

Beyond Access: Partnership for Quality with Equity

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[This paper will (a) examine the concepts of gender parity, gender equality and gender equity as used in EFA discourse and practice, (b) look at the experience of Bangladesh where parity has been achieved, but the challenges of equality and equity loom large, and (c) conclude with key action points for shaping the strategy and practices for building partnerships to advance girls' education.]

1. The gender dimension in EFA goals

The Dakar Framework Goal Five is specifically about gender. The goal is:

Eliminating *gender disparities* in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving *gender equality* in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of *good quality*.

The other five goals are also relevant to the gender goal:

- Goal 1: Expanding early childhood and care and education, *especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children*
- Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, *particularly girls*, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of *good quality*
- Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of *all young people and adults* are met through *equitable access* to appropriate learning and life skills programmes
- Goal 4: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, *especially for women*, and *equitable access* to basic and continuing education for all adults
- Goal 6: Improving *all aspects of the quality of education* and ensuring *excellence of all* so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are *achieved by all*, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The Gender-related Millennium Development Goals are:

- Goal 2: Achieve UPE
 - Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
 - Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

-- From UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005*,
(emphasis added)

Provision of free and compulsory primary schooling and the elimination of gender inequalities throughout education are taken up in both the Dakar Goals (the fifth as well as the second goals) and the MDG (Goals 2 and 3).

The pertinent MDGs are cautiously phrased. The targets do not mention free and compulsory primary education, restrict themselves to aiming for elimination of gender disparities rather than the more demanding and time-bound gender equality goal of the Dakar Framework. Literacy is not mentioned in the MDGs. The MDGs are less fully reflective of the international human rights commitments, such as the commitment to provide “fundamental education for those who have not completed primary education” in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (Article 13.2).

The Dakar Framework extends the scope of agreed education commitments beyond those that are implied by human rights treaties. (UNESCO, GMR 2003/4)

Perhaps semantic hairsplitting about the words used is not important. In the EFA movement, during the decade from Jomtien to Dakar, there has been a refinement in thinking and clarification of concepts regarding gender in education. The “expanded vision for education” of Jomtien was made more specific and operational in Dakar with time-bound targets, identification of strategies, recognition of the connectedness among the components of EFA, a sharper focus on the quality of education, and an affirmation of the rights perspective. The MDGs, which underscore selected key elements of EFA in the articulation of a global development agenda, are not necessarily designed to be restrictive.

The point, however, is that in interpreting the gender dimension of EFA goals, developing operational strategies and developing plans and programmes, both in the international EFA community and at the national level, a restrictive view is taken. This narrow view of the gender goal and strategy undermines real progress.

2. Concepts of gender parity, gender equality and gender equity

A close reading of the Dakar EFA goals raises several conceptual issues. Dakar Goal Five mentions parity as a goal for 2005 and the more demanding goal of equality is to be achieved by 2015. The idea of equality is qualified as “equal access to and achievement in basic education of *good quality*.” Improving “all aspects of quality of education” is emphasized by stating it as a separate goal (goal 6) and is also linked with the goal of access for all in primary and secondary education.

A proactive position to expand early childhood care and education *especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children* has been taken. (Goal 1) Similar proactive measures for *equitable access* are indicated in ensuring that by 2015 all children, *particularly girls*, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of *good quality* (goals 2, 3 and 4).

The definition of targets and indication of strategies in EFA and gender discourse suggest a distinction between gender parity, gender equality and gender equity.

Gender Parity. Both the Dakar Goals and MDGs related to gender set removal of disparities in primary and secondary education as a target to be achieved by 2005. Parity, therefore, is seen as a quantitative equality in respect of enrolment. It does not include any aspect of quality of education and learning outcomes, which are difficult to measure and, from an empirical point of view, would have been totally unrealistic to include in the parity target for 2005. The parity target also does not require that all girls have access to education, but only that girls have access in the same proportion as boys. Parity, in this sense, presumably could be achieved even if the majority of the girls in a country did not participate in education. Empirically, however, there is a correlation between low overall enrolment ratio and high gender disparity in enrolment.

Gender Equality. As used in EFA discourse, gender equality in education is a more complex and demanding concept. It embraces parity (in the sense of equality in enrolment rates), but also includes the indicators of outcomes which are manifested in learning achievement and performance of students in school and in public examinations. The questions of balance in enrolment in different subjects, stereotyping of fields of studies appropriate for boys and girls, balanced reflection of gender concepts in the curricular content, and equality in opportunities for further learning or job opportunities related to academic qualifications are also elements of gender equality. Classroom practices, school environment, and teacher behaviour and attitudes are also important factors in influencing equal educational outcomes.

The notion of equality is clearly related to components of educational quality, including learning content, the pedagogic process and educational system inputs which would contribute to the equality outcomes. The time horizon for achieving the higher standards of gender equality is 2015. Obviously, it is necessary to understand and identify the benchmarks of progress towards that target and to ensure that progress is being made.

Gender Equity. Equity is a broader and more comprehensive concept. It incorporates in itself the notions of numerical parity in access and participation and equality in terms of outcomes and learner performance. Quality issues related to learner performance, learning inputs and the teaching-learning process are integrally linked to equity.

- Equity embraces the idea of education as a transformative process that promotes social change and contributes to building a just and democratic society.
- It recognizes that gender discrimination is an expression of a larger system of social injustice and is manifested in overt and subtle ways with consequences that are not all quantifiable or tangible.
- It admits that gender oppression is interwoven into the web of oppression and exploitation in society which multiplies the vulnerability of the female and limits her ability to defend herself.
- The strategy for gender equity in education would emphasize proactive approaches to cope with the social, cultural and historical ingredients of gender injustice in education responses.

- It would emphasize affirmative action and positive discrimination to compensate for and to break the patterns of overwhelming and pervasive disadvantages.
- Gender equity concerns both girls and boys and the role and obligation of all in promoting gender roles and norms as the means of realizing human potentials for both girls and boys.
- The rights perspective and promoting and fulfilling the right to education form an important dimension of gender parity in education.

Is it reasonable and useful to look at the concepts of parity, equality and equity as stages in the development of gender strategies and actions? Can it be argued that parity in terms of access is the first priority before issues of outcomes and learning performance can be effectively addressed? And the more enduring and ingrained patterns of injustice in society with education and gender consequences are longer term concerns which must wait until progress can be made in access and participation? Again, whatever the theoretical answers to these questions, in practice, a sequential approach is being taken and a segmentation of action is being followed, which have important consequences. Bangladesh, a high population developing country that has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education in the last decade, illustrates the consequences and offers useful lessons.

3. The Bangladesh Experience

2005 Parity goal achieved

Enrolment data in primary and secondary education show that gender parity in enrolment has been largely achieved. According to the latest published data from BANBEIS for 2002, the percentage of girls' in primary school (grades 1 to 5) is 49.7, and at the secondary level (grades 6 to 10), it is 53.4 percent.

Other official data about primary and early childhood education support these overall statistics:

	Girls	Boys	Total
Gross enrolment rate in early childhood education (Age 3-5)	9.97	10.65	10.32
Percentage of grade 1 students Who attended preschool	22.06	23.32	22.71
Apparent intake rate in grade 1 (New grade 1 entrants/population age 6)	149.03	150.20	149.63
Net intake rate in grade 1 (school entrants age 6/population age 6)	63.77	63.51	63.64

Survival of grade 1 students to grade 5 64.90 63.00 64.40

Source: GOB, Compulsory Primary Education implementation Monitoring Unit,
Report of Child Education and Literacy Survey, 2002

A household survey in the catchment areas of selected primary schools in 10 Upazilas from all six divisions in the country carried out in 2004 by *Education Watch* shows broad-based gender parity across the board among catchment areas, upazilas, school types, and socio-economic groups. (CAMPE, Education Watch Report 2003/4, forthcoming)

Analysis of the survey data (Annex Table 1) indicates that gender-based disadvantage in school enrolment has been overcome in the surveyed upazilas. This is consistent with available national data. Girls, in fact, surpassed boys in enrolment and reduction in drop out. Even in upazilas with an overall low rate of enrolment, the girls had an edge over boys.

Bangladesh is in the midst of profound social changes, of which gender role integration and breaking down of gender barriers represent a key element. Important components of gender role definition and perception are: (i) Elimination of gender gap in access to primary and secondary education, (ii) Significant reduction of fertility achieved in the last decade and increased exercise of choice by women about reproduction, (iii) Increased participation of women in the formal sector labour force, dramatically portrayed by women garment workers as the mainstay of this principal export sector of the economy, and (iv) New economic opportunities and change in social and family role of women through women's access to micro-credit. These elements have interacted and reinforced each other in a synergistic way.

Progress in expanding education opportunities with gender parity has been the result of a combination of factors which include proactive policy and action by the government, the contribution of the NGO community, especially in social mobilization and awareness raising, and the involvement of society as a whole.

Government policy and action. Bangladesh enthusiastically adopted the Education for All (EFA) agenda of the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, March, 1990). A compulsory primary education law was promulgated and the government proceeded to implement a compulsory primary education programme since 1991 with increased resource allocation and efforts to mobilise public support for this programme. Other supportive measures included:

- a. Provision for free textbooks for all children at the primary level, which reduced cash costs to parents for their children's primary education;
- b. Food for education - distribution of grain to school children, later replaced by monthly cash grant for 40 percent of the children in primary school identified as poor;
- c. Monthly stipends and tuition waiver for rural girls at the secondary level, which became an incentive for girls to go to primary school;
- d. Competency-based primary education curriculum introduced since 1993 in an effort to enhance relevance and quality of education;

- e. Increased proportions of women in teaching with sixty percent reservation for women in recruitment of teachers for government primary schools;
- f. Mobilisation of external assistance for major primary education development activities. Since the EFA initiative, the volume of external assistance has increased and more of it has been devoted to primary education (JBIC 2002).

NGO Contribution. The government efforts have been complemented by vibrant NGO involvement in providing primary education, especially for children left behind by the public sector schools. A model known as non-formal primary education pioneered by BRAC, and a similar approach followed by other NGOs, served up to 1.5 million children every year in approximately 40,000 non-formal one-room-one-teacher centres in the later half of the last decade. Each of these centres took a cohort of 30-33 children who were eight years or older, beyond the entry age for regular primary school, and taught them for three years to bring them up to the level of fourth or fifth grade of primary school, so that they could join and continue in formal education. In fact, over 80 percent of these children joined the formal school. The large majority of these children, 70 percent initially, were girls. Gradually, the model developed into a full primary education programme, offering the equivalent of 5-year formal primary education in four years. The BRAC model was adopted by a majority of the 700 NGOs now involved in basic education delivery.

Other distinctive features of the non-formal primary schools are: Elimination of all direct costs for families, with no tuition and provision for free learning materials; women teachers who are recruited from the neighbourhood; essential pedagogic and management quality for institutions ensured by close supervision; parents, especially mothers, closely involved through consultation and regular mothers' meetings; a school with only 33 students, which is close to the students' home.

Other Developments. Micro-credit programmes pioneered by Grameen Bank and other NGOs, which reach over 10 percent of the poor households has opened the door for economic freedom and a change in social status for women. Health and family planning programmes in which NGOs have played an active role have, apart from benefiting women and their families, have also expanded the opportunities for women to work outside home as health and family planning workers. Various forms of skill development programmes, adult and nonformal education programmes offered by NGOs, which have included content about law and legal rights and life skills have promoted the forces of change. Social mobilization in support of girls' education and against traditional gender perceptions have been undertaken by the government and civil society organizations – a prominent example of which is the creation of the cartoon character Meena as the champion of girls' education sponsored by UNICEF. (USAID, Basic Education Policy Support Activity, Bangladesh Education Sector Review Report No. 2, Overview of the Status of Gender Equity, 2002)

Equality and Equity: The Large Picture

Despite commendable progress, the large picture about primary education is still of large-scale deprivation, which can be drawn from overall primary education statistics and the findings from the *Education Watch* reports, based on national

sample surveys. *Education Watch 2001* reported net primary school enrolment rate as 79.8 percent. A more recent reliable estimate does not exist. Although the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) has mentioned higher net enrolment rates for 2001 and 2002, around 80 percent is considered a reasonable estimate. Documents of the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II), the national umbrella programme for primary education development, for example, have cited net enrolment rate as "about 81 percent" (ADB, "Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors... Second Primary Education Development Programme, October 2003).

Assuming eighty percent as net enrolment and 66 percent as the rate of completion of five years of primary education by those who enter primary school, it can be concluded that over 40 percent (47 percent, to be more precise) of the children eligible for primary education do not participate in a full cycle of primary education. Enrolment and "participation" say nothing about what children learn. *Education Watch* surveys for 2000 and 2002 have shown that majority of children in primary schools do not acquire the basic competencies prescribed in primary education curriculum; in fact, one-third of the children remained non-literate or semi-literate after going to school for five years.

Box 1. Primary education deprivation at a glance

- ❑ One out of five children does not enroll in primary school.
- ❑ One out of three of those enrolled drops out before completing primary education.
- ❑ One out of three who complete five years of primary schooling still remains non-literate or semi-literate.
- ❑ Therefore, the large majority of children, mostly poor and disadvantaged in other ways, grow up without basic skills and preparation for life.

The overall disparity in primary education and the historical disadvantage of girls are reflected in literacy rates. Women lagged 12 percentage points behind males for population 11 years and above and 14 percentage points behind for 15 years and above.

(Annex Table 4). Gender gap persisted in respect of literacy across the board. Females were behind males even when they had the same number of years in schooling. Girls and women needed one more year of schooling than their male counterparts to have the same average rate of literacy. (*Education Watch 2002*).

The proactive policy for recruiting more women teachers in primary schools and encouraging women to become secondary school teachers have helped to increase the number of women in teaching positions, but the proportions of women still remain low at all stages and types of education. (Annex table 3) Women remain few and far between in education management positions.

Girls' enrolment gain in general secondary education has not spread to post-primary vocational and technical education. This subsector remains a male preserve with only a quarter of the students being girls. In higher technical and professional education as well as general tertiary education, representation of girls remains low with a slow pace of increase in female participation.

Madrasas constitute a substantial part of the total education system – with seven percent of primary education students and almost a quarter of the secondary and higher secondary level students. (Annex Table 2) The intention of modernising the curriculum and improvement of teaching-learning has been expressed, but few concrete steps have been taken. A system of academic and administrative supervision is virtually non-existent for the madrasas. Girls constitute half of the enrolment in madrasas in grades equivalent to primary and secondary levels. But little is known about the gender values and attitudes inculcated among the girls as well as the boys in madrasas.

Unravelling the conundrum

Education Watch 2004 survey confirms that the most prominent factor related to differences among groups of children in respect of enrolment, repetition, dropout, and participation in primary education was the socio-economic category of the child, which delineated the magnitude and nature of the problem of deprivation in primary education. Contributing in significant ways to non-enrolment, dropout and poor student performance are child labour, the phenomenon of private tutoring, various factors related to low class attendance, and problems of the first generation learners. It was not one or another cause that could be identified and fixed, but *a syndrome of poverty and disadvantage* that caused deprivation.

- In the surveyed upazilas, a child from an "always in deficit" family had a 30 percent less chance of being enrolled in a school and five times more chance of dropping out from school compared to a child from a "surplus" family. (Self-rated food security status of households was taken as the proxy for socio-economic grouping.) (Annex Table 5.)
- Thirty percent of the girls and 21 percent of the boys who never enrolled in schools cited poverty as the reason for never enrolling in a school. Over forty percent of the dropout indicated poverty as the reason for dropping out. (Annex Table 6)
- Refusal of the school authority to admit the child was cited as the second most important reason (21 percent of the cases) for non-enrolment. (Annex Table 6) This appears to be a new phenomenon arising from increased interest in schooling generated by offer of stipends and parents' preference for certain schools - close to home or with a "good name."
- Children not "liking school" was an important cause for not enrolling and the most important reason for dropping out. This indicates problems about how the school functions. Interestingly, this was a problem for boys more frequently than for girls. (Annex table 6)

- In the 6-14 age group in the poorest economic category, one-third of the children were non-students and at work or unemployed, and 30 percent were students and working at the same time. In the "surplus" group, about the same proportion was both students and at work, but only 7.5 percent of the children were non-students, either working or without any work. (Annex tables 7 and 8).
- Forty-seven percent of the mothers and 43 percent of the fathers of primary school children in the upazilas were without any schooling. Both parents were without education for a third of the children. Almost half of the children can be regarded as "first generation learners" if the criterion regarding both parents' education is applied. Inability of parents to guide and help their children, and the likely economic disadvantage of these families, affect how the first generation learners perform in school. (Annex table 9)
- Private tutors for primary school children have become a norm. Forty three percent of the children had private tutors; they paid an average of Tk 152 per month for eight months in a year. Eighteen percent of the children from "deficit" families and 57 percent from "surplus" families had private tutors. Children who needed extra help with their studies received the least help from private tutoring. (Annex table 10)
- Low average school attendance, about 60 percent, encapsulated many factors related to both the operation of the school and the family situation of the child. Causes identified were children's need to help at home either regularly or for seasonal farm work, ill health or sickness of the child or a parent, acute family economic problems, and falling behind in lessons with no help to catch up from teacher or at home. Without the capacity of school and willingness or ability of teachers to help the child to catch up, any disruption set in motion a vicious spiral of further lag, more absences, and eventual dropping out.
- Children with special needs, especially those with disabilities, and children of ethnic minorities whose mother tongue is not Bangla, form a special dimension in the picture of deprivation in primary education.

How some interventions worked

Survey data, discussion and observations brought out information about three kinds of interventions which were expected to be elements of the effort to address deprivation. These are free distribution of textbooks, scholarship examinations in primary schools, and stipends for primary school children from poor families.

Textbook distribution. The government is committed to providing free textbooks to primary school students. It is a commitment that reflects the government's desire to fulfil its obligation to promote compulsory and universal primary education.

The household survey in the upazilas have revealed that the textbooks were not truly free for students in any of the various categories of primary schools including those officially listed as eligible to receive the books free of charge. These are Government Primary Schools (GPS), Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS), community schools and the ibtedayee madrasas. (Students of non-formal primary schools run by NGOs so far have not benefited from government-provided textbooks.) It was found that other types of schools also received the books, but a proportion of students in all categories of schools had to pay various amounts of money. In GPS, a quarter of the students, and in RNGPS, 40 percent of the students each paid an average amount of Tk 14. Kindergarten students had to pay the highest amount (Annex Table 11).

The Scholarship Examination. Primary schools, essentially GPS and RNGPS, select 20 percent of their class 5 students to be sent for scholarship examination held by primary education authorities. The scholarship examination serves several purposes. It is a means of identifying talented students and rewarding them with a scholarship; it is a means of evaluating the performance of primary schools; and it is a way of encouraging schools to improve performance and, in turn, help and encourage their students to excel in learning. In practice the scholarship examination appears to have become a means of discrimination and disadvantage to the majority of the students, especially the weaker learners who come from the poorer families.

Although, the selection of nominees is supposed to be on merit, it was found that the student's economic status became an important consideration, because the selected students are expected to pay for the extra attention they would receive from teachers. The extra time and attention given to the scholarship nominees, only 20 percent of class 5 students, often meant that all the other students, in class V and in the rest of the schools paid a price, especially in the very common situation of teacher shortage in the school. A measure which is supposed to encourage good performance and benefit students, thus has become counter-productive in many schools.

Stipend. The government began Primary Education Stipend Programme (PESP) in July 2002, substituting the former Food for Education Programme (FFE). With the aim of attracting and keeping more children, especially of the poor, in school, PESP targeted the children in the poor families throughout rural Bangladesh (excluding metropolitan cities, district towns and other municipal towns). Forty percent of the students in rural GPS, RNGPS and some madrasahs were eligible to receive Tk 100 stipend per month. Identification of 40 percent of pupil enrolled in grades 1-5 from the poorest households is to be conducted at school level by the SMC with the assistance of head teachers. To remain eligible for the monthly stipend, a student has to attain 40 percent marks in term examinations and have 85 per cent monthly class attendance. The stipend, the largest item of development expenditure from the government budget, is seen by the government as an equity-promoting intervention.

Data from the household survey in the ten upazilas shed light on the operation of PESP. Although the stipend is to be targeted at the poorest 40 percent children in each school, it was found that the stipend recipients were more or less evenly divided between four socio economic categories (based on food security criteria used in this study). Over two-thirds of the children from the poorest category were not selected to

be recipients of stipend; but 27 percent of children from affluent households received the stipend.

Our survey also revealed that 46 percent of the stipend holders did not receive the full amount of stipend. Almost forty percent of the recipients received Tk 200 or less instead of Tk 300. Average payment received by the group surveyed was TK 250. Students of GPS, on average, got more money than in RNGPS and boys got more than girls. And students from the poorer family background received less than others - on average, Tk.260 for students from "surplus" families and Tk 225 paid to students from "always in deficit" families (Annex Table 12).

Data from the ten upazilas indicate the following problems with the stipend programme:

1. Targeting the poor, the principal rationale of the stipend programme, does not appear to be working, at least in the upazilas under study.
2. There are major problems in the management and administration of the programme, one manifestation of which is "cuts" taken from stipend.
3. Focus group discussions revealed pressure on SMCs and teachers to influence selection of students, inducement to alter school records to meet eligibility criteria, additional burden on teachers and head teachers to prepare and maintain records, and the difficulty in meeting the eligibility criteria by children from poor families, for whom the programme is intended.

4. Conclusions: Rethinking the strategy and practices for girl's education partnerships

The Bangladesh experience suggest an apparent paradox: it is necessary to unbundled analytically and conceptually the notions of gender parity, gender equality and gender equity, so that in practice these elements are consciously and deliberately integrated in the girls' education strategy and action agenda. Otherwise, there is a real risk that the more demanding and complex criteria of equality and equity will be ignored and left aside.

The success and shortcomings of Bangladesh strongly reinforce the case for a focus on quality with equity. Gender parity and gender equality in education have to become the building blocks for a quality-with- equity strategy. The gains in parity have to be deepened and broadened to achieve quality-with-equity.

The Bangladesh experience lends support to several key propositions which have wider application for the girls' education and EFA agenda:

- Expansion and nominal parity in primary and secondary education can be achieved without the participation of a large proportion of girls in education.

- Progress can be made in achieving parity and even aspects of equality without real education benefits for girls in a low quality system.
- A comprehensive and effective gender strategy in education must embrace parity, equality and equity.
- Equity requires attention to quality and quality is meaningless without equity.
- Quality in education is about both cognitive learning and the transformative role of education, which also should be a core element in the gender strategy for education.
- Gender equity in education is inseparable from broader social equity; gender equity should promote and be sustained by social equity.

This conceptual backdrop points to key principles in shaping the strategy and practices for building the partnership for girls' education:

1. *A recognition of inequity and deprivation in primary education as a serious problem and a commitment to deal with it.* The first step to effective action has to be an understanding and recognition on the part of policy makers at the political level and all stakeholders that primary education remains unequal with large-scale deprivation of access and participation in the system. A genuine commitment to removing deprivation and inequity has to be reflected in:

- Allocation of resources and budgets for education programmes with equity and affirmative action in favour of the disadvantaged as key criteria,
- Subjecting education policy and programme decisions as well as resource allocation and budgets to poverty impact analysis,
- Applying poverty impact and consequences as a component in education programme assessment and evaluation,
- Supporting research, experimentation and analysis of experience about how the poor and other disadvantaged groups can be effectively served and the programme outcomes enhanced, and
- Adopting the rights perspective to fulfil the education rights and entitlements of all children.

This commitment at the national level has to be communicated forcefully and with conviction to all actors in the system including policy makers and implementers, local bodies, SMCs, teachers, parents, donors and international partners and even students. As key stakeholders, the role and commitment of students themselves in helping achieve educational goals is paramount.

2. *Decentralisation, local planning and management trial.* The absence of any oversight responsibility and planning of primary education involving all service providers at the local level and lack of management authority with accountability at school level have been identified as a serious impediment to quality and equity in primary education. At the same time, there is apprehension about the problems decentralisation may cause and the capacity and resources at the school and local level. One and perhaps the only appropriate way to deal with this dilemma is to

initiate development and trial of decentralised planning and management including decisions about personnel, resources and academic programme in a few districts. The components of the trial can include:

- Defining tasks, responsibilities, capacities and accountability process at district, upazila and school levels,
- Identifying, involving, and developing mechanisms for effective involvement of all potential partners and actors.
- Developing upazila primary education planning and school improvement plans, as anticipated in PEDP II, including technical and professional support for these,
- Working towards a unified approach to ensure core quality standards for all primary education provisions for all children,
- Scope and method for devolving greater authority and responsibility and fund management to school managing committee and head teacher including accountability of school to community and education authorities.
- Managing at school level learning time and calendar, academic programme, and teacher's performance of duties.
- Capacity- building at district, upazila and school level including capacity to manage and use information.

Implementation of PEDP II programme in a decentralised mode in the selected upazilas and districts with trial and demonstration of effective implementation of the programme should be a key objective of the trial.

3. *A greater voice of stakeholders at all levels.* In the education system, more than in all other social enterprises, partnership building and the participatory approach, transparency in decision-making and a high degree of accountability should become the norm. Openness and sharing of information and dialogue in public forums should be the norm at school, union parishad and upazila regarding objectives, plans and progress, and budgetary allocations in the school, and for the upazila. The process of transparency and participation of all stakeholders should include:

- Periodic sharing of information and plans, and monitoring of progress of , e.g., school's quality improvement plan and annual work plan, upazila primary education plan and use of funds received from government and other sources, performance evaluation of schools in public forums organised for this purpose.
- Building strong Parent Teacher Associations and encouraging them to take an active role.
- Transparent and public selection/election of school managing committees and upazila education committees.
- Discussing, sharing and seeking views on governance issues in public forums at the school, community, upazila, district and national levels.

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ANNEX TABLES

Annex Table 1. Children aged 6-10 years by enrolment status, upazila and sex

WFP Upazila Food insecurity category	Upazila	Boys				Girls			
		Number of children	Currently enrolled (%)	Drop- out (%)	Never enroll ed (%)	Number of children	Currently enrolled (%)	Drop Out (%)	Never enrolled (%)
High	Nageshwari	281	85.1	1.1	13.9	279	90.0	0.7	9.3
	Tanor	134	91.8	2.2	6.0	112	91.1	0.0	8.9
	Madhupur	300	79.3	5.7	15.0	241	84.6	3.3	12.0
	Patharghata	113	97.3	0.0	2.7	124	98.4	0.0	1.6
Moderate	Tala	249	95.2	2.0	2.8	230	98.3	0.0	1.7
	Golapganj	202	85.6	3.0	11.4	171	88.9	2.3	8.8
	Chandina	490	88.6	4.5	6.9	437	92.2	1.8	5.9
Low	Bakerganj	147	89.1	2.7	8.2	116	91.4	0.0	8.6
	Jessore sadar	313	85.3	8.6	6.1	356	90.4	5.1	4.5
	Lohagara	454	93.4	1.1	5.5	469	96.6	0.6	2.8
Total		2683	88.6	3.4	8.0	2535	92.3	1.7	6.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex Table 2. Gender Distribution of Enrolment

	Total Number	Girls	Girls (%)
Primary Education	17.6 mill	8.7 mill.	49.7
Sec. Edn. (grades VI-X)	8.2 mill	4.4 mill	53.4
College Edn. (grades XI-XV)	1.6 mill	0.6 mill	38.0
<u>Madrasas</u>			
Ibtidayee (Primary)	1.2 mill	597 000	49.7
Madrasa Dakhil (VI-X)	1.1 mill	617 000	56.0
Madrasa High (XI-XV)	733 000	256 600	34.9
Public Universities	92 100	23 200	25.2
Private Universities	34 400	9 500	27.6
Technical Vocational Edn.	134 000	34 200	25.5
Higher Tecn./Professional	60 000	20 500	34.1
Teacher Training	27 800	10 700	38.5

Source: BANBEIS Data for 2002

Annex Table 3. Gender Distribution of Teachers

	Total Number	Females	Females (%)
Primary Education	315 055	119 440	37.9
Sec. Edn. (grades VI-X)	186 949	31 311	16.7
College Edn. (grades XI-XV)	68 017	13 297	19.5
<u>Madrasas</u>			
Ibtidayee (Primary)	26 788	2 971	11.1
Madrasa Dakhil (VI-X)	70 247	3 954	5.6
Madrasa High (XI-XV)	43 563	1 241	2.8
Public Universities	5 467	880	16.1
Private Universities	2 948	513	17.4
Technical Vocational Edn.	8 623	1 730	20.1
Higher Techn./Professional	3 815	673	17.6
Teacher Training	1 620	466	28.8

Source: BANBEIS Data for 2002

Annex Table 4. Gender Distribution of Literacy

Items	11 years and above	15 years and above
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	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Non-literate	45.1	53.2	47.6	58.4
Semi-literate	7.3	11.2	6.1	9.6
Literate	47.6	35.6	46.3	32.0
Initial Level	19.5	22.3	17.8	19.2
Advanced Level	28.1	13.3	28.5	12.7

Source: Education Watch Report 2002

Annex Table 5. Children currently non-enrolled and dropouts by economic status

Enrolment status	% of children by economic status (Total numbers in parentheses.)			
	Always in deficit	Sometimes in deficit	Break-even	Surplus
Enrolled	67.6 (142)	87.4 (1030)	90.8 (2087)	95.3 (1435)
Dropout	7.1 (15)	3.1 (37)	2.8 (68)	1.3 (19)
Never enrolled	25.2 (53)	9.4 (111)	6.4 (148)	3.5 (52)
Total	100 (210)	100 (1178)	100 (2299)	100 (1506)

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex Table 6. Percentage distribution of never enrolled and dropout children of age 6-14 by reasons and sex (Total numbers in parentheses.)

Reason	Never enrolled		Dropout	
	Boys (272)	Girls (193)	Boys (433)	Girls (253)
School is far from home	1.5	5.2	1.2	2.0
Scarcity of money	21.0	29.5	39.9	43.7
School refused admission	19.9	21.8	1.6	3.1
No use of education	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.4
Has to work at home or outside	0.7	2.6	5.8	8.3
The child does not like school	21.7	8.8	45.9	23.2
Too young to go to school	14.3	14.0	na	na
Unsafe road transportation	7.4	5.2	0.5	2.0
Marriage	na	na	0.0	6.7
Disability	9.9	7.8	1.2	2.0
Others	2.9	4.7	4.1	8.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex Table 7.
Child Labour by economic status among children aged 6-14 years

Economic status	Number of students	Only student (%)	Both student & worker (%)	Only worker (%)	Neither (%)
Always in deficit	353	41.4	25.2	17.8	15.6
Sometimes in deficit	2010	51.3	31.2	11.4	6.0
Break even	3836	56.8	30.3	7.4	5.4
Surplus	2590	61.8	30.7	5.3	2.2
Total	8789	56.5	30.4	8.1	5.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex Table 8.
Percentage of primary school students (6-14 years) participating in labour force by grade

Grade	Boys	Girls	Both
I	15.0	27.3	20.9
II	28.8	42.2	35.4
III	34.3	45.7	40.2
IV	42.3	58.0	50.3
V	47.1	70.6	59.9

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex Table 9. First generation learners

The school catchment area-based household survey revealed the education status of parents of currently enrolled children in primary schools as follows:

Both parents are without schooling:	31.8 percent
Any one parent is with schooling:	26.4 percent
Both parents are with schooling:	41.8 percent

Source: Education Watch Research Team, 2004

Annex Table 10.
Proportion of Students having private tutors by grade and sex

Grade	Boys	Girls	Both
I	35.5	32.1	33.9
II	43.3	38.3	40.9
III	47.5	44.1	45.8
IV	53.4	44.4	48.8
V	60.3	50.0	54.7
All	45.6	40.7	43.2

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex Table 11.

Payment for textbooks by school type

School Type	% of students who paid to receive textbooks	Average amount of payment (in Tk.)
GPS	24	14
RNGPS	40	14
NFE	17	46
Madrassa	23	32
Kindergarten	60	166
High school attached primary	9	83
Total	27	29

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Household Survey, 2004

Annex Table 12.

Percentage of students receiving stipend and the average amount received by economic status

Economic status	Number of students	% receiving stipend	Average quarterly payment received by student (Tk.)
Always in deficit	132	38	225
Sometimes in deficit	676	36	224
Break-even	1210	33	251
Surplus	633	27	260
Total	2452	32	250

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004