in classrooms reveals support for richer and more inquiry based interactions among students and between teacher and students. (Example from the District Primary Education Programme in India, cited in Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, p.46)

The existing EMIS in most countries is not aimed at capturing detailed and disaggregated data on many aspects of basic/primary education, such as the quality aspect, the transformational experience of learners and teachers and the gender dimension, in a comprehensive manner. In order to develop comprehensive analyses and full understanding of the ground realities related to the various barriers that continue to exist and adversely affect the issues of access, quality and equity in basic/primary education especially for girls, the countries may have to move to lower levels of school government and management. (Chitrakar, 2009, p.16)

Effective monitoring requires, in addition to key input and output of data, more emphasis on qualitative information such as listening to children's views and experiences. 'Capturing the lived experience' of girls or other disadvantaged children can happen in different ways. For example, SIDA's Bangladesh Reality Check project is enabling local researchers to carry out in-depth qualitative studies in a series of urban and rural settings over a period of time in order to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of users on the quality of services, including education (UNICEF, 2009d, pp.36–38). Save the Children has developed child-led processes which involved children being supported to express their views about school using a range of creative methods (Save the Children, 2008b). They have also developed a community-based monitoring system, C-EMIS, which complements the regular EMIS monitoring and is carried out by and involves listening to the views of children, parents and community members (Save the Children, 2007b).⁵

UNICEF's *Child Friendly Schools Manual* also recognizes the importance of involving all stakeholders in the monitoring process, highlighting the importance of monitoring 'efficiency', 'effectiveness' and 'equity' and establishing means of tracking individual children to monitor their holistic development. It emphasizes the way in which teachers are key to the monitoring process and the value of developing teachers' skills as 'reflective practitioners' who 'take stock regularly and routinely of the classroom process and its outcomes: What went right, what went wrong? Why do some of the learners still not grasp the lesson, why are some children so disinterested in what is going on? And how can I make things better?' (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 8.3.3)

Several organizations and individuals have developed checklists for teachers which give indicators of what is needed for ensuring inclusive, quality education (for example Heijnen-Maathuis, 2008, pp.77–81; Save the Children, 2008, Annex 1). This shift of focus from purely quantitative to qualitative measurement is welcome. However, concerns have been expressed that 'EFA discourse has moved from a commitment to quality to its measurement without adequate consideration of what quality entails, particularly in the vital domain of pedagogy' (Alexander, 2008, p.vii). Alexander is concerned that the quest for measurement has led to an attempt to find measures for each indicator of child-friendly pedagogy whereas 'some indicators cannot be translated into measures.' He is also concerned that the desire to find universal quality indicators of pedagogy can detract from an understanding that specific context and culture inevitably

A key feature of child friendly schools is the active and meaningful participation of students and community members, along with teachers, school administrators, supervisors, inspectors and education system officials in the monitoring process. (UNICEF, 2009b, Chapter 8.1)

affect the concept of quality. For example quality will mean something different in a small multi-grade school from that in a large school, and will be interpreted differently in one cultural context from how it is interpreted in another context. He is also concerned that an over-prescribed definition of what constitutes quality teaching could end up restricting teachers. Instead, he believes there is a need for education authorities to:

consider ways of involving teachers in the exploration of pedagogy and pedagogical quality. The account will be even more useful if students, too, are involved. In fact, both the debate about quality and its pursuit in the classroom would be immeasurably enhanced if teachers and students were empowered to participate in it rather than merely enact versions of 'quality' handed down from above. (Alexander, 2008, p.44)

⁵ C-EMIS projects have now been established in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh, supported by UNICEF or Save the Children.

4.4 Conclusion

It is not sufficient only to look at how to ensure disadvantaged children gain access to education and remain in school, but it is also crucial to look at the extent to which all children are gaining equal access to a quality education experience. What is needed is that:

- All learners have access to formal accreditation and qualifications.
- Formal skills such as literacy and numeracy are regularly monitored, but that such monitoring do not take place at the expense of a focus on equally important but less easily measurable social skills.
- Education becomes more relevant and provides learners with vocational skills which will support them in gaining employment, but also a realization that such education can be perceived as second best and hence serve to perpetuate existing social divisions.
- Teachers use interactive child-centred teaching methods, but being aware of the risk that such teaching methods might not be seen as 'real' education in a culture where traditionally education is delivered in more formal ways.
- More attention must be given to the 'process' of education rather than simply to the outcomes, even though the process is not easy to measure.

If quality is to be measured through the learning process and children's learning experiences it is clear that more attention needs to be given both to the teachers who will deliver the learning and the children who will receive it. There needs to be a recognition that '*versions of quality*' cannot be simply '*handed down from above*'. Instead, those who are themselves involved in education both as teachers and learners need to be able to contribute to the debate and to look, within their own particular context, at what educational skills and processes will really enable disadvantaged children to make a positive difference to their lives (Alexander, 2008).

4.5 Resources

Alexander, R. (2008). *Education for All, The Quality Imperative and the Problem of Pedagogy*. CREATE Research Monograph No. 20. Sussex, UK: University of Sussex/DFID

This CREATE research monograph by Robin Alexander explores how educational quality in the classroom is conceived, indicated and measured. It also explores how it might be conceived, indicated and measured better in the future. As the author explains, the monograph was written originally for DfID India for application in the context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the Education for All programme launched by the Government of India in 2002. However the content of the monograph has considerable relevance for the conceptual and methodological work of CREATE in India and elsewhere. Central to CREATE's concerns are the Zones of Exclusion in which many children are denied access to education of quality. One such is the zone of 'silent exclusion' in which children are enrolled in and attending school but are not participating in a learning and teaching process of good quality. Such children are at risk of learning very little and are likely to become poor attenders and drop-outs.

Cambridge Distance Education Consultancy (CDEC) (2009). *Open and Distance Learning for Basic Education in South Asia: Its potential for hard-to-reach children and children in conflict and disaster areas*. Cambridge: CDEC; and Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This study examines the range of different ways in which open and distance education might extend educational options for hard to reach children. The two case studies carried out in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka look specifically at the way in which open learning might facilitate ongoing access to education at times of emergency and conflict.

Chitrakar, R. (2009). *Overcoming Barriers to Girls' Education in South Asia: Deepening the Analysis*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

The analysis of the documentary evidence for this study is informed by the need to investigate more deeply the barriers to girls' education and gender equality in South Asian countries. The study contains a detailed description and analysis of the educational situation for girls in each of the eight countries. It particularly focuses on the way in which, even when countries have progressed in terms of parity of girls having access to education, education still tends not to play a transformational role for

girls and is yet to lead to a more gender equal society.

Heijnen-Maathuis, E. (2008). *From Parity to Equality in Girls' Education: How Are We Doing in South Asia?* Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

Starting from the belief that education is a fundamental human right this publication examines in a practical way what is needed at national, regional and school levels to ensure that girls' right to quality education is ensured. As well as giving many examples of good practice from across the South Asian region, the publication also has three useful annexes: '*How children learn and implications for school practice*', '*What makes a good teacher*' and '*Is your classroom inclusive and child-friendly? A self-assessment tool for teachers to use in their classroom*'.

Kothari, K.S. (2007). *Education through the Gender Lens*.

Kothari believes the community is responsible for education and hence it should mount pressure on the government to be accountable. Sixty percent of India's illiterate comprise women. Female literacy (43%) was 26 points below male literacy (69%). No society can grow without a sound base of educated women. Even though the current environment for the promotion of girl child is gradually being encouraged but basic attitudes of people toward education of girls and the culturally tempered gender bias remain unchanged.

Narayan, S., Rao, N. and Lourdes A. Khan, M. (2010). *Gender, Equality and Education: A Report Card on South Asia*. Mumbai: Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education/UNGEI

This report uses a gender lens to score and grade countries across South Asia based on their respective abilities to distinctly nurture gender equality in education. The quantitative framework and the specific indices chosen for the report reflect some of the priorities of civil societies and UNGEI partners for basic education, and serve as a call to action to national governments to ensure that every woman and girl receives her rights to a meaningful education.

Plan International (2010). *Because I am a Girl: The State of the World's Girls 2010. Digital and Urban Frontiers: Girls in a Changing Landscape*. London: Plan UK

Digital and Urban Frontiers is the fourth in a series of annual reports published by Plan examining the rights of girls throughout their childhood, adolescence and as young women. Focusing on two of the 21st century's fastest growing areas - the boom in city populations and the explosion of IT and communication technology, the report looks at the prospects and perils facing girls. While there are great opportunities, prejudice and poverty is excluding millions of girls from taking advantages of the possibilities on offer. Urban poverty, lack of proper housing and sexual harassment can make many girls feel unsafe. Cyberspace can also be hazardous - a hunting ground for traffickers and bullies. The report argues that girls need to be able to gain the skills to protect themselves and to recognise both the threats and the opportunities that await them on the city streets and online.

UNESCO (2009). *Overcoming Inequality: Why Governance Matters. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009: Regional Overview for South and West Asia*. Paris and Oxford: UNESCO and Oxford University Press

This edition of the EFA Global Monitoring Report offers a warning to governments, donors and the international community that with current trends universal primary education will not be achieved by 2015. Too many children are receiving an education of such poor quality that they leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills. Finally, deep and persistent disparities based on wealth, gender, location, ethnicity and other markers for disadvantage are acting as a major barrier to progress in education. If the world's governments are serious about Education for All, they must get more serious about tackling inequality.

UNICEF (2009b). *Child Friendly Schools Manual*. New York: UNICEF

The UNICEF Child Friendly Schools Manual contains a wealth of practical guidance on how to further the development of child-friendly schools. It includes sections on the design and construction of schools; the school and its relationship with the community; schools as a protective environment; the process of teaching and learning; costs and benefits; and monitoring and evaluation. It also includes a range of examples of how child-friendly principles have been put into practice in various countries.

UNICEF (2009c). *Equity in School Water and Sanitation: Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination in South Asia*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

Regional report and Bhutan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh case studies (5 documents). These studies go beyond simply looking at the importance of schools providing toilets and safe drinking water and also examine other ways in which school children can be discriminated against for issues related to water and sanitation and to perceived notions of cleanliness. The four country case studies used qualitative research methods in order to elicit the views of children, families and teachers.

UNICEF (2009d). *Evidence for Education Policy Advocacy and Planning: Keeping Children at the Centre*. Report of Workshop, 10–14 August 2009, Kathmandu, Nepal. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This report describes the presentations, discussions and outcomes of a workshop which brought together a wide range of examples of different ways of collecting, analysing and using evidence, and how this diverse evidence can best be used to influence both planning and policy in education. It contains detailed presentations on how to make use of the EFAINFO database. Each section of the report includes examples of further reading.

UNICEF (2007a). *Education Policy and the Right to Education, Towards More Equitable Outcomes for South Asia's Children*. Report of Meeting, 17–20 September 2007, Kathmandu, Nepal. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This report describes the presentations, discussions and outcomes of this meeting which examined the complex range of issues which inhibit children from maximizing their participation in education and from achieving good learning outcomes. Issues are summarized into sections which include looking at: *Where are we now in South Asia, The wider context, Excluded groups and inclusive systems, Different dimensions of inclusive education, Government policies and Making equitable choices*. Sections refer to additional further reading and the report has an accompanying CD which includes full presentations of speakers and also additional background papers.

Chapter 5: Access to Education in Emergencies

5.1 Additional access issues facing children at times of emergency

Emergency and conflict throughout the South Asia region provides one of the key reasons for children not being in school. *'Currently conflict is the biggest single reason for South Asia not meeting its EFA targets'* (UNICEF, 2009d, p.29). School children in some countries in South Asia are also vulnerable to external attacks on their schools. In 2011 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1998, which recognises attacks against schools and hospitals as a grave violation of children's rights. The resolution also calls for the perpetrators of such violence to be listed in the UN Secretary-General's annual report on Children and Armed Conflict.

Many of the strategies for improving access to education are equally relevant for extending access to education for children at times of emergency. Initiatives such as outreach work, school feeding programmes or targeted incentives will be equally, if not more, important for vulnerable children affected by natural disaster or conflict. However, these initiatives should be supplemented by additional child-seeking initiatives (CIER, 2009).

Planning for emergencies

Emergencies tend to engulf a country suddenly and without prior warning. In order to respond to such situations education departments will need to have detailed plans in place. There are currently several resources available to support planning for education in emergencies and also specific resources to support continuity of schooling. For example, UNICEF's *School in a Box* provides the essentials for creating a temporary classroom, or, as described below, Sri Lanka's *Home School Modules* are designed to provide learning for children in conflict-affected areas who cannot attend school regularly. Some countries in the region also have Open School programmes which could be used to provide education for children in emergency situations. Clear planning strategies must be in place for these initiatives to be effective (UNICEF, 2006, 2007b).

Finding children

After an emergency or at times of conflict vulnerable children must be made visible. It is essential that all schools keep clear and up-to-date class registers so that in an emergency, teachers can try to locate the children they used to teach. In some instances countries have found that using children themselves as monitors to seek out children and encourage them to return to school has been very effective – in Sri Lanka at IDP camps in Batticaloa, children themselves became monitors and encouraged fellow students to go to schools and this was seen as a more effective tactic than using adults (CIER, 2009, p.106).

Those providing education in emergency or conflict situations need to work closely with agencies providing 'safe places' for families and, if possible, to use these as a bridge for encouraging children to return to school. Devastating as emergency situations are, they can also in the longer term become an opportunity for registering and enrolling children who may not previously have attended school. For example, after the 2005 Pakistan earthquake when camp schools were opened for children who had come down from high altitude villages, it was revealed that 80 per cent of the children attending the camp schools had never been to school before (CIER, 2009, p.35).

Helping children get to school or providing alternative forms of schooling

Existing schools are often destroyed at times of emergency, and those which remain standing are often taken over as community shelters. If temporary or new schools have been established, these will not necessarily be accessible to all children. Transport might need to be provided for both students and teachers, and also specific help given, for example if children need to pass through security checkpoints to get to and from school.

Even with this support some children may be unable to attend a regular school and alternative types of provision need to be established. In Sri Lanka it was found that there were children who could attend school spasmodically but not every day. To address this, a system of 'home school modules

and booklets' was set up and designated adults would gather together four or five children to work on these booklets, sometimes supported by a teacher who would visit several of the clusters. Another potential way of ensuring that children continue to have access to education at times of emergency and conflict is open schooling. Sri Lanka established an Open School in 2005. Currently it has been mainly targeting older students from various ethnic groups within the country. However, it has also extended its reach to some young people and adults who were affected by the conflict in the north and east of the country. Currently the Open School in Sri Lanka is being run on a small scale and, although it is a government department, it is heavily reliant on donor funding. Nevertheless, the researchers carrying out the Open and Distance Education study for ROSA felt that *'there is a clear potential in Open School, in continued partnerships with other organizations, to meet the complex needs of those affected by conflict.'* (CDEC, 2009, p.71)

5.2 Additional child-friendly practices required during emergency or conflict

While the requirements discussed in previous chapters are equally applicable to children in emergency or conflict situations, these children also have additional needs. Children in conflict-affected areas can face the risk, not just of lack of security within school, but also attacks from outside. In Afghanistan there has been a dramatic increase in enrolment in education since the fall of the Taliban (Chitrakar, 2009, Chapter 6.1). However, particularly in the south of the country, schools are still subject to security threats. Despite these threats, which cause many schools to close, the Ministry of Education has attempted to ameliorate the situation by developing the following risk reduction framework:

- Child Protection officers in each province who look after the security of children, particularly girls
- Community mobilizers who work to improve understanding and encourage communities to reopen schools and send children to school
- Education envoys who are committed religious scholars or chieftains and who try to integrate education with society
- A Director of Security and Protection which, according to the Ministry's policy, responds to emergencies and has a commitment to respond to attacks within 72 hours
- The Ministry of Education and UNICEF stock up on student supplies
- The provision of psychological support

(UNICEF, 2009d, p.31)

Addressing concerted attacks on schools requires both immediate responses such as those described above and long-term initiatives. In Afghanistan, one of the key causes of conflict in terms of education was over curriculum content and hence a key challenge was to negotiate with religious leaders in order to try to establish a curriculum which was acceptable to all sides (UNICEF, 2009d).

Safety is not just an issue for children in conflict-affected areas but also in areas subject to natural disaster. Child-friendly schools must be physically safe if they are to protect children during natural disasters, and recent experience during the earthquake in China shows the importance of monitoring school construction to ensure that building regulations are adhered to. Schools also need to have clearly set out procedures on what teachers and children should do in the case of emergency and regular drills to ensure that everyone is aware of these.

As well as attention to physical safety, children in conflict and emergency situations are likely to be subject to additional psychological trauma. Children need to know that school is a safe place for them to be able to share their grief or anxiety and teachers need to seek out culturally appropriate ways of addressing these needs. For example, in Sri Lanka, after the tsunami in 2004, resistance was encountered in some districts to attempts to encourage one-to-one discussion about personal issues as children were not used to this approach. Instead a community-level approach was developed using *'forum theatre'* techniques where actors and singers talked and sang about common issues and allowed the audience to contribute (CIER, 2009, p.105).

5.3 Creating child-enabling education at times of emergency or conflict

Immediate skills

At times of emergency and conflict there are likely to be additional skills required by children and also a need for education which focuses specifically on children's health and safety. Children will need to learn how they can best adapt to their new situation and may need, as a matter of urgency, specific health and hygiene skills, for example in how to reduce the chances of catching infectious diseases. In addition they may require additional skills which involve learning about their rights and how to protect themselves. Children also need to better understand their situation and through this knowledge to feel less powerless within it. As a child in Gaza said, *'by increasing our skills, we can become more capable of fighting the occupation with our minds'* (Mathieu, 2006, p.58).

In a situation where regular teachers may not be available, it is valuable to have ready-made curriculum modules which are presented in a way which allows older children or other literate members of the community to deliver them to groups of children. For example, UNICEF ROSA's publication, *Flu Pandemics: What you can do if there is an outbreak* (UNICEF, 2009e), has taken existing UNICEF educational materials on flu and converted them into a distance education module which could be used independently by older children and with a local but untrained facilitator for younger ones.

Preventative role of education

Education has a key role to play not only in providing children with additional enabling skills in emergencies but also in giving children the skills to prevent future emergency situations and to develop *'capability and skills to strengthen society in the future against vulnerability'* (CIER, 2009, p.19). All children, particularly those living in areas throughout the region which are prone to disaster, need to be taught skills of how to cope with these disasters. Sometimes this will include general planning skills such as disaster preparation or hazard awareness. It might also include a general policy on teaching all children a specific practical skill, for example the Government of Maldives, after the tsunami, developed a *'commitment to ensuring that every child in the Maldives can swim and be safe in water from an early age'* (UNICEF, 2007a, p.41).

Enabling skills can be crucial not just in giving children tools which will help them to cope in a possible future emergency, but also in helping to prevent future emergencies. For example, there is strong evidence that basic education remains the strongest weapon against AIDS. The Global Campaign for Education has reported that:

Peace education has been proven to be a key component in life skills education, especially in conflict settings. In post-conflict settings there is a clear need for education to play an important role in guiding children away from violence through the teaching and emphasis of tolerance, reconciliation and accountability. (Mathieu, 2006, p.73)

HIV/AIDS infection rates are doubled among young people who do not finish primary school. If every girl and boy received a complete primary education, at least 7 million new cases of HIV could be prevented in a decade. (Cited in Mathieu, 2006, p.60)

In addition to the way in which education in general can act as a mitigating factor in the spread of AIDS there is also the need for schools to have programmes which make children aware of AIDS and how to prevent it.

In terms of education's role in preventing conflict it is recognized that education can also be part of a root cause of conflict. Education can be used as a means to manipulate history and to reinforce inequality. At the same time it can provide an opening for social transformation (UNICEF, 2009d, p.30). Education which seeks to provide social transformation needs to occur both at a general level – for example by promoting equality within schools – and also in the form of peace education during and after conflict situations.

5.4 Conclusion

Despite the devastation caused by emergency situations there are also indications that at times emergencies can act as an agency for opening up new opportunities. A key way in which this can happen is that sometimes emergency results in *'the suspension of cultural and other norms'* (CIER, 2009, p.36). At times of extreme crisis there is often a need for everyone to work together in a way which overrides traditional social barriers. Education needs to build upon this by emphasizing principles of mutual assistance. The Education in Emergencies study found several individual examples where positive developments had occurred; for example, *'in India, it was felt that there were positive examples from groups learning together who would normally be segregated by class, caste or location'* (CIER, 2009, p.36). In Sri Lanka, UNICEF found that the absence of male teachers meant that more female teachers could be brought into the refugee camps. In Nepal, despite the bitterness and division caused by conflict, there is also a view that *'women's involvement in the Maoists' army has challenged their subordination'* (CIER, 2009, p.86). While the terms 'emergency' and 'opportunity' do not appear to sit easily beside each other, chances exist to 'build back better' and it is important that those involved in education realize that this does not just refer to physical building but also for: *'social "building back better" – which implies building human, not just physical, resources – and for using the possibility of an emergency to enable creative and protective teaching'* (CIER, 2009, p.36).

5.5 Resources

Cambridge Distance Education Consultancy (CDEC) (2009). Open and Distance Learning for Basic Education in South Asia: Its potential for hard-to-reach children and children in conflict and disaster areas. Cambridge: CDEC; and Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This study examines the range of different ways in which open and distance education might extend educational options for hard to reach children. The two case studies carried out in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka look specifically at the way in which open learning might facilitate ongoing access to education at times of emergency and conflict.

Centre for International Education and Research (CIER) (2009). Education in Emergencies in South Asia: Reducing the Risks Facing Vulnerable Children. Birmingham, UK: CIER, University of Birmingham; and Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

The focus of this research study was to identify those children whose education is most vulnerable in times of emergency and to suggest ways of reducing this vulnerability. The research was conducted by a team from the Centre for International Education and Research (CIER) at the University of Birmingham in the UK and supported by local researchers in seven out of the eight countries in South Asia. It examines in particular the need at times of emergency to make children 'visible', 'safe' and 'capable' and looks at different ways in which education in emergency needs to be 'child-seeking', 'child-friendly' and 'child-enabling'.

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) (2010). INEE Minimum Standards Handbook for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery.

The INEE Minimum Standards Handbook is the only global tool that articulates the minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies through to recovery. The aim of the handbook is 1) to enhance the quality of educational preparedness, response and recovery; 2) to increase access to safe and relevant learning opportunities for all learners, regardless of their age, gender or abilities; and 3) to ensure accountability and strong coordination in the provision of education in emergencies through to recovery.

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) (2010). Gender Equality in and through education. INEE pocket guide to gender.

The INEE Pocket Guide to Gender complements the INEE Minimum Standards for Education and the IASC Gender Handbook and is intended for anyone working to provide, manage, or support education services as part of emergency preparedness, response or recovery.

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) (2009). Education in Emergencies: Including Everyone. INEE pocket guide to inclusive education.

With the input of many INEE members, the Task Team has developed this tool as a quick reference

guide to help practitioners make sure that education in emergencies is accessible and inclusive for everyone, particularly those who have been traditionally excluded from education.

Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) (2009). *INEE Guidance Notes on Teacher Compensation in Fragile States, Situations of Displacement and Post-Crisis Recovery* Developed in a widely consultative manner under the leadership of an interagency advisory group (INEE Secretariat, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children Alliance, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, Women's Refugee Commission), these Guidance Notes address a critical challenge to quality education by providing a framework for discussing the complex issues surrounding the compensation of teachers based on lessons learnt from practice around the world.

Mathieu, A. (2006). *Reaching the Girls in South Asia: Differentiated Needs and Responses in Emergencies. Issues Paper.* Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

Drawing on a range of recent papers on education and emergencies this publication looks at the variety of ways in which girls' education can be negatively affected at times of emergency. It then examines a range of different ways in which countries in the region have attempted to ensure that girls' education is not thwarted at times of emergencies and the lessons which can be learnt from these approaches.

Save the Children (2010). *Rewrite the Future – 3 years on*

In 2006 Save the Children launched its Rewrite the Future campaign to take action for children in conflict-affected countries. This report highlights the progress made during the three years of the campaign.

Save the Children (2010). *The Future is now – Education for children affected by conflict*

Following on from the Rewrite the Future campaign this publication looks at how more children can access education, how the quality of education can be improved, and how education must be recognized as an essential part of an emergency response.

Save the Children (2010). *Barriers to Accessing Primary Education in Conflict-affected Fragile State. Literature Review.* International Save the Children Alliance

This review synthesizes the literature on education in conflict-affected fragile states in order both to identify the barriers facing children's access to education at times of conflict and also to suggest promising approaches.

UNESCO (2011). *The Hidden Crisis: armed conflict and education.* EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011. Paris and Oxford: UNESCO and Oxford University Press

Violent conflict is one of the greatest development challenges facing the international community. Beyond the immediate human suffering it causes, it is a source of poverty, inequality and economic stagnation. Children and education systems are often on the front line of violent conflict. The 2011 Global Monitoring Report examines the damaging consequences of conflict for the Education for All goals. It sets out an agenda for protecting the right to education during conflict, strengthening provision for children, youth and adults affected by conflict, and rebuilding education systems in countries emerging from conflict. The report also explores the role of inappropriate education policies in creating conditions for violent conflict. Drawing on experience from a range of countries, it identifies problems and sets out solutions that can help make education a force for peace, social cohesion and human dignity.

UNESCO (2010). *Education under Attack.* Paris: UNESCO

This is a report of a global study on targeted political and military violence against education staff, students, teachers, union and government officials and institutions.

UNICEF (2009e). *Flu Pandemics: What you can do if there is an outbreak. Resource Pack.* Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This Resource Pack contains a range of materials to help young people to learn how to prevent the spread of influenza, and what to do if there is an outbreak. The materials focus on avian flu, but can be adapted in the event of an outbreak of a different strain of the illness. They explain what causes avian flu, why it is important to prevent its spread, and what steps can be taken to minimize its occurrence.

UNICEF (2007b). *Education in Emergencies: Facilitators' Guide*. Kathmandu, Nepal: UNICEF ROSA

This guide includes a menu of learning exercises to assist participants in learning and applying preparedness and response activities in emergency contexts. It is a companion guide to the Resource Tool Kit published in 2006.

UNICEF (2006). *Education in Emergencies: A Resource Tool Kit*. Kathmandu, Nepal: UNICEF ROSA/NYHQ

This tool kit has been developed for UNICEF officers, and presents information and tools to enable them to prepare for and respond to emergencies to comply with UNICEF's Core Commitments for Emergencies in the Education sector.

Chapter 6: Effective Planning – Internal and Cross-sectoral

This synthesis has brought together findings from a range of recent publications which address issues related to disparity in access to education in the South Asia region. It has structured this by focusing on three main areas: access to education, equality of opportunity while *in* education and equal access to quality education and learning achievements *through* education, and has looked at some of the approaches which are needed to ensure that education is ‘child-seeking’, ‘child-friendly’ and ‘child enabling’ (CIER, 2009, Chapter 3). It is clear that countries in the region have achieved considerable progress during the past decade. It is apparent that there is increasing awareness of the importance of focusing not just on access to education but also on ensuring that all children receive equal treatment when in school and have equal access to quality provision. While the publications provide several individual examples of good practice, it is also clear that these interventions need to be scaled up. This requires both coherency within the education system and also consolidation of effective cross-sectoral efforts.

6.1 Coherent and workable education systems

Achieving equal access to quality learning for all groups of learners will not happen unless countries have a coherent and inclusive education strategy. Over the past decade, *‘there have been substantial changes in the way in which educational development is conceptualized and how international assistance to the sector is managed’* (Durston *et al.*, 2008, p.4).

With the 2005 Paris Declaration there was a commitment from donors to provide more co-ordinated and simplified procedures for supporting country plans. There has been a shift from traditional project-based work to more general programme support initially through a Sector Investment Programme (SIP) approach which: *‘aimed to support governments in planning coherently for the whole sector within the context of an over-arching, realistic and costed policy framework’* (Durston *et al.*, 2008, p.4).

However, as SIP implementation got underway, there was a recognition that ‘one size does not fit all’ and in preference to SIP the term ‘Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp)’ was adopted to describe *‘what is more of a direction, process and ethos than a rigid blueprint or narrowly defined funding mechanism’* (Durston *et al.*, 2008, p.4).

While the SWAp aims are laudable, studies have shown that in practice SWAps do not always succeed in the way they are intended. To begin with, as was described in detail in the Open and Distance Learning study (CDEC, 2009), the important work being carried out by the non-formal and the NGO sectors is not always included within countries’ overall educational framework. Consequently much valuable synergy is lost which can be particularly damaging to disadvantaged groups of children.

Secondly, it is clear in some of the publications that the shift to SWAps has not always resulted in greater local contextualization. In *The Move to Programme-Based Approaches: An Effective Partnership for Girls’ Education*, Ted Freeman shows how partnership requires:

- Continuity
- Addressing technical and administrative imbalances, including simplifying administrative requirements
- Respecting roles and broadening participation
- Ensuring relevance and validity to local context
- Creative use of aid modalities

(Freeman, 2006, pp.20–22)

However, the Country Studies in *Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in SWAps in South Asia* (see the Resources below) show that donors are not always working in accord with the Paris Declaration and also that partnerships can be working in formalized top-down ways which may be to the detriment of traditionally excluded groups (Freeman, 2006, pp.76–77).

As stated in Durston *et al.* (2008, p.7, citing Seel, 2007):

A focus on sector-wide efficiency and national development objectives over individual rights can lead to a de-prioritizing of hard-to-reach groups as 'too expensive to reach'.

The top down and formal approach of many SWAPs can lead to weak involvement from civil society, a lack of recognition of informal processes and the reinforcement of existing gender and social biases.

and

Some development partners perceive themselves to be losing the diversity and richness of experience, field-based understanding and interpersonal relationships which project interventions had provided.

One concern is the lack of sufficient attention being paid to listening to the voices of children, families and communities. While programmes continually speak about the importance of local contextualization, it was felt that this was often token rather than actual. In his list of 'What Doesn't Work', Freeman (2006, p.18) draws from the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education (Freeman *et al.*, 2004) and includes in his list:

Donor-driven programme priorities and programme components ... which are apt to be inappropriate to the capacity of the education systems as a whole as well as to community structures which support them.

Centralized systems of national control over the education system which imposes standardized approaches down to the school level.

and

Expectations of community management which impose elaborate systems of planning and allocating resources without adequate support from the centre.

Coherent and committed centralized plans are essential if issues of disparity in access to education are to be addressed. But this needs to be countered by a genuine commitment to listen to those whose role it is to implement these plans and to those who are the intended beneficiaries. This requires *'flexibility in terms of innovation and approaches chosen'* and also *'realism in terms of goal setting and expectations'* (Freeman, 2006, p.22).

6.2 Cross-sectoral working

While being a key player in addressing issues of disparity it is wrong to suggest that all problems can be solved by education alone. There is a need for the educational framework to *'look beyond itself'* and remember that, *'in addressing social inclusion, cross sectoral working will be vital'* (Seel, 2007, p.87). UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009* also emphasizes the need for *'co-ordination across sectors'* and the need to *'integrate education with wider strategies for overcoming poverty and inequality'* (Seel, 2007, p.131). Three particular areas where cross-sectoral work is of fundamental importance are: education and health; addressing discrimination; and anti-poverty strategies.

Education and health

Ill health as a key cross-cutting reason for children to be either not enrolled in school or performing badly in school (CREATE, 2008b). It is clear that closer and more systematic co-ordination between education and health sectors could help to mitigate the extent to which ill health is a factor in children missing out on school. Positive working relationships are now increasing, particularly in some ECD provision where parents can receive support and advice in areas such as nutrition and inoculation. Another substantially successful cross-sector initiative has been the Indian Midday Meal programme which, as was noted earlier, has had proven impact on school attendance in India as well as improving children's ability to study. However, more could be achieved if countries had a more integrated approach between the education and health sectors, whereas *'... none of the eight countries have an integrated approach to the issue of health and education of children'* (Ramachandran, 2008, p.51).

Addressing discrimination

Education is a vital factor in helping to address issues of discrimination. However, if changes are to be effective and sustained the changes brought about by education need to be supported within a wider context of social change. Such changes require countries to have appropriate anti-discrimination legislation. Although many countries in the region have had this legislation for a number of years and discrimination is still commonplace shows that legislation has to be accompanied by effective programmes of implementation and monitoring. Both gender- and caste-based discrimination are deeply entrenched in parts of the region and are '*rooted in patriarchal and religious value structures*' (Chitrakar, 2009, p.17). Addressing this requires education to work '*in tandem with wider civil society and media campaigns and actions to highlight discriminatory or exclusive practices, strengthen the voice of excluded groups, and catalyse attitudinal change in the wider society and culture*' (Seel, 2007, p.95).

At a local level there is a need for a holistic commitment throughout a community to address discrimination and instigate change. The Equity in School Water and Sanitation study cited in Chapter 3 showed that where this holistic approach was present, for example in the Tanahun District in Nepal, the synergy between community and school meant that individual anti-discrimination changes introduced in schools were more likely to be successful.

Anti-poverty strategies

Concerted efforts should ensure that education is free with no hidden costs, and also that incentives are available for families in order to mitigate the effect of lost opportunity costs. However, these must also be matched by general pro-poor strategies which will help to raise the standard of living of the poorest families and enable them to see beyond the grind of day-to-day existence.

Finally, it is not sufficient simply to focus on economic strategies which will help children get into or even through school. Governments and donors have a responsibility to ensure that relevant employment opportunities are open to young people when they leave school. Despite rapid urbanization, the population in South Asia still predominantly live in rural areas and many districts have little non-agricultural employment. Often those who live in rural areas and who have completed their education perceive that their only options are either to move to cities in the hope, but not the certainty, of finding work, or to seek migrant work abroad. Experience from other regions (for example South East Asia) shows how investment in education can support economic growth, but this can take time. If countries are to avoid raising expectations which will not be met, equal attention needs to be given not just to education but also to the development of employment opportunities.

6.3 Resources

Acharya, S. (2007). *Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in Education SWAps in South Asia. Nepal Case Study*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This is one of three case studies which explore how education programmes supported through a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) are conceptualizing and addressing issues of social exclusion and gender inequality, and with what results. The synthesis report analyses in detail the country findings and ends with listing pointers for how to achieve education SWAps that promote equity and inclusion.

Durston, S., Seel, A., Evans, J. and Huebler, F. (2008). *Developing Rights-Based Education SWAps in South Asia: From Evidence to Action*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

This publication builds upon the Social Inclusion: Gender and Education SWAps in South Asia studies mentioned above. The fact that it is based upon practical evidence allows it to focus on the practical process of developing rights-based education SWAps. As well as exploring the nature of a rights-based educational SWAp and how to build this, it also provides tools for assessing the education sector from an equity and rights perspective.

Freeman, T. (2006). *The Move to Programme-based Approaches: An Effective Partnership for Girls' Education? The Experience of Recent Evaluations*. Issues Paper. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This paper examines how partnership can become an effective strategy in accelerating progress in South Asia toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those relating to girls' education. Taking a lead from the work done in the Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education which was carried out in 2002–03 it focuses on why partnership is necessary, its potential pitfalls, and how meaningful partnership can be achieved.

Freeman, T., Niels, O. et al. (2004). *Nepal: Joint Government–Donor Evaluation of Basic and Primary Education Programme II*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Danida: Copenhagen

The reason for the evaluation was the need to analyse experience of providing support for education in Nepal in the period 1999-2004. Participants included the Nepalese Ministry of Education and several donors, with Denmark playing a leading role. Norway contributed funding to cover approximately one third of the costs.

Seel, A. (2007). *Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in Education SWApS in South Asia. Synthesis Report. Issues Paper*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA/UNGEI

This new research explores how SWApS are conceptualizing and addressing issues of social exclusion, gender and equity in education in South Asia. It shows that both gender and social inclusion issues in education are important as they have a national dimension, in terms of underutilized potential for the state. The Synthesis Report summarizes the trends and issues from the three country case studies and also identifies gaps in our understanding of gender and equity issues of disadvantaged groups in education programmes in South Asia. It shows that more work needs to be done to reduce inequality through strategies and processes in Education SWApS in South Asia.

Seel A. (2006). *Addressing Social and Gender Disparity in South Asia through SWApS and PBAs in Education: How can we use world experience?* Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA

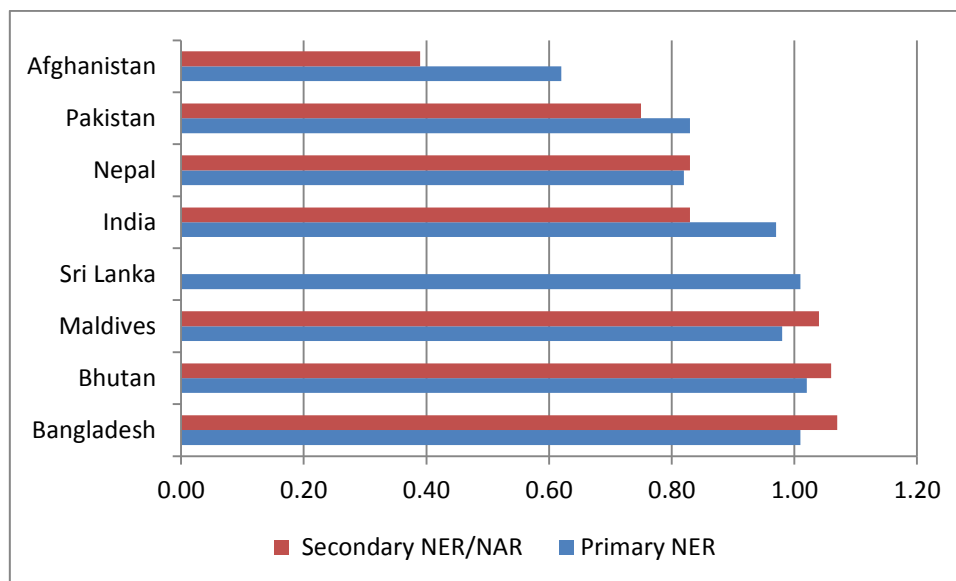
This paper explores the coverage of, and approaches to, gender and social exclusion in twelve educational SWApS across the world, including four in South Asia. It summarizes the literature that sets out the theoretical potential of sector-wide approaches to address equity issues and follows this by examining twelve practical examples of sector-wide approaches and programme-based approaches (PBAs). It concludes with an analysis of the role that development partners have played in supporting a SWAp/PBA to become 'equity sensitive'.

UNICEF ROSA (2006). *Report on Social and Gender Disparity in Education Sector-Wide and Programme-Based Approaches: Regional Meeting for UNICEF South Asia, 20–21 February 2006*

This regional meeting set out to examine the degree to which gender and social disparity has been adequately captured in the SWApS or Programme-Based Approaches, and to discuss how UNICEF can play a role in promoting this. In the report presentations and discussions are summarized and grouped into sections which include: *Why SWApS, The evidence for SWApS, Policy issues and issues of concern, SWApS and inclusion, SWApS in difficult environments, UNICEF's role and comparative advantages* and *Where do we go from here*. The report also includes a select bibliography, a summary of suggestions from UNICEF South Asia based on countries' experience, and a copy of UNICEF's 2006 position paper on SWApS.

Appendix

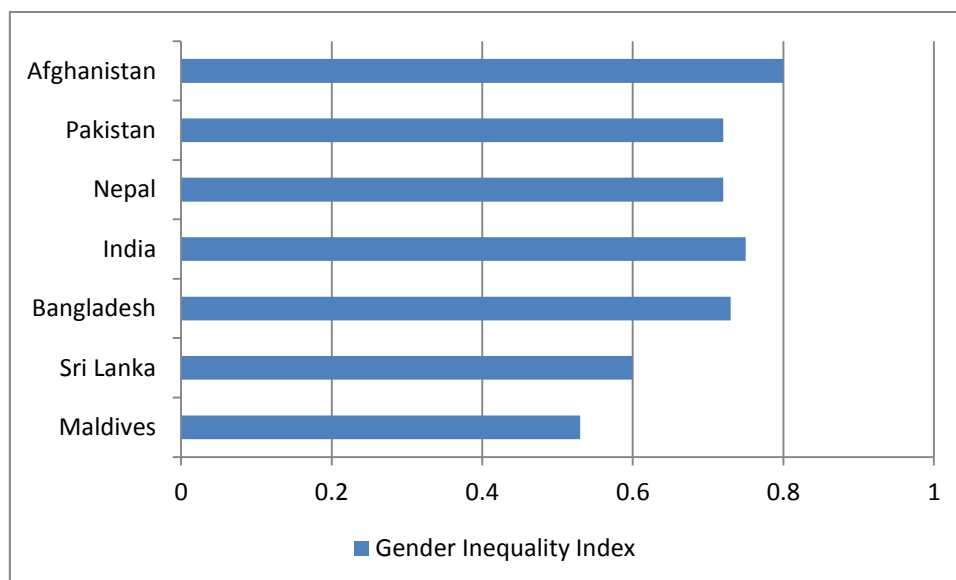
Figure 4: Gender parity at primary and secondary school levels



Source: UNICEF (2011)

Figure 4 shows education disparities by gender by comparing the Gender Parity Index (GPI) at primary and secondary education level. If the GPI is 1, the country is at gender parity, while a GPI below 1 indicates disparity in favour of boys.

Figure 5: Gender Inequality Index

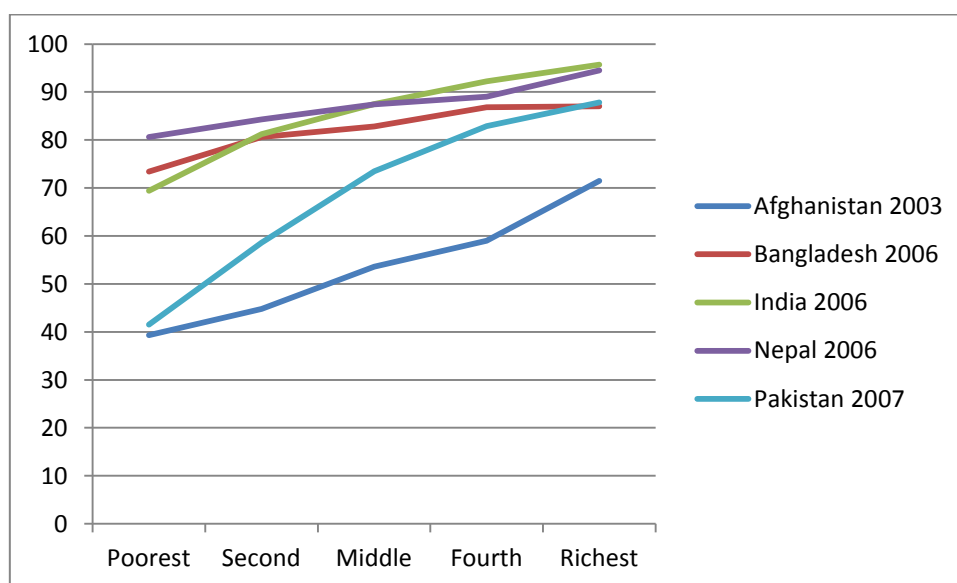


Source: UNDP (2010)

Figure 5 reveals that in all countries, including those where gender parity in education has been largely achieved, another form of exclusion of girls and women exists, which is that gender parity in basic education has not contributed to girls' social and political empowerment (Chitrakar, 2009). This can be illustrated by the Gender Inequality Index, which measures gender equality across the areas of reproductive health, empowerment (secondary education and above, and parliamentary

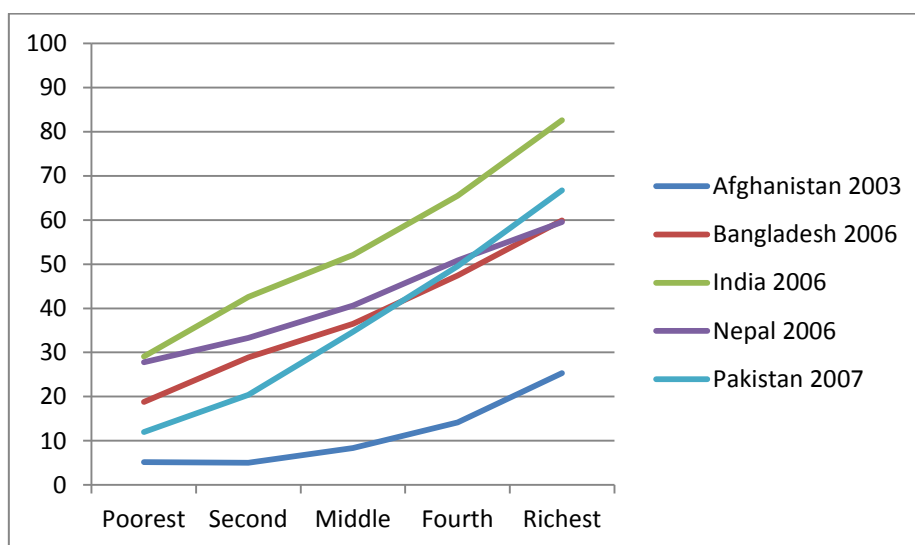
representation) and labour force participation, used in the 2010 UNDP *Human Development Report*. A high value close to 1.0 indicates low gender equality.

Figure 6: Primary NAR by wealth quintile



Sources: MICS and DHS Household Surveys 2003–2007

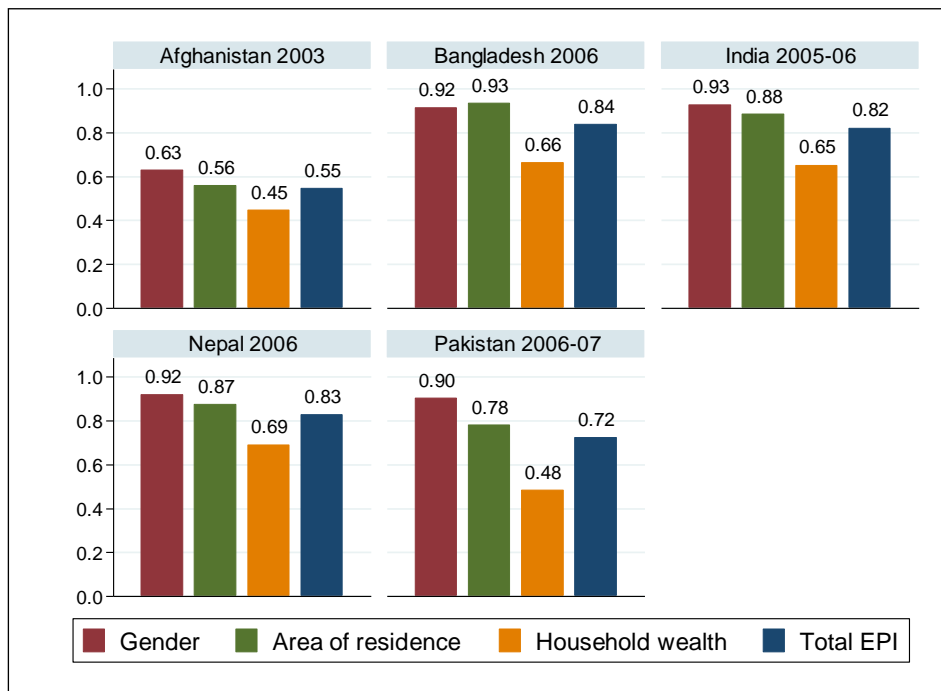
Figure 7: Secondary NAR by wealth quintile



Sources: MICS and DHS Household Surveys 2003–2007

For five countries in the region – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan – data is available from household surveys showing disparities in primary and secondary NAR by wealth quintile (Figures 6 and 7). At the primary education level the disparities between the wealth quintiles are less marked than at secondary education level (except for Afghanistan and Pakistan). At secondary education level disparity by wealth quintile does seem to have a greater impact, although within a context of very low enrolment even for the richest.

Figure 8: Education disparity in South Asia by gender, location and wealth



Source: Huebler (2008), updated by the author, October 2010

In Figure 8 the Education Parity Index (EPI) measures disparity in the same five countries across the groups *gender*, *area of residence* (*rural*, *urban*) and *household wealth* and across the indicators *primary NAR*, *secondary NAR* and *survival rate to the last grade of primary school*. The EPI is modified to constrain the range to 0 to 1, where 1 indicates equality.

Figure 9: Types of para-formal⁶ and alternative schooling systems and the exclusions addressed

Type	Examples	Providers	Coverage	Exclusions addressed
Open schools	National Indian Open School (NIOS) Bangladesh Open School (BOS) Sri Lanka Open School (SLOS) Pakistan Open School (POS)	Parastatal Open University National Institute of Education Open University	National National National National	Wide range of hard-to-reach groups requiring alternative service delivery models – children, youth and adults
Community-based schools	Community Organized Primary Education (COPE) Initiative, CARE Afghanistan BRAC, Bangladesh	NGO initiated but typically partnerships of INGO (e.g. SC, UNICEF), MoE and local NGOs Large NGO	Mainly rural areas National, rural and urban	Lack of access to schools, often in rural areas Lack of access in rural areas, but also cater to specific groups, e.g. street children, migrant workers, language minority groups, IDPs,

⁶ Para-formal education is non-formal provision to promote equivalency with the government system by for example adopting a similar curriculum and preparing learners for the same examinations/levels (CDEC, 2009, p.14).

Type	Examples	Providers	Coverage	Exclusions addressed
	Escuela Nueva, Columbia	MoE, state formal system	National, mainly rural	refugees Lack of access in rural areas
Television for direct instruction in primary and secondary education	Telesecundaria, Brazil	Partnership – typically MoE with public or private broadcasting organization	Nationally available	Demand-driven provision often in rural areas
Low-cost private schools	Low budget private schools in many South Asian countries	Private enterprise	Urban and peri-urban areas	Low income groups in urban and peri-urban areas, do not address exclusion of poorest or non-income poorest, e.g. gender, caste
Faith-based schools	Madrasas (Islamic religious seminaries) in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India Buddhist monasteries in Bhutan and Nepal	Faith-based organizations	Urban or rural areas	Responsive to differentiated demand, and may include moral obligation to cater for the poor
Schools run by charitable organizations	Pushpa Vidyalaya – St Agnes' Loreto Day School, Lucknow, India (elite private convent school with outreach programmes) Aga Khan Foundation schools in Northern Areas, Pakistan	Philanthropic associations funded by corporations, individual donations and trusts	Urban or rural areas	Responsive to differentiated demand, and may include moral obligation to cater for the poor

The South Asian region contains a wealth of alternative forms of education. Figure 9 shows some of these, along with the exclusions they address, as tabulated in the research report *Open and Distance Learning for Basic Education in South Asia* (CDEC, 2009, Table 3.2).

Figure 10: Case studies of para-formal or alternative schooling systems (CDEC, 2009, Table 7.1)

		Description	Target group	Providers
1	BRAC Education Programme (BEP), Bangladesh	An apex organization, providing a package of programmes for a range children and young people from disadvantaged groups. Also supporting other NGOs/formal system in teacher training, materials development, capacity-building	A broad range of disadvantaged children	Large INGO
2	Open Basic Education Programme National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS), India	An apex organization, providing three-tier progression routes from basic to higher secondary for a range of children and young	Broad range of disadvantaged children	Parastatal

		Description	Target group	Providers
		people from disadvantaged groups. Also supporting other NGOs/formal system in materials development and capacity-building		
3	Open School in Sri Lanka – a pilot programme	Second chance equivalence schooling for lower secondary level for children/youth past the official age, but also attracting younger ages and those who did not complete basic education	Various disadvantaged groups	National Institute of Education + funding from other development partners, e.g. GTZ
4	Junior Secondary Certificate Bangladesh Open University – a pilot programme	Programme providing lower secondary level equivalence schooling for those who have had non-formal basic education which has not been recognized formally, e.g. in some rural community schools	Various disadvantaged groups but particularly for children and youth in rural areas	Bangladesh National Open University Open School, CAMPE, COL but with potential for scaling up using other providers, e.g. BRAC

Figure 11: Case studies of programmes supporting successful transition to and performance within formal schools (CDEC, 2009, Table 7.2)

		Description	Target group	Providers
1	MV Foundation Residential Schools, India	A proactive, rights-based feeder approach to take child workers out of work and mainstream into formal schools	Child labourers	A charitable organization supported and funded by the Indian and Andhra Pradesh governments, charitable organizations (e.g. JRD Tata Trust, Sir Dorabi Tata Trust), INGOs (e.g. CRS, Action Aid) and UN and donor agencies (e.g. UNDP, NORAD)
2	Afghan Primary Education Programme (APEP), Afghanistan	A catch-up feeder (to formal school) programme using accelerated learning, Afghanistan	Overage children (9–14) Out-of-school children Children in underserved rural areas	Consortium of MoE + Afghanistan NGOs + several INGOs and donor agencies
3	The Community Organized Primary Education Initiative (COPE), Afghanistan	Non-formal community schools integrated into the formal system, Afghanistan	Children in underserved rural areas	CARE + MoE (central and district)
4	Underprivileged Children's Educational	Accessing accelerated basic education with	Working children of the urban poor	Directorate of Primary Education

		Description	Target group	Providers
	Programs (UCEP), Bangladesh	technical and vocational elements and technical training, Bangladesh		+ Plan International with funding from DFID, World Bank, DANIDA, Save the Children, AusAID, CIDA

While the quality of these various alternative provisions may vary greatly, many of them have been extremely successful in allowing children previously excluded from education to learn and achieve. The diversity of this kind of provision, and also the success it has had in bringing together a range of different providers in order to create provision specifically tailored for children facing particular access barriers, is shown in Figures 10 and 11.

Figure 12: ASER's village report card



LEADING TO ASER...

VILLAGE REPORT CARD

Local people help in making the hamlet report card

Report card focuses on whether child goes to school & on whether child can read simple text and do basic arithmetic

Big meeting in village to discuss education report card

Attended by parents, village committee members, headmaster and teachers

What can be done?

"Demo" class in the village for 4-5 days to show how children can learn to read

Track measurable changes in children's learning

FIRST COUNTRY WIDE INITIATIVE: In 2004

Pratham teams led rapid assessment effort in 17 states

1 district, 2 randomly selected blocks, 5 villages each

Exercise completed in a month

Presented to the Planning commission

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