

Draft for Discussion

Bangladesh

Education Sector Mapping

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
Abbreviations	5
1. Introduction	7
A. Why the exercise?	7
B. Methodology	7
2. Defining the Sector	8
3. Size and shape of the sector	9
A. The structure of the education system	9
B. Legal framework of Bangladesh education	9
C. An outline of the education management structure	10
- Ministry of Education	
- Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME)	
- Directorates of Education	
- Directorate of Primary Education (DEP)	
- Directorate of Secondary Education (DEP)	
- Directorate of Non-Formal Education	
- Directorate of Technical Education (DTE)	
D. Support Organizations in Education	13
- National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB)	
- Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE)	
- National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE)	
- National Academy of Education Management (NAEM)	
- Madrasa Education Board	
- Technical Education Board	
- Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS)	
- The Teacher Training Institutions	
- Other Ministries and Government Agencies	
- Non-government Education Providers	
- Research, Advocacy and Policy Dialogue	
E. Participants and Stakeholders	16
F. System Functions	16
- Policy-making	
- Coordination and overview in relation to national priorities	
- Planning, system development and R&D	
- Management of the sector	
- EMIS, monitoring, evaluation and research	
4. Major Policy Concerns	22
A. Cross-Cutting Sectoral Issues	22
- Overall sectoral policy-making, coordination, and oversight	
- Allocation of authorities and functions at the central level	
- Decentralization and devolution of responsibility and authority	
- Financing of education	

- Human resource policies and practices in education
- Governance issues

B. Sub-sector issues 25

- Access and equity in sub-sectors
- Quality of teaching-learning in sub-sectors

5. Development Cooperation 28

6. Reform Needs and Opportunities 29

References 32

Annexes 33

- Chart 1. Educational structure of Bangladesh
- Chart 2. Organogram of the Primary Education System
- Chart 3. Organization of the Secondary education System
- Chart 4. Organization of Tertiary Level Education
- Chart 5. Education Development Decision Making
- Chart 6. Organogram of the Directorate of Technical Education

- Table 1. Institutions, Students and Teachers: General Education
- Table 2. Institutions, students and Teachers: Technical, Specialized
And Professional Education
- Table 3. Highlights of Education Commission 2003 Recommendations
- Table 4. Policy Matrix for Education Sector (PRSP)
- Table 5. Overview of Major Donor Education Projects
- Table 6. List of Key Informants
- Table 7. Checklist for Interviews
- Table 8. Responsibilities of Directors at DPE and DSHE

Executive Summary

This mapping of the education sector in Bangladesh has been undertaken as an initial step for developing a complementary sector reform initiative in support of education development in Bangladesh which CIDA is assisting. The study has profiled the key institutions, stakeholders and patterns of relationships and processes in sector decision-making and management.

The map of the sector including the description of the system functions and capacities have led to the identification of needs and opportunities for activities which will promote and support necessary change and reform in the sector. The following have surfaced as areas that merit special attention:

- Support and attention to areas which have been “neglected,” such as technical and vocational education and madrasas
- Promoting professionalization and professionalism in the education sector
- Supporting research and development in the sector in operational and policy-relevant issues
- Attention to the equity issues in education policy and programs, and
- Better use of financial resources to achieve the sector objectives.
- Strengthening governance and management through increased authority with accountability at various levels

A provisional list of activities has been proposed as components of a complementary sector reform initiative. The proposed activities are:

1. *Exploring options in post-primary vocational and technical education.* Examination of options for expanding opportunities for middle level vocational-technical skill development, especially for girls and disadvantaged groups. Viable models have to be developed which are effective in responding to employment prospects and equity concerns.
2. *Modernization of primary and secondary level madrasa education.* This will call for work on curriculum and learning materials, teacher training and institutional management to bring about improvement in quality and equivalence with mainstream education in curricular and learning objectives.
3. *Improvement in learning assessment.* (a) Research and capacity development in improving the validity and reliability of secondary level public examinations, SSC and HSC, and (b) Research, development and trial of formative and summative learning assessment tools and methods at the primary and secondary level in order to make teaching learning more child-centred and result-oriented in respect of learning outcomes.
4. *Curriculum and learning materials development at the junior secondary level (grades 6-8).* This level has remained neglected. With larger numbers of children enrolling at the secondary level and the importance of consolidating the basic skills development begun in primary school, this is a critical stage of education. It is also important for the child in respect of making educational and occupational choices for life. Work is needed on curriculum and learning materials to respond to the educational needs and to improve the teaching-learning process at this stage.
5. *Research on education financing and effective resource use choices.* Empirical analysis of macro-budgeting in the public sector, institution and community level choices, and households costs and expenditure is needed in terms of impact on quality and equity of the education system

The tasks ahead are to examine critically these specific contributions to the reform agenda and what they imply for support to and collaboration in reform. All of these activities are expected to be carried out in the mode of research, development and trial to explore and try out viable models which can be used more widely when their viability and effectiveness are tested.

Abbreviations

AAB	ActionAid Bangladesh
AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BAFED	Bangladesh Foundation for Educational Development
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BISE	Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CPEIMU	Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit
CPE	Compulsory primary education
CSR	Complementary Sector Reform
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DPI	Director of Public Instruction
DPO	District Primary Education Officer
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
DTE	Directorate of Non-Formal Education
ECNEC	Executive Committee of the National Economic Council
EFA	Education for All
ELCG	Education Local Coordinating Group
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FREPD	Foundation for Research in Education Policy and Development
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
IED	Institute of Education and Development (BRAC University)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFEP	Integrated Non-Formal Education Program
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
MAB	Madrassa Education Board
MOCWA	Ministry of Children and Women Affairs
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME)
NAEM	National Academy for Education Management
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Text Book Board
NEC	National education Commission (2003)
NEP	National education Policy (2000)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action (for EFA)
PCP	Project Concept Paper
PEDP-II	Second Primary Education Development Program
PMED	Primary and Mass Education Division (Converted to MOPME in 2003)

PP	Project Performa
PPRC	Power and Participation Research Centre
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSQL	Primary School Quality Levels (PEDP II)
PTI	Primary Training Institute
RED	Research and Evaluation Division (BRAC)
ROSC	Reaching out-of-school Children
RRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SSC	Secondary school Certificate
TEB	Technical Education Board
TLM	Total Literacy Movement
TOR	Terms of Reference
TTTC	Technical Teacher Training College
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education programme
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VTE	Vocational and Technical Education
VTTI	Vocational Teacher Training Institute
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

A. Why the exercise?

As a part of its support for education sector development and reform in Bangladesh, CIDA intends to undertake a Complementary Sector Reform (CSR) Project. The purpose of the CSR project is to assist the Government of Bangladesh and other education stakeholders to carry out education planning and program development that incorporates sub-sector experience and complementary approaches. The CSR project is seen as one aspect of the CIDA Education Sector Reform Project, which includes as its major component support for the Second Primary Education Development Project (PEDP II).

An "education sector mapping exercise" has been proposed as an inception planning activity for the CSR project. This exercise will provide a basis for planning and development of the project. The mapping will help link the project with the educational framework from the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of Bangladesh. The aim, scope and process of developing the Sector Map, as indicated in the TOR, are as follows:

- The Sector Map will identify key institutions and stakeholders as well as patterns of relationship between these players. Based on the findings of this research, CIDA staff and the Canadian Coordinating Agency will develop a Project Action Plan to guide the implementation of the Complementary Sector Reform Project.
- The sector mapping study will also provide input into the subsequent development of a CIDA Education Strategy for Bangladesh.

In summary, the Education Sector Map, as an initial step for planning and developing the CSR project, is intended to gain an understanding of key components of the education sector and their relationships. Such an understanding is necessary to identify sector reform needs and opportunities which are *strategic and complementary* to mainstream national sector development activities in the education system of Bangladesh supported by CIDA and other development partners.

A mapping of the sector and the identified priorities for reform will help the formulation of a *complementary sector reform project consisting of a set of strategically significant activities* to support the government and other education stakeholders in Bangladesh. The activities are expected to be in the areas of *education policy-making, planning, governance, management* as well as *national capacity-building in these and related areas*.

B. Methodology

The mapping study, as the title and the purpose suggest, is a rapid reconnaissance of the education sector in Bangladesh, which is expected to be a precursor to further work on diagnostics, analysis and identification of cooperation opportunities. Two basic methodological techniques have been used in carrying out the study: (a) study and review of relevant documents and (b) interviews with knowledgeable informants, many of whom are in key positions in the education system.

The structure and key elements of the content of the study report were developed based on the TOR and discussion within the research team and with the senior Education Program Officer of CIDA. This exercise provided a lead to the documents and reports on aspects of the education sector in Bangladesh considered relevant and were reviewed. It also assisted the researchers to prepare a checklist for interviews and helped in the identification of people who should be interviewed.

A checklist of questions (Annex Table 7) guided the interviews with the informants. Some two dozen people who are knowledgeable about key components of the education sector and are current or recent incumbents in key positions were identified for interview. Information gap or lack of documentation in certain areas was one factor in considering potential interviewees. Of the people identified, 21 were interviewed, mostly by the principal researcher and at least one other researcher. (See annex table 6.) Apart from published documents, relevant working documents and reports were collected from the organizations visited.

The information collected from the review of documents and interviews were assembled and put together in a narrative with brief commentaries, where appropriate, on the basis of the initial structure of the study report. A draft of the report was shared with CIDA on which useful comments and suggestions were received. These comments were taken into account in a revision of the initial draft. The present version is still to be regarded as a draft for discussion.

2. Defining the Sector

The boundary of the sector can be delineated in different ways. One way of looking at the sector is to include in its scope all forms of educational activities - formal, non- formal and informal learning, skill development and systematic dissemination of useful information under public and private auspices. For the purposes of the present exercise, major categories of educational activities, with an emphasis on the pre-tertiary level, are included in the definition of the sector. These are:

- (a) Formal general education including pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools,
- (b) Formal vocational and technical schools,
- (c) The madrasa system embracing primary and secondary levels, and
- (d) Non-formal and continuing education for children, youth and adults
- (e) Tertiary education, especially as it relates to the above sub-sectors

All of these education sub-sectors fall within the purview of the two education ministries of the government - the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). These educational programs are not totally unrelated to or isolated from education activities beyond these sub-sectors. The links and relationships that are pertinent to effectiveness of these programs have been given attention.

Components of the education sector not specifically examined in this exercise include mainstream tertiary education; informal and non-formal skill development opportunities; formal skill development opportunities offered by other ministries such as industries, labor, agriculture etc. and the private sector; and specialized advanced professional education and training such as in medicine, engineering and agriculture. However, relevant references to these areas will be made as appropriate in discussing the sub-sectors included in the scope of this exercise; for example, teacher education at the tertiary level and links and complementarity between formal and non-formal/informal vocational and technical education.

3. Size and Shape of the Sector

A. The structure of the education system

The education system of Bangladesh is divided into three conventional stages, viz. primary, secondary and higher education. Each stage consists of different educational programs and types of institutions. Primary education is imparted by government and government-assisted primary schools (catering to two-thirds of the students), madrasas and at least eight other types of institutions, including NGO-run non-formal primary schools. Secondary education is offered by junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary institutions consisting of three major streams - general secondary schools, madrasas, and proprietary English medium schools. Higher education courses are taught in degree colleges, universities, higher level madrasas and other institutions for specialized and professional education.

Primary education (grades I-V) and general non-formal education are managed by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME), currently under the supervision of the Prime Minister. Post-primary and tertiary education programs are the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MOE) headed by the Minister of Education. Post-primary education (below the tertiary level) is divided into three streams in terms of curriculum: general education, madrasa education, and technical-vocational education. Annex chart 1 shows the structure of the present education system in Bangladesh.

B. The legal framework for Bangladesh education

Article 17 of the constitution of Bangladesh stipulates that effective measures will be taken to "establish a common system of universal and people-oriented education" and offer free and compulsory education to all boys and girls up to a stage prescribed by law. The constitutional provision has not been translated into a basic law for education as is the case in some countries (e.g. National Education Act of Thailand, 1999). Various laws and government regulations for different levels and types of education adopted and revised over time provide a legal framework for the education system.

The celebrated Wood's Educational Dispatch of 1854, resulting from an inquiry about education in India by the Select Committee of the British House of Commons, provided the legal foundation for modern public education in Bengal. A provincial department of education was established and thus began the process of developing an organization and management structure for education. The enactment of the Bengal Education Code in 1930 was a landmark legislation that created the District School Board as the administrative body for primary education. This act also intended to introduce compulsory, universal primary education, but the implementation of this goal had to wait another six decades.

Since the birth of Bangladesh in 1971, various laws have been passed regarding primary education including Primary Schools (Taking Over) Act 1974, the Primary Education Act 1981, and the Compulsory Primary Education Act, 1990. The Act of 1974 provided for free primary education all over the country and teachers of primary schools became central government servants. The Act placed upon the government the onus of bringing the primary school system under a centralized administration from the previous district based management. The Act of 1981 made provisions for the establishment of Local Education Authorities at the subdivisions (present districts). The Act also provided for school based management and the formation of the school management committee. The Act of 1981, however, was not implemented; it was promulgated as a decree by the then military ruler, but was not followed up with necessary administrative steps for implementation. The compulsory primary education act was enacted in 1990 in order to implement the constitutional provision for free, universal and compulsory education. The act empowered the government to

undertake legal and administrative measures to implement the CPE act. The whole country was brought under CPE program in 1993.(Hossain 1997)

Secondary education is regulated by the Bengal Education Code of 1930, with subsequent amendments and modernization. This law continues to be the overall legal framework for secondary education. The East Pakistan Intermediate and Secondary Education Ordinance of 1961 spelt out the law regarding establishment of managing committees for secondary schools. Based on this ordinance, regulations were framed at various times on such matters as student fees, admission and registration, and terms of teachers' service. The Public Examinations (Offences) Act of 1980 was passed to ensure orderly conduct of secondary and higher secondary public examinations.

The institutions of higher education include a variety of educational enterprises. Universities are governed by acts, orders and ordinances. For example, Dhaka University was established through the DU Act of 1920. The act underwent several changes, such as the ordinance of 1961, and Dhaka University Order 1973 and its amendments in 1997. The Order of 1973 revived the concept of autonomy of universities, restored the senate and established the principle of collective leadership of the vice-chancellor in the Syndicate.

In 1992, higher education witnessed enactment of legal frameworks in three vital areas: establishment of private universities, distance education through Open University, and management of college education through the National University. Academic oversight of teacher training courses leading to certificates and degrees falls within the purview of the National University and the Open University. Acts for setting up 12 new universities of science and technology was passed in the Parliament in 2001.

The University Grants Commission serves as an intermediary between the government and universities in respect of financial allocations. It also approves and monitors academic programs of all universities including the private ones.

C. An outline of the education management structure

The macro-level management structure of Bangladesh education sector consists of Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education , Directorates of Education, sixty four District Education offices (separate ones in each district for primary and secondary education), and about 464 Upazila Education Offices only for primary education. Besides, there are support organizations, which help the line organizations to function effectively in order to achieve the goals of education. These organizations include Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB), Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), and National Academy for Education Management (NAEM) etc. These are briefly described below. Charts in the Annex (charts 2 – 6) show the organization and management structure of the education sector including the organograms of the major sub-sectors.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is the apex body for educational administration, management and planning except for primary and adult education. It is responsible for educational planning with the Directorates of Education and the education section of the Planning Commission. MOE responsibilities include allocation and oversight of functions of education managers at the directorates down to the district education officers. It exercises overall authority over recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, dismissal and disciplinary actions regarding teachers of the government-run high schools and colleges; and selection of teachers for training abroad. It also has an overall regulatory and policy responsibility for post-primary education including institutions not under direct government management.

The Directorate of Inspection and Audit attached to MOE has the responsibility of inspecting education institutions managed directly or assisted financially by the government through MOE (some 28,000 schools, colleges and madrasas). The areas of inspection are financial management, administration and development of institutions. The Directorate has a professional (class I) staff of 35.

Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME)

The Ministry level Primary and Mass Education Division was established in 1992, which was under direct administrative control of the Prime Minister. It became a full Ministry in 2003. MOPME is the apex administrative body which determines policy and implements development programs in primary and general adult education (called mass education or non-formal education) sub-sectors. The administrative head of MOPME is a secretary of the government. It has 76 officers and staff. (Annex chart 2)

Following the adoption of the Compulsory Primary Education Law in 1990, a Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit (CPEIMU) within the former Primary and Mass Education Division was established with a staff of 44 including 10 professional personnel, headed by a Director General. This unit was active in mobilizing public and community support for compulsory primary education and formation of compulsory primary education committees for this purpose at the local and district levels. It has been assigned the responsibility of overseeing the approval of the registration of non-government primary schools and their eligibility for receiving salary subvention for teachers and carrying out a periodic national child and literacy survey.

Directorates of Education

Directorates of Education have key roles in the administration and management of the education system. The three directorates described below, in principle, are the bodies where the main responsibilities for implementing policies and managing each sub-sector of education lie. These bodies, staffed with senior education personnel, also are supposed to play the lead role in initiating and formulating policy changes, although formal administrative and political approval of policies is the MOE and MOPME responsibility. In practice, however, there has been an erosion of the authority of the professional personnel and expansion of control of the Ministry civil service cadres over time even in operational matters, much beyond the realms of policy and overall planning. A carry-over from the past of practices and organizational structures appropriate for a much smaller education system, the bureaucratic culture of a unitary state, and the desire for political control over educational decisions have strengthened this trend.

Directorate of Primary Education (DEP): The entire education system excluding universities and most of the professional institutions used to be managed by the Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI). With the expansion of education at different levels, an independent Directorate of Primary Education was established in 1981. The Directorate is headed by a Director General with functional sections headed by Directors at the headquarters. (See Annex table 8 for responsibilities of DPE Directors). In different tiers of the administrative structure, such as, Division, District and upazila (previously known as thana), the directorate has field officers such as Deputy Director, District Primary Education Officer, and Upazila Education Officer (UEO), respectively. The six Divisional offices (Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet) each supervise a cluster of district offices out of the 64 in the country. There are 461 upazilas (subdistricts) as well as 20 urban *thanas*, the lowest level in the public administration hierarchy at which some of the government departments including primary education (but not secondary education) is represented by an office. Each upazila primary education office has a number of Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEOs) – approximately 2,000 of them at present, planned to be increased by another 1,000 as part of the Second Primary Education Development Program for 2003/4 to 2008/9 (PEDP II). The responsibility of construction, repair and supply of furniture to government and

government-assisted schools has been given to the Facilities Department in the Directorate of Primary Education and Local Government Engineering Bureau under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

DPE has a staff strength of 234 including 80 professional staff (Class 1 and 2 officers) in the headquarters and 7,000 in the field. In addition, there are 165, 000 teachers on the payroll of the Directorate at the school level.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE): The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education is responsible for the implementation of government policies and development programs in secondary education. The DSHE has 208 administrative and supervisory staff, 40 at the HQ under four directorates, and 40 at the Zonal level and 128 at the district level. (See annex table 8 for the functions of the directorates.) There are nine zonal offices under DSHE in six Divisional headquarters and three additional offices in Comilla, Mymensingh and Rangpur, each of which oversees a number of district education offices. The DSHE has the responsibility for the enforcement of academic standards of secondary and college education. It is also involved with the recruitment of teachers and non-teaching employees of the government schools and colleges, although decision-making lies with MOE. It appears to be overburdened with the payment of salary subvention to over 250,000 teachers and employees of the non-government secondary schools and higher secondary institutions. Since January 1994, BANBEIS (The Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics) has been assisting in subvention payment. (FREPD, 1999).

Non-Formal Education: In line with the government's commitment to Education for All, an Integrated Non-Formal Education Program (INFEP) was initiated in 1991 to address the needs of the illiterate population. In 1996, INFEP was replaced by the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE), which oversaw the implementation of adult literacy campaigns called the Total Literacy Movement (TLM). Public criticism of the management and effectiveness of the literacy campaigns led to the discontinuation of TLM and closure of DNFE by the government in 2003. Development of an appropriate organizational structure and a policy framework for non-formal education remain under consideration by the government.

Directorate of Technical Education (DTE): The Directorate of Technical Education is responsible for planning, development, coordination and supervision of technical and vocational education under the Ministry of Education. Its main functions are to: (a) assess the needs of skilled manpower at all levels, (b) prepare policy guidelines for the Ministry of Education on consolidation, improvement and expansion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and (c) prepare annual budget proposals for the DTE and TVET institutions under its purview, allocate funds from the approved budget, and supervise its implementation.

The Directorate oversees several types of institutions including Technical Teacher Training College (TTTC), Polytechnic and Monotechnic Institutes, Vocational Teacher Training Institute (VTTI), and Vocational Institutes. (see annex chart --) The Directorate has a staff of about 5,000 including teaching and other personnel in the various institutions. Of these, 140, including 40 professional staff (class 1 and 2 officers) are employed in the head office. (See Annex chart 6.)

Educational administration, in general, is characterized by excessive centralization of power and authority in the capital. Administrative reform and restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s have the effect of further centralization through the creation of the Primary and Mass Education Division, establishment of a separate Directorate of Non-Formal Education, and setting up of a unified National Curriculum and Textbook Board, because of the way the functions and roles of these bodies have been defined and because of the prevalent bureaucratic culture. The sub-national units such as districts, upazilas and unions essentially

have the task of implementing instructions and directives from above and carrying out routine supervision.

D. Support organizations in education

The roles and functions of the above line organizations in the education organizational structure are supported by a number of "staff" or support organizations as noted below.

NCTB: The National Curriculum and Textbook Board is responsible for developing curricula and publishing textbooks. The management of NCTB includes a chairman and members for Finance, Curriculum Development for primary and secondary schools, and Textbooks. Its main functions are to:(a) review curricula and introduce changes, (b) evaluate curricula and textbooks, (c) prepare textbook manuscripts;(d) approve textbooks and (e) publish and ensure distribution of textbooks. NCTB produces some 55 million primary textbooks and 26 million secondary textbooks each year. (GOB 1999) A policy of separating the curriculum development and textbook production functions has been adopted by the government. Textbook preparation and production have begun in 2004 to be handed over to private sector publishers, beginning with secondary level textbooks.

BISEs: Six geographically based Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) as well as a separate Madrasa Education Board exists. BISEs are mainly responsible for two functions (1) accreditation of non-government secondary education institutions; and (2) administration of the SSC and HSC examinations. BISEs are autonomous, self-regulating and financed completely from income received as public examination fees paid by students.

NAPE: The National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) has the role of training the Primary Training Institute (PTI) instructors and primary education personnel of different levels, conducting PTI examinations and carrying out related research activities as an apex training and research institute of primary education. The academy has a director, two deputy directors and eleven specialists. It operates under the supervision of the Director General of Primary Education. Development of NAPE as an autonomous academic and professional institution has been recognised as necessary, but progress in this direction has been slow.

NAEM: The National Academy of Education Management (NAEM) is the principal institution for training educational administrators and managers. NAEM has two divisions (a) Management and Administration, (b) Extension Training. Its capacity is about 1,600 trainees per year. Almost half the trainees receive foundation training for civil service positions, and the remainder, mostly heads of institutions, receive management training. Evaluation studies on NAEM have shown that various constraints have limited the impact of training on management changes on the ground. NAEM has been re-designing its training programs to achieve better results. (World Bank 2000, Education Sector Review, vol. III)

Madrasa Education Board: The Madrasa Education Board has the responsibility for deciding the curricular content, setting and enforcing academic standards, conducting public examinations at the end of different stages of education, and providing a regulatory framework for academic management of the madrasa education system. The span of responsibility of the board, only one in the country, extends from primary to tertiary stages in different types of madrasas. The board is linked to the Ministry of Education and collaborates with DSHE, which has the responsibility for implementing administrative and financial management policies for madrasa education.

Technical Education Board: The Technical Education Board has the responsibility for curricula, academic standards and formal assessment of formal vocational and technical education and training for middle level technical and vocational skills. The Board's purview includes the institutions managed by the Directorate of Technical Education, other government Ministries and agencies (such as Labour and Employment, Industries etc.) as well as the private sector institutions providing skill training. Conducting examinations, inspection

of institutions and development and revision of curricula and syllabuses for courses are the major continuing functions of the Board, carried out by approximately 30 professional personnel.

Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS): The Bureau is responsible for developing and maintaining a data base for the educational system. As an organization linked with the Ministry of Education, BANBEIS does not collect and maintain primary education statistics, but includes some basic data about primary education, which are provided by DPE, in BANBEIS annual publication. BANBEIS also carries out periodic specific surveys such as one for basic data about madrasas, information about post-primary institutions not generated by routine reporting and GIS based mapping of institutions. BANBEIS has been supporting MOE tasks requiring large-scale data processing such as payment of salary subvention to non-government teachers and classification of schools based on analysis of public examination results. BANBEIS aims to develop its data base and enhance its analysis capacity to serve as an effective EMIS for the Ministry of Education.

The Teacher Training Institutions: The public teacher training system consists mainly of the 54 Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTIs) for primary schools, 11 Teacher Training Colleges at the secondary level, the Technical Teacher Training Institute and a Madrasa Teacher Training Institute. The Institute of Education and Research in University of Dhaka offers Bachelors and Masters Degrees in education. In addition, there are over 40 private teacher training institutions offering B.Ed. degrees, awarded by the National University. There is little quality control over these private profit-making institutions and the value of the training in some is "questionable," according to informants consulted for this study

Other Ministries and government Agencies: Besides the organization structure and units mentioned above linked to the two ministries of education, there are other public sector providers in education on a limited scale at the post-primary level. Notable among these are:

- A network of 11 Technical Training Centres run by the Ministry of Labour and Employment
- Special schools for children with disabilities managed or supported by the Ministry of Social Welfare (13 institutions at the primary level and integrated programs supported in 64 secondary schools; in addition, voluntary organizations run a number of schools at the primary and secondary level.)
- Vocational Training courses offered by the Ministry of Youth Affairs
- Technical skill training by Ministry of Industries (skill training mainly in textiles, in 30 vocational institutes);
- Agriculture with 11 Agricultural Training Institutes (skills in agriculture, agricultural processing and specialised farming);
- Ministry of Home Affairs (education and training in schools in jails and other institutions for juvenile offenders), etc.
- Ministry of Children and Women Affairs (MOCWA) serves as the government focal point for early childhood development through the national Shishu (Children) Academy and its several district branches. The Ministry also offers short vocational and technical training courses for women in its six residential training centers and through other *ad hoc* arrangements.
- The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Employment also has a number (?) of training centers which offer short courses in to workers in demand for employment overseas.

The Public Service Commission (PSC), with responsibility for recruitment of permanent civil servants of the state, also recruits education personnel for permanent professional positions in the government-run colleges, secondary level institutions and the directorates at the central

and field levels. The positions which are filled by the administrative service cadre personnel, almost all professional positions in the two Ministries and some senior posts in the directorates, are recruited through annual competitive examinations and selection conducted by PSC for general civil service recruitment. (Head teachers and teachers of government primary schools are recruited through special examination and selection procedure of DPE).

Non-government education providers and stakeholders: One third of the primary school students, over 90 percent of the secondary school and college students and almost of all of madrasa students are enrolled in non-government schools. The government, however, exercises considerable regulatory control over these institutions through payment of salary subvention for teachers. Proprietary English medium schools at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels; *quomi* (national) madrasas, and NGO-run non-formal primary education programs are managed by respective providers without any government involvement, since these programs neither receive government financial support, nor do they seek government stamp of approval for the academic credentials they offer.

Research, advocacy and policy dialogue: Research capacity and culture in education remain relatively undeveloped. Much of what exists is supported by non-government organizations. Among these are:

- Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE): A forum of over 700 education NGOs, CAMPE supports evaluative research on basic education and has been the publisher of the annual Education Watch studies. It also serves as the focal point for the EFA network of NGOs, a clearing house of NGO educational activities and provider of training for staff skill upgrading among affiliated NGOs.
- Institute of Education and Development (IED). Recently (2004) established within BRAC University, IED's mission is to strengthen professional capacity in education, undertake policy and operational research and provide technical support to programs. It has assisted the government in policy analysis in non-formal education and preparation of PRSP and has been providing technical lead to the Education Watch studies.
- Other NGO research/advocacy actors. A number of non-government academic and service-providing organizations are interested in research-based policy dialogue and advocacy in education. For example, Bangladesh Foundation for Education Development (BAFED) sponsors seminars to disseminate research findings and publishes a journal. Foundation for Research in Education Policy and Development (FREPD) has undertaken research on various aspects of education, but has been less active lately. Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) is interested in decentralisation, empowerment of stakeholders and good governance in education. ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) is the focal point for a network of research and advocacy on EFA. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has been active in developing policy agenda in education and organizing public discussion on these prior to national parliamentary elections. The Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC has an education unit to undertake commissioned studies as well as operational research related to BRAC's education program. RED has been closely associated with the Education Watch reports. Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) also has a research unit that undertakes research beyond operational needs of its own program.
- The public sector institutions such as the Institute of Education and Research of Dhaka University, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, the National Academy for Primary Education and the National Academy for Education Management have been occasionally engaged in policy relevant research and policy dialogue in education.

E. Participants and stakeholders

The educational system in Bangladesh consists of some 150,000 institutions, 34 million students and over 900,000 teachers. Primary and secondary level institutions naturally form the bulk of the system with about 20 million students in primary education including madrasas and non-formal programs and 11 million students at the secondary level including madrasas. (Annex table 3)

Participation in education has expanded significantly in the decade of the 1990s. At the primary level, close to universal initial enrolment has been achieved, although almost a third of those enrolled drop out before completing the primary stage. Gender equality in enrolment at the primary and secondary levels is another accomplishment of the last decade. In spite of the expansion, overall enrolment ratios remain low at the secondary (about 40 percent) and tertiary level (about 6 percent). Effective participation measured by completion of the stage and acceptable learning achievement is much lower than what the enrolment rates may suggest. (BANBEIS 2002 data)

A high level of dropout and very poor learning achievement seriously undermine the progress in expansion of education. One-third of those who complete primary education have been found to be functionally illiterate. (Education *Watch* 2002) Dropout and poor learning achievement affect disproportionately the poor and disadvantaged groups. The segment of the population judged to be in extreme poverty, 20 percent to one-third of the total depending on criteria used, is effectively deprived of educational opportunities that could help the poor to pull themselves out of poverty.

Virtually no public sector activities in non-formal education have existed since the literacy activities were discontinued and DNFE was shut down by the end of 2003. NGOs continue literacy and adult education activities on a small scale. Non-formal primary education managed by NGOs, a category by itself, which may not be regarded as non-formal by many, also continues. The government, reluctant so far to recognize it as legitimate primary education, now plans to initiate a similar project (Reaching out-of-school Children or ROSC) with IDA and SDC support.

As noted earlier, NGOs, the private sector, households and the communities are major providers and stakeholders in the education system. NGOs have made a major contribution in introducing innovative non-formal approaches in primary education to serve on a substantial scale children who have been left behind by the formal system. Non-government institutions other than NGO-run non-formal schools are recipients of substantial government subventions for staff salaries and development of facilities. A great potential for public-private partnership through cooperation of all service providers and stakeholders exists but an effective modality for this remains to be developed.

Teachers' unions of primary, secondary and college teachers are important stakeholders in the education system. They play an important role in education development and policy-making and ultimately in determining if policies and programs are successfully implemented. There are several unions of teaching personnel at each level of education – a division that is encouraged and used by political parties. This rivalry has harmed the interest of teachers and has limited the prospects of playing a constructive role by teachers' organizations in educational development.

F. System functions

A number of essential functions or tasks, which may be called the system functions, has to be taken care of to ensure that the sector perform effectively and serve the objectives in terms of the needs of society and individuals. These include:

- Policy-making
- Coordination and overview in relation to national priorities

- Planning and system development including R&D in education.
- Management of program implementation
- EMIS, monitoring, evaluation and research.

Policy-making: The need for a comprehensive statement of the national education policy has been felt and voiced repeatedly. Since the birth of Bangladesh, several national education commissions and committees have been appointed to develop education policies and priorities in line with national goals and aspirations. Beginning from the Quadrat-e-Khuda Education Commission report of 1974, at least half a dozen such initiatives have been taken. The common elements in the diagnosis of problems and recommendations in these reports outweigh the differences. The most important common feature of the reports, however, is that few of their substantive recommendations have been fully implemented. The latest to be consigned to the archives, after a change of government in 2001, was the National Education Policy Report of 2000. The new administration appointed an Expert Committee on Educational Reforms (headed by Professor Muhammad Abdul Bari), which submitted its report in July 2002. Some recommendations of this report have been put into effect, but the fate of others remain unclear.

In January 2003, a Commission with 24 members, headed by Prof. Maniruzzaman Mia was formed to identify the “major problems of the education system and recommend remedial action.” The National Education Commission 2003 (NEC 2003) presented its report to the Prime Minister in March 2004. It made recommendations about various aspects of the education system, including those on quality, access, strengthening management and governance and promoting equity in education.

The history of educational policy statements not acted upon and almost a counter-productive nature of the initiatives in aggravating political divisiveness have given rise to skepticism about formal policy exercises. A civil society policy brief before the 2001 national election recommended “a pragmatic approach to solving problems based on experience and relevant international lessons, without the fanfare of a new policy, with ample dialogue and participation.” (Centre for Policy Dialogue, “Policy Brief on Education,” CPD Task Force Report, August 2001)

A National EFA Plan of Action (NPA), following the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All was prepared in 1995, outlining plans for EFA up to year 2000. It turned out to be an expression of ambitions, based partially on government targets, rather than a plan that was followed through for implementation. (Government of Bangladesh, PMED 1995) A similar document (NPA2) has been prepared in draft, but yet to be finalised, following the Dakar World Education Forum 2000, for the period up to 2015.

A heavy reliance on donor contribution for up to a third of education "development" budget (in contrast to the "recurrent" budget) has given the external development partners leverage in respect of education policies. For example, the dialogue and technical inputs from the donor consortium supporting PEDP II have led to the adoption of a coordinated sub-sector programme approach rather than multiple projects. The arguments in favour of detailed institutional analysis leading to management reform and decentralisation and the proposal for changes in human resource management policies and practices including the creation of a primary education cadre have been made strongly by the development partners. Institutional analysis of primary education management at central and field levels is included as an early action in the PEDP II plan.. Similarly, multilateral and bilateral donors, by citing and sharing their international experience, have bolstered the case for linking government subventions to non-government institutions at the secondary level to their performance and for introduction of registration and accreditation of secondary school teachers. In non-formal education, the donors have encouraged the government to consider a new policy framework and an organisation and management structure characterised by greater professionalism, autonomy and decentralisation.

Coordination and overview in relation to national priorities: Coordination and maintaining an overview of the education system in relation to national development goals and priorities are a difficult and complex undertaking. In the absence of a longer term and well-articulated policy and strategy framework for education various *ad hoc* formulations of strategies have to be taken as the guide to coordination of policies and priorities.

A number of basic principles listed by NEC 2003 as its guide in formulating its recommendations can be taken as set of educational development priorities likely to be given serious consideration by the government. These are (paraphrased and summarised):

- The overarching aim of the education system must be to turn the abundant population of the country into productive human resources in the shortest possible time.
- All should have the opportunity to participate in education free from discrimination because of religion, culture, gender and where they live; equal access should be the guiding principle especially in basic education.
- Changes in the present structure of the educational system are not essential [*given the need for many urgent reforms without embarking on difficult structural changes*].
- The different streams of schooling in primary and secondary education should be brought into a unified system with the aim of reducing social divisions and elitism. Development of common core curricula will be a realistic approach to achieving this aim.
- Maintaining quality standards at all stages of education should be one of the highest priorities. Effective steps should be taken to implement the measures recommended for this purpose including those for teacher's professional development and improvement of status, work on curriculum and learning materials, building model institutions in rural areas, use of information technology, strengthening learning assessment and examinations, and reducing student-teacher ratio.
- All primary schools should be brought under government management within as short a time as possible.
- Educational management should be decentralised, moving away from "Dhaka-centred" administration, especially in secondary and college education.
- Recruitment of all teachers other than for universities should be undertaken through independent commissions.

In its detailed recommendations, the Commission addressed in varying degree the issues of access and equity, improvement of quality, and stronger management. A major omission in the Commission's report is the absence of any substantive discussion of financing of education - need for resources, their mobilisation and their effective use. The implications of all of these principles, such as the one on bringing all primary schools "under government management" have not been adequately elaborated. (See Annex Table 3 for a summary of NEC2003 recommendations.)

With almost half of the population in poverty in Bangladesh, and 20 percent to one-third of the people in extreme poverty, poverty reduction is appropriately the overarching national development theme. The Millennium Development Goals and the target of reducing poverty by half by 2015 have re-affirmed the centrality of the war against poverty in international development cooperation agenda. The formulation of a national poverty reduction strategy, as the guide to medium term objectives and strategies for national development, has been made a condition for access to special assistance facilities of the World Bank and IMF.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of Bangladesh, still in draft in early 2005, has identified a seven point medium term strategic agenda for attention to the following areas:

- Employment
- Nutrition
- Maternal Health
- Quality education at primary, secondary and vocational levels

- Sanitation and safe water
- Criminal justice
- Local governance

The avenues through which the goal of accelerated poverty reduction will be pursued include: supportive macroeconomics to ensure rapid economic growth, choice of critical sectors to maximize pro-poor benefits from growth, safety net to protect the poor, human development to raise the capability of the poor, participation of the poor in the development process and their empowerment, promoting good governance, improving service delivery in areas of basic needs, and caring for the environment.

The education sector effort has to be the center-piece of the human development component of the poverty reduction strategy. (See Annex Table 4 for the proposed policy matrix of key strategies and measures in education.) The contribution of education must lead to intended cognitive development of participants, (e.g. acquiring by children the 50 competencies listed in the primary education curriculum), resulting in change in behavior, capacities, understanding and perceptions of people. The change has to be reflected in people's life, livelihood and work habits; in habits related to health, sanitation, nutrition and raising family; and in perception about and demand for education and learning. There has to be a transformation in women's role and involvement, both at home and in the community. Education must enhance participation of people at local and higher levels in governance and building a democratic society. It must improve people's capacity to cope with and adapt to the impact of global changes.

Attention to poverty reduction has brought out in sharp relief the high degree of inequity in respect of access and participation in education. Maintaining acceptable quality in education is a simultaneous concern, since access to education without the guarantee of a minimum level of quality is meaningless.

The global market has touched the lives of people in the remotest village and has created a demand for new skills and knowledge. Similarly, sustainable development both in education and in other spheres of development has to be a key issue in defining educational priorities and goals.

A broad consensus regarding education development priorities around a set of themes consisting of fighting poverty, promoting sustainable development, addressing globalization challenges, and upholding quality in education can be stated and is unlikely to be controversial. However, the mechanism and process of translating the broad priorities into coordinated sector-wide programs and strategies which are supported by resources and followed through by effective implementation are clearly more difficult and complex tasks.

Planning, system development and R&D: Educational planning as a function looks beyond routine operations of the system to define objectives and outputs and allocates resources to produce the outputs. This function is formally distributed between the Directorates (a director of planning for each of the directorates of primary and secondary and an assistant director in the directorate of technical education), the Ministries (a chief of planning in each of the two Ministries of Education) and the Planning Commission (a chief of planning for the social sector). In practice, projects, and lately the sub-sector program in primary education, supported by external assistance and prepared with heavy external technical assistance inputs, have dominated development activities.

Development projects are typically prepared with external technical support with technical assistance grants and international and national consultants provided by multilateral and bilateral donors. The planning units of the Ministries and the Directorates have participated in this process mainly as the facilitator in the preparation process. The size and scope of project/program determine the extent of involvement of senior officials from the concerned Ministry and Directorate as well as officials of the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance in the preparation process. Once a draft project/program proposal is ready, the Planning Unit in the Ministry works with the Planning Wing in the Planning Commission to

take the new proposal through the formal approval process of the government including financial commitments. The steps involved are sequentially the translation of the new proposal into a Project Concept Paper (PCP), preparation of a Project Proforma (PP) and consideration of these by inter-departmental bodies of the government under the auspices of the Planning Commission. A major project/program proposal would receive final approval from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) which is chaired by the Prime Minister. (Annex chart 5 shows a graphic representation of the formal decision-making structure for educational development). Some development proposals involving a policy issue may be referred to the Cabinet or a subcommittee of the Cabinet for its recommendation before formal approval by NEC or ECNEC.

Apart from facilitating the preparation of new development proposals, the planning units in the Ministries and directorates have the role of following up and reporting on progress of development projects. However, major donor assisted projects have followed the practice of establishing a project implementation unit in each project, which takes over the follow-up, monitoring and reporting tasks for the project. The justification for this arrangement is the limited staff and professional capacities of the planning units in the Ministries and the concerned implementing agencies (directorates).

A longer term and comprehensive system development function and an R&D capacity for this purpose do not exist in the planning and development process followed in the education sector. A sector-wide program approach has been advocated by development partners to overcome at least partially this deficiency. PEDP II (which actually represents a partial sub-sector approach, including in its scope only formal primary education) is an example of the effort to move towards a coordinated and broader system development approach.

A major objective of PEDP II is to build the capacity of the mainstream management and implementation mechanism by placing the main implementation responsibility of the program in DPE, instead of creating a separate implementation mechanism. The program director of PEDP II is the Director General of Primary Education and the Directorates in DPE are expected to be responsible for implementing the program. In order to augment the capacity of DPE, a Program Coordination Unit (PCU) has been set up under a specially appointed Joint Program Director. A sizeable Technical Support Team (TST) has been established which is headed by an international consultant and is planned to include over 100 national and international consultants. In addition, there is a Program Liaison Unit (PLU) based in ADB, the lead agency in PEDP donor consortium. How this arrangement will be different enough from the past project implementation units and effective at the same time, so that it can contribute to mainstream capacity building in primary education management and implementation, remains a challenge.

Management of the sector: The staff and line structure for managing the education sector, including the programs and the institutions, have been described above. Important characteristics of the education management system are: (i) a high degree of centralization, (ii) strong government control over parts of the system with absence of any public oversight over other parts, and (iii) lack of professionalization of management functions.

With a population of 140 million, Bangladesh is the largest unitary state in the world in which the central government does not share authority with a state or provincial government. The highly centralized political and administrative structure has a special implication for the education system, because the far-flung education network is more extensive and directly involves more citizens than any other public service. A high degree of centralization is a key feature of education management in Bangladesh and a source of many of its problems.

The field structure of the education management extends to the upazila level, with a substantial presence in the upazila, essentially as an extension of the Directorate of Primary

Education. The secondary education management structure is represented at the district level through the District Education Officer. At the upazila level, there is only a project officer to look after the secondary school girls' stipend project. The field level presence in both instances can be described as an extension of the central directorate, with the role of carrying out instruction from the center rather than taking planning and management decisions of any significance or exercising authority over budgetary resources.

Only a small part of the education system, mostly at the primary level, is directly managed by the government. However, through indirect control and compliance requirements for financial subvention, the government exercises a high level of authority over the non-government schools, the results of which have not been all positive. (See below.) On the other hand, the madrasas, although they represent a sizable number of institutions, students and staff, have very little management support and supervision. This, however, does not mean that they enjoy autonomy with accountability, since they are subjected to detailed compliance regulations as recipients of subventions.

The education authorities do not exercise any oversight related to overall national education priorities and general protection of public interest in respect of sizable components of the education system which do not receive government funds. These include English medium proprietary schools at different levels, *quomi* (national) madrasas, and NGO- run non-formal programs.

The general human resource management policies and practices of the government, which also apply to education management, do not promote professionalism and professionalization. Personnel even in support institutions with technical functions are generalists recruited and deployed as members of the common education service pool and are subject to usual frequent rotation and other civil service regulations. General administrative service personnel are routinely put in key line management functions in education. The implications are discussed in the next section.

EMIS, monitoring, evaluation and research: Monitoring of programs and institutions, evaluation of performance and outcomes and a system of collection and use of relevant information are essential ingredients of good management. So are evaluative, operational and policy-related research and studies. As noted above, BANBEIS has a specific responsibility to build a database and publish useful statistics and information. Its annual statistical report provides useful basic useful data, but there appears to be limited use of the database or use of its capacity for data analysis for policy review and policy reform. Primary education is outside the purview of BANBEIS.

At the primary level, separate units have been set up in DPE for monitoring and EMIS. Both are weak in terms of staff strength and professional capacity and are used on an *ad hoc* basis in tasks not directly pertinent to monitoring or EMIS. As a result, reliable and updated data for some of the basic indicators, such as net enrollment rate and completion and dropout rates in primary education are based on varying estimates. In addition to the separate units for monitoring and EMIS in DPE, which presumably could be consolidated into one technically strong unit, there is the CPEIMU attached to MOPME which also has a monitoring and MIS function. Data from the different sources sometimes are not consistent. There is clearly a need for reliable, relevant and timely information collected, analyzed and reported competently and used in management decision-making at different levels of the system. The general weakness in operational and policy-relevant research capacity has been already noted.

4. Major Policy Concerns

Major policy and strategy concerns in education can be grouped under cross-cutting sectoral issues and specific sub-sector issues. These issues have arisen in part from the organization and management structure of the sector and in part from the way they have functioned, as briefly described above.

A. Cross-cutting sectoral issues

Overall sectoral policy-making, coordination, and oversight: An important systemic concern is how the education system as a whole and its sub-sectors function to make their contribution to meeting key social goals, including fighting poverty. It is a question of vertical and horizontal linkages and articulation within and among sub-sectors of education and the possibility of taking a systemic view of the organizational structures and function of the system and sub-systems.

The overall organization and management of education show critical disjunctions and discontinuities. For example, at the primary level, the four major streams - the government and non-government registered schools, the madrasas, non-formal primary schools run by NGOs, and the proprietary English medium schools - operate with differing learning objectives and academic standards, with limited opportunity for horizontal movement of students, and no interaction among organizational authorities running these different streams. The same applies to the secondary level, in respect of the parallel streams in general secondary education, madrasas, proprietary schools and post-primary vocational and technical education.

At the tertiary level, a system-wide view - embracing colleges, universities, professional and specialised education under public and private management; the potential for specialised training by professional bodies; and how all these together match the demand for high level skills - does not exist.

Notwithstanding the good intentions behind the separation of primary and mass education from the Ministry of Education, various problems of articulation arise. Issues in primary education regarding curriculum development, training of teachers and management personnel, and transition from primary to secondary education cannot be resolved in isolation.

All of the concerns about horizontal and vertical links among subsystems point to the need for rethinking about organizational structures, functions, and roles in the education system. A systemic approach has to contribute to overall education system goal defined by society's overarching priorities, such as poverty alleviation. The system view will have to address broader human resource development issues, going beyond the parochial concerns of education sub-sectors. India, for example, has opted for a super-ministry for human resource development which coordinates the work of different ministry and department level agencies and organizations involved in various aspects of human resource development. Thailand and Indonesia have permanent statutory commissions with similar functions. NEC2003 has recommended a permanent National Education Commission.

Allocation of authorities and functions at the central level: Interviews undertaken for this study with various line and support units in education at the central level have brought out dissatisfaction about the distribution of authority, functions and capacities among these entities. - Ministries, directorates, and other support institutions. A need expressed by many is to redefine the division of roles and responsibilities between the secretariat of MOE and MOPME and the Directorates – ceding more of the responsibilities for planning, initiating policy reforms and overseeing policy implementation to the professional staff of the Directorates.

Similar needs for redefining roles and functions of different central entities have also been expressed in the support organizations. A consequence of the present situation is that insufficient time and effort can be devoted to the critical functions of strategic policy development, inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral coordination and general public interest watch at the Ministry level.

Decentralization and devolution of responsibility and authority: The centralised structure of management of both government and government -assisted institutions has not changed over the years in spite of the rhetoric about decentralization. Several informants for this report were of the view that, in recent years, increased politicisation of education management has led to greater centralisation with many small and large decisions, which should be disposed of at the Directorate, district or Upazila level, ending up at the highest level in the central Ministry. Salary subvention and *ad hoc* grants paid to non-government institutions by the government, and enforcement of compliance to regulations for this purpose have provided an avenue for exercising various forms of central control over these institutions. The present practice of having the local MP or a political personality or the district administration head as the chairmen of governing bodies of all or many secondary schools, madrasas and colleges in the locality is widely seen as a detrimental form of politicisation leading to misuse of the central compliance regulations.

At the primary education level, the PEDP II Macro Plan says, "Fundamental to the process of quality improvement in primary education is the principle of decentralization and devolution of authority and responsibility to middle and local levels of the education system....A distinctive thrust of the of PEDP II is to increase authority and accountability, and enhance resources at school level to achieve quality improvement in learning with equitable access. In line with this approach, key outreach support mechanisms will be developed at the upazila level... additional functions will be assigned to schools and upazilas, which will be strengthened in terms of infrastructure and staff." It would be important to ensure that these promises are actually fulfilled. (PEDP II Final Plan, October 2002, pp. 48-49.)

Quality of education can be enhanced and schools can be held accountable for performance when individual institutions take responsibility for managing their own learning program. In the case of vocational and technical training institutions, for instance, this is the only way for assessing and responding to skill demands in the local economy and adapting to specific opportunities and circumstances.

Even in the current general bleak picture, exceptional institutions which have earned a good reputation actually take greater responsibility for their own management, usually through good leadership of a head of the institution and support of an enlightened managing committee. These can serve as the model for a gradual move towards greater institutional responsibility and accountability.

Financing of education: An anomaly of under-resourcing and waste at the same time can be seen in financing of education in Bangladesh. Some special features of mobilisation of resources and their use in education merit attention.

It is a *low-cost and low-yield system*. Per student primary education recurrent expenditure is about \$13; for non-government secondary education it is \$16. The low per capita and total cost is no reason for satisfaction, because, educational quality - judged in terms of learning outcome, the pedagogic process and essential inputs – is clearly the victim of this situation. There is a *mismatch of financing and objectives*. Total national education expenditure, especially public budget allocation, around 2 percent of GNP, has to increase substantially in the medium term to meet national goals and priorities regarding expansion and quality improvement in education. The share of government budget for the education sector would need to rise under one scenario from under 15 per cent in 2000 to 26 per cent in 2008 in order to achieve essential quality improvement. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. I, 2000, pp. 58-108.) There is a *significant household contribution for education*, which is not taken into account in government public financing strategy for advancing policy objectives

such as equity and quality improvement. In principle, the generous system of subvention could be an important leverage for maintaining and enforcing quality standards in the non-government institutions. In practice, it fails to work this way because of the weak capacity of the regulatory and supervisory organizations in the government, and intrusion of partisan politics in educational management.

The standard practice in making financial allocations in the recurrent budget is to do it on an *incremental basis*, i.e., taking the current status as the baseline and adding annual increments in the budget.

Staff compensation dominates the recurrent budget (97 percent of the total) in primary education and comparably high at other levels. This leaves very little funds for other essential quality inputs such as learning materials, upgrading of teachers and academic supervision.

There are *high incentive expenditures* in primary and secondary education. Development expenditure is dominated by the incentive payment in the form of stipends both at the primary and secondary levels. Stipends at the primary level amount to two thirds of the estimated development budget from the government's own resources and one third of the total primary sector development program (PEDP II). The important policy question that has arisen is whether the benefits in terms of participation, equity and quality improvement would not be better achieved by spending directly on improving inputs and performance in school. (Knowles 2001)

The experience of the NFPE program of NGOs shows that the problem is of supply - offering quality schooling at the right time and place and in the right way without a direct cost burden on families for unofficial fees - rather than creating demand by offering stipends. This in fact may defeat the purpose, if resources cannot be provided for essential quality inputs.

Education finance arrangements reinforce *the pattern of inequity* in the education system. The share of benefits for households from public spending in education rises with income levels of households at all stages of education, but especially in secondary and tertiary education (World Bank, Bangladesh: From Counting the Poor to Making the Poor Count, 1998.) In primary education, the expenditure roughly corresponded with income distribution of the population. But, actually, effective spending and benefits, counting who actually complete the primary stage, is far from equitable.

Human resource policies and practices in education: Professional development, professionalization of specialized tasks in education and a career ladder for personnel within each sub-sector of education, which demand different skills and training, are recurrent topics for discussion. At present, although inadequate, there is a system of teacher training for primary and secondary level teachers, none for tertiary education, and only very *ad hoc* and limited professional skill development opportunities for other specialized tasks - such as curriculum and learning materials development, educational assessment, planning and management - under externally-assisted development projects.

The problem in teacher training at all levels is both meeting the quantitative requirement of pre-service and in-service training, and improving the quality of training so that it makes a difference in students' learning outcomes. Studies have indicated that C-in-ed training at the primary level has shown no significant difference in children' learning achievement in primary school. (Education *Watch* 2000)

As for specialised professional tasks, the present recruitment, placement and deployment rules and practices do not allow for any one to acquire professional skills, stay on the job in the same field and be promoted and rewarded for working in one's specialty. All senior education personnel are recruited as part of a common education cadre dominated by college teaching positions or as administrative service cadre. They are then considered interchangeable for any position in primary, secondary and higher education supervisory and management tasks as well as tertiary level education teaching positions. Only a short "foundation training" emphasizing administrative procedures and practices offered by NAEM is a requirement for

the newly recruited staff. Seniority is the basic criteria for placing people at higher levels of responsibility. As a result, there is a merry-go-round in personnel placement, with frequent transfers as is the practice in the administrative cadre. There is no opportunity to develop specialized professional skills and use these in one's job. Moreover, only senior personnel on the verge of retirement are placed at the seniormost leadership positions - not a winning formula for dynamism and continuity in leadership.

The need for professionalization of specialized tasks and building a career path from primary school teaching to senior positions in the Directorate of Primary Education has been recognized in the PEDP II plan. A separate primary education cadre has been under discussion for a long time. PEDP II plan calls for its implementation. NEP 2000 and NEC2003 have both endorsed this idea. Similar career ladder and recruitment under common standards for both government and non-government schools have been recommended in NEP2000 and NEC 2003.

Remuneration of teachers across the board is regarded as low, not commensurate with their responsibility and due status in society. Different education commissions, including the recent one, have recommended a major overhaul of the remuneration structure of teachers. Teacher's remuneration is a continuing source of dissatisfaction, agitation and unrest. Private tutoring, even in primary schools, has become a common practice as a means of supplementing teachers' income, with many negative consequences for equity and accountability of schools and teachers. Personnel costs, of course, consume the bulk of the recurrent costs of the education system; even a small salary increase has a large impact on the budget. It is essential that additional salary spending pays off in better learning outcome. With this end in view, remuneration structure can be designed to allow for more differentiation in teaching positions (for example, assistant teachers, teachers, senior teachers, team leaders/master teachers, assistant headmaster and headmaster in the primary school system), with promotion and salary raise tied to clearly established and enforced performance criteria. Some special rewards or bonuses can be tied to group performance at the institution.

Governance issues: Governance and management issues can be said to bring out in sharp relief the problems of the education system. All of the main deficiencies can be attributed directly or indirectly to governance and management of the system. The administration and management procedures and processes are ruled by regulations and practices based on tradition, custom and precedence rather than responsiveness to changing needs and conditions.

Concern has been expressed in the Education Commission reports of 2000 and 2003 about rampant indiscipline, student unrest and other adverse influences of politicization of education decision-making. The related problems of corruption and mismanagement, spawned and nurtured by partisan politics, when disciplinary and remedial action cannot be taken, have become the most serious obstacle to educational reform and change. Pro-poor changes in the education system proposed in PRSP cannot succeed unless the political obstacles to change can be removed or at least mitigated. The poor mostly suffer from this failure of the system, because the rich and the elite can opt out of the system and go to private institutions or abroad, as many have.

B. Sub-sector issues

The consequences of the systemic deficiencies in policy-making, organization and management structures, and professional and technical capacities are evident in the coverage and quality of education services.

Access and equity in sub-sectors: At the primary level, one in five children does not enroll in school and one in three of those enrolled does not complete primary education. This adds up to almost half (47 percent) of the children not having the benefit of a full cycle of primary education. It is reasonable to conclude that children from poor families are the ones who either do not come to school or are very poor achievers.

It is very likely that there is an overlap between non-enrollees and non-completers and some 6 million children estimated to be engaged in harmful child labor. Education provisions for children with disability are very limited either in the public or the private sector.

There is still a major access and equity problem in primary education in spite of the policies including stipends for children from poor families and non-formal education programs. An important positive development is the closing of gender gap in enrollment.

At the secondary education stage, the enrollment rate of about 40 percent of the age-group and high dropout result in a low net participation rate of young people in education. By one estimate, of every hundred who enter class six, the first year of the secondary stage, only 15 received SSC and six received the higher secondary certificate. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. II, Table 3.6, p. 70). In 2000, 3.2 million people in the active labor force of 60.3 million or 5 percent had SSC or HSC qualifications. (Labour Force Survey 1999-2000).

Very limited opportunities for organized *vocational and technical education (VTE)* for the size of the population in Bangladesh are the defining characteristic of this sub-sector. VTE enrollment is estimated to be under 3 percent of post-primary formal education enrolment. There is a wide array of informal skill development through on-the job experience and traditional apprenticeship which has no link with the formal training system. Some informants were of the view that the national economy would come to a grinding halt without the informal and traditional skill development network.

Formal VTE serves mainly young males who have completed at least the eighth grade. This rules out those who do not survive in the education system up to grade 9, mostly the poor. Secondly, failure to diversify its clientele and to make the program more flexible, adaptable and responsive to market needs and geared to the informal economy means that VTE is failing to help the poor improve their employment and income.

The number of students passing HSC examination who then would be eligible for tertiary education has varied considerably year to year. For example, about 291,000 passed the examination in 1999, but the number dropped to 193,000 in 2003. (BANBEIS Data) This indicates problems with both the examination system and how quality standards are applied in institutions and in the examination process.

The institutions under the National University have an intake capacity of 200,000 students in affiliated degree colleges and a small number of specialised professional colleges. The public and private universities can admit respectively about 20,000 students each. The Open University offers another avenue for tertiary education to those who do not want to or cannot be full-time students. There appears to be enough tertiary education intake capacity at present for students who are eligible and interested in pursuing higher education. The problem regarding access to higher education arises from the fact that there is intense competition for the limited places in the universities and a few prestigious colleges and for fields which are seen to have a high market value. The main issues regarding access to tertiary education, therefore, are two-fold: (a) equity of access to universities and prestigious institutions leading to potentially high private return from higher education, and (b) the balance of enrollment in different fields.

Equity in the education system has surfaced as a major concern in the context of the national poverty reduction goal. Expansion of the education system appears to have had the perverse effect of reducing opportunities for the poor, as noted above. It was not unusual in the past to have meritorious students from poor, rural background to hold positions in the merit list in SSC and HSC examinations. This does not happen any longer. The merit list is dominated by students from urban areas who have gone through intensive and expensive private tutoring.

Quality of teaching-learning in sub-sectors: Mention of educational quality can generate a hot debate about its definition. This debate has its value, but in pragmatic terms, quality in education is best reflected in learning achievements of students.

That the quality in primary education is far from what is acceptable is no news. The dropout rate, non-completion of the full cycle, and the competency level of learners who complete five years of primary education, cited earlier, testify to the poor quality of education delivered.

The policies for quality improvement have not been directed at addressing the specific circumstances and obstacles of the various deprived segments of the population, based on analyses and diagnosis of the particular situations and constraints. A general improvement of the system following conventional solutions (e.g., more textbooks, more teachers training and more supervision) has been pursued with the assumption that the benefits would accrue to all. (*Education Watch 2003/4*, forthcoming)

Studies have shown that, although educational quality across the board is poor, non-formal primary education programs did significantly better than the regular primary schools in respect of acquisition of student competencies prescribed in the curriculum and in student retention and completion rates (*Education Watch 2000*). This is remarkable because these program, by definition, are targeted at the poor.

PEDP II aims to bring about significant quality improvement in primary education by introducing common Primary School Quality Levels (PSQL) in the formal schools which have over 80 percent of the students. PEDP II could fit its label better as a sub sector program for primary education, if it did not leave out the possibility of supporting NFPE. It has not taken a coordinated approach including NFPE to reach out to the neglected and the under-served. The potential of benefits that may be derived for primary education in general from methods of teacher training, supervision, learning materials, community rapport, and parental involvement in NFPE need to be recognized in an agenda that emphasizes quality with equity. (*Education Watch 2003/4*)

The secondary schools now serve essentially as a screening device for disqualifying the large majority of young people and selecting a small minority for tertiary education, rather than having a purpose of its own. The curriculum and teaching are geared to preparation for higher education, which only a fraction of students can aspire for. They do not relate to prospects of gainful employment, entrepreneurship and practical skills - which, of course, need not be a disqualification for further education. (ADB, Secondary Education Sector Development Plan 2000-2010, 1998)

A small proportion of teachers, about a third in the non-government schools, which are 98 percent of all schools, have any professional training. And academic supervision of secondary schools is almost non-existent to mitigate the problem. (GOB, UNDP and UNESCO, 1992, p.44)

A recently introduced vocational-technical stream, after grade eight, runs counter to general international experience that shows that "vocationalizing" formal secondary schools raises the cost of the school without corresponding benefit in skill development or better employment prospects for students. International experience also suggests that the most useful vocational /occupational preparation in the secondary school is building a sound foundation of communication skills, mathematics and basic science, and increasingly computer skills, which make young people trainable for the employment market. (JBIC 2002, pp. 63-64). NEC 2003 recommends that secondary education up to class 10 should be one unified stream with adequate focus on communication skills, science and mathematics for all students.

The most appropriate way to look at the quality of VTE is to judge it from the point of view of external effectiveness. This sub-sector, more than any other, should prove its worth by enabling students to cash in on the benefits of education and training through employment and income. Public sector VTE is regarded as disconnected from the formal and informal job

market. The centralized management of the institutions throughout the country is based on standard curricula, courses, and organizational arrangements that limit interaction with local entrepreneurs and employers. Placement rates for VTI and TTC graduates were 40 to 65 percent, and “unemployment is also common among graduates of polytechnics.” (World Bank 2000, Education Sector Review Vol. III, p. 9)

Non-governmental organizations such as UCEP appear to be confronting the quality and effectiveness problems better than the public sector programs. UCEP has a high course completion and job placement rate. Per trainee cost in UCEP is 25 to 40 percent lower than in public institutions (JBIC 2002 pp. 65-66). This pragmatic model has useful lessons for viable skill development programs.

In summary, a result focus based on defined learning outcomes need to guide the efforts to improve quality. Key quality inputs such as teachers, learning materials, and essential facilities need to be looked at from this outcome perspective. Assessment of learning of students and performance of schools need to reflect the outcome orientation. The inputs and processes need to be managed and capacities need to be built for this purpose in the system from the same perspective.

5. Development Cooperation

A substantial contribution from external development partners (DPs), roughly one-third of the government's annual development budget in recent years, give the DPs considerable leverage on policies and strategies in educational development. Apart from adding to the resource pot, this partnership has helped to bring an international perspective and lessons from diverse experiences into the education development process of Bangladesh. DPs have helped to re-direct attention to international consensus in education development priorities such as the EFA framework, the Millennium Development Goals and the focus on combating poverty represented by the PRSP exercise.

The annex on "Overview of Major Donor Education Projects" (Annex Table 4) reveals important features of this assistance:

- Assistance is provided predominantly in mainstream primary and secondary education, out of which formal primary education takes the lion's share. Almost no assistance is provided to technical-vocational training, general and specialised tertiary education and madrasa education.
- Both public sector and NGO programs are beneficiaries of assistance, although NGOs' share is about one-eighth of the total listed assistance. Almost all of the assistance to NGOs is intended for different kinds of non-formal education programs.
- There is a trend towards a coordinated sector-wide approach in assistance. PEDP II is a prime example. In NFE support to NGOs, in several cases, donors themselves have arranged to provide assistance jointly to a project.

Donor assistance seeks to support expansion and improvement of services with enhanced quality and equity, provision of assistance within the framework of policies reflecting longer term priorities and strategies, and promotion of sustainability and capacity building in the education system. Effectiveness of assistance in terms of these principles is hampered by a number of factors:

- Weak articulation of the vision, direction and priorities in the education sector as a whole and the sub-sectors. PEDP II is an attempt to address this deficiency in one sub-sector. PRSP, still in draft, is an effort to provide a sense of direction for education and other development sectors.
- Coordination and a shared vision among development partners about objectives and strategies in some areas need to be enhanced. ELCG has this mission. However, differences in organisational priorities and procedures and the scale and capacity of

technical staff presence in the country have led to varying degree of involvement and varying positions on assistance strategy.

- Results of assistance in terms of national capacity building remain a problem. The practice of establishing PCU or PIU, considered necessary for management of the assisted activities, has not been conducive to permanent capacity-building in the system. How the PEDP II arrangement for program support will work out is still a question mark.
- The system of separate allocation procedures and management of revenue and development budgets has been an obstacle to integration of staff and activities of assisted projects into the mainstream. A workable solution is yet to be found.
- Deficiencies in institutional structures and human resource management policies and practices in the public sector have stood in the way of professionalization and professional capacity building that donor assistance seeks to promote. Efforts to bring about reforms in the government policies and practices have been complemented to a limited extent by donor collaboration with NGOs and research/academic institutions outside the public sector (such as support to CAMPE, BRAC, Ahsania Mission, CPD, IED of BRAC University etc.). A more clearly articulated strategy on the part of donors that recognizes the potential of non-government entities in professional capacity development in the national system and strengthens and expands public - private cooperation in this respect is needed.
- Funding of projects outside the public sector, especially to NGOs, with relatively small grants, has been found to be difficult and costly. Ideas for a common sectoral or multi-sectoral funding channel or facility have been explored, but a consensus is yet to emerge.

6. Reform Needs and Opportunities

The map of the sector, its principal components and the configuration of relationships or lack of it among the components as well as the description of the system functions and operations presented point to needs and opportunities for reforms in the sector. Key informants from line and staff units of the sector interviewed in the course of the study also identified needs for change and development, which are presented below:

- Better delineation of roles and functions of the Ministry and other central organizations such as the Directorates and the Board.
- Encouragement and support to organizational units to exercise authority and take responsibility instead of "passing the buck."
- Recognition of the status of "autonomous" entities such as the various Boards and political and administrative support to performing their statutory authorities without extraneous influence.
- Need for professional development in the education sector and promoting it through human resource management reform.
- Establishment of a primary education cadre.
- Greater authority at field level (division, zone, districts) for personnel management decisions.
- Greater personnel management decisions regarding professional staff in the system at the Directorates.
- Support to a systematic and continuous curriculum development process; immediate attention is needed at the lower secondary level (VI-VIII grades)
- Opportunities and incentives for professional development for the personnel of respective responsible organizations in curriculum development, assessment and evaluation of learning and public examinations.
- Research in curriculum development and implementation including longitudinal and action research.

- Research in learning assessment including formative and summative assessment and public examinations.
- Building public awareness and consensus on governance issues and accountability at different levels to stakeholders; accountability of institutions to communities and parents.
- Government action to enhance authority with accountability of managing committees of institutions; freeing managing committees and institutions from political and other vested interest influence,
- Government grants to institutions linking these with transparent application of performance criteria.
- Establishment of a well equipped resource center and workshop for modeling teaching-learning and teacher development for technical and vocational training.
- Government and external assistance to development of the madrasa system's curriculum and learning materials in order to integrate "modern" knowledge and make madrasas equivalent to the general stream.
- Development of a teacher training and upgrading system for madrasas.
- Development of the administrative oversight and supervision structure for madrasas.
- Establishment of a separate directorate for college education in MOE.

The above list indicates concerns and needs for support to reform, change and capacity building in the following areas:

- i) Support and attention to areas which have been "neglected", such as teacher development and "modeling" of effective training in technical and vocational education and the development of madrasas.
- ii) Promoting professionalization and professionalism in the education sector through reforms in the human resource management policies and practices
- iii) Supporting research and development in the sector in operational and policy-relevant issues including longitudinal studies and action research.
- iv) Strengthening governance and management through increased authority with accountability at various levels; especially at the institution level; redefining the roles at the central level in respect of sharing authority between the Ministry and other central bodies; and protecting education management from political and other negative extraneous influences;

The "mapping" presented above have also brought out other important concerns, which have not been specifically identified by the informants, but follow logically from the items they have stressed and the policy priorities expressed by the government. These are:

- v) Primacy of the equity issue in education policy and programs, given the high degree of inequity in the system and the focus on poverty reduction as a national goal. Giving a high level of attention to equity issues in the strategies for quality improvement will require looking at policy and strategy options from the point of view of a matrix that combines quality and equity in policies and actions. Quality with equity need to be the overarching agenda in the education sector development and reform.
- vi) Better use of financial resources to achieve the sector objectives. Along with the advocacy for a larger share of GNP and government budget for education, the funds must be effectively used for the identified priorities. Making education financing mechanisms and decisions effective vehicles for serving educational objectives and priorities will require clear articulation and delineation of the objectives in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Equally important is better understanding of the strategies and instruments, including the ones concerned with provisions for resources and their use, to be applied to achieving the objectives. Paucity of systematic research and analysis in education finance, including tracking of expenditures, is a major obstacle to effective educational planning and management. There is a great need for research, particularly, in the form of micro-economic studies at the level of households, schools and communities; tracking expenditure from central level to

institutions and learners; analysis of private costs and expenditures; and probing internal efficiency of different types of institutions in the same sub-sector.

A provisional list of proposed activities. The areas of change and development identified and the analysis of the sector profile suggest specific activities which may be considered as components of a complementary reform project. These are seen as contribution to the overall reform agenda of addressing issues of quality, equity, education governance, capacity building and further exploration of options. The proposed activities are listed below:

1. *Exploring options in post-primary vocational and technical education.* It is necessary to examine the options for expanding opportunities for middle level vocational-technical skill development, especially for girls and disadvantaged groups. Viable models have to be developed which are effective in responding to the employment prospects and equity concerns. Potential partners will be Directorate of Technical Education, Board of Technical Education, NGOs, employers, investors and providers of capital, and academic and research institutions.
2. *Modernization of primary and secondary level madrasa education.* This will call for work on curriculum and learning materials, teacher training and institutional management to bring about improvement in quality and equivalence with mainstream education in curricular and learning objectives. Potential partners will be the Madrasa Education Board, DSHE, DPE, interested NGOs and academic and research institutions.
3. *Improvement in learning assessment.* (a) Research and capacity development in secondary level public examination, SSC and HSC, with the aim of improving validity and reliability of public examinations and using examinations as a means of enhancing teaching learning practices in schools. (b) Research, development and trial of formative and summative learning assessment tools and methods at the primary and secondary level in order to make teaching learning more child-centred and result-oriented in respect of learning outcomes. Potential partners in these activities will be BISEs, NCTB, DSHE, DPE and research and academic institutions.
4. *Curriculum and learning materials development at the junior secondary level (grades 6-8).* This level has remained neglected. With larger numbers of children enrolling at the secondary level and the importance of consolidating the basic skills development begun in primary school, this is a critical stage of education. It is also important for the child in respect of making educational and occupational choices for life. Work is needed on curriculum and learning materials to respond to the educational needs at this stage and to improve the teaching-learning process. Potential partners will be NCTB, DSHE, and academic and research institutions.
5. *Research on education financing and effective resource use choices.* The options for mobilization of larger resources and improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness of resources need to be explored. Development and application of a quality-with-equity framework for resource allocation and use are necessary. Empirical analysis of macro-budgeting in the public sector, institution and community level choices, and household costs and expenditure is needed. Potential partners are Ministry of Education, MOPME, Ministry of Finance, schools and academic and research institutions.

The tasks ahead are to examine critically these specific contributions to the reform agenda and what they imply for support to and collaboration in reform. All of these activities are expected to be carried out in the mode of research, development and trial to explore and try out viable models which can be used more widely when their viability and effectiveness are tested. The strategies for action involving institutional collaboration and partnership, research, policy dialogue, technical assistance, advocacy, support for networks and linkages, and capacity building have to be identified and elaborated. These will provide the basis for the action plan for the Complementary Sector Reform Project.

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