

# Bangladesh Education Sector

## **An appraisal of basic education (pre-primary and primary with reference to secondary)**

Prepared by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)

At the behest of Education Local Consultative Group (ELCG) and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

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## ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASC	Annual School Census
ASPBAE	Asia Pacific Association for Adult and Basic Education
ASPR	Annual Sector Performance Report
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BEHTRUC	Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children
BEN	Bangladesh ECD Network
BNFE	Bureau of Non-Formal Education
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CAP-MMM	Coordinated Area-based Planning, Management, Mobilization and Monitoring
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPD	Center for Policy Dialogue
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity
CSEF	Civil Society Education Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
Dip-in-Ed	Diploma in Education
DLO	Disbursement Linked Indicators
DP	Development Partner
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECL	Each Child Learns
EFA	Education for All
EFA-FTI	Education for All Fast-Track Initiatives
ELC	Essential Learning Continua
ELCG	Education Local Consultative Group
EU	European Union
EWG	Education Working Group
FY	Fiscal Year
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GO	Government Organization
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPE	Global Partnership for Education

GPS	Government Primary School
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IE	Inclusive Education
IED	Institute of Educational Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non Government Organization
JARM	Joint Annual Review Mission
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCG	Local Consultative Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFF	Multi Tranche Financing Facility
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MTBF	Medium Term Budget Framework
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NCTB	National Curriculum and Text Book Board
NEP	National Education Policy
NFPE	Non Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NNPS	Newly Nationalised Primary Schools
NPA	National Plan of Action
NSA	National Student Assessment
PECE	Primary Education Completion Examination
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
PESP	Primary Education Sector Plan
PPE	Pre Primary Education
PSQL	primary school quality level standards
RBM	Result Based Management
RNGPS	Registered Non-Government Primary Schools
ROSC	Reaching Out-of-School Children
SCE	Second Chance Education
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SE	Supervising Entity
SEC	Small Ethnic Community
SESIP	Secondary Education Sector Investment Program

SFYDP	Sixth Five Year Development Plan
SFYP	Sixth Five Year Plan
SHARE	Supporting the Hardest to Reach through Basic Education
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation
SLIP	School Level Improvement Planning
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TLM	Teaching Learning Materials
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPEP	Upazila (sub-district) Primary Education Plan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# Bangladesh Basic Education Appraisal

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## I Background

1. The discussion has been on-going for some time about Bangladesh's participation in GPE. In the course of finalizing the Third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP3) for the period 2011-16, now extended to 2017, the possibility of applying to GPE to fill funding gap was considered. ELCG, with concurrence from the Government of Bangladesh, prepared a primary education sector plan appraisal in 2011 as a step towards Bangladesh's GPE membership. (ELCG, EFA -FTI Appraisal Document, July 2011). Eventually, the extent of funding gap for PEDP3 was not considered critical at that point in time and the submission to FTI/GPE was put off.
2. Meanwhile, Bangladesh was included by GPE in its list of potential partners with an indicative allocation of USD 100 million for 3 years. In the course of PEDP3 implementation, the need and potential for use of additional funds was identified. In February 2014, the Government of Bangladesh, in consultation with the Education Local Consultative Group (ELCG), took a decision to apply for GPE membership.
3. Bangladesh is already a beneficiary of GPE through Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) participation in Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF). CSEF, a facility of GPE, supports the role of civil society in driving international and national progress toward EFA and other national education goals. With a modest grant offered through Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and managed by the Asia Pacific Association for Adult and Basic Education (ASPBAE), CAMPE has been conducting activities in public awareness raising and mobilization, policy participation, advocacy, research and monitoring activities to promote EFA goals. CAMPE has been also active regionally and internationally in EFA advocacy by taking a lead role in both GCE and ASPBAE.
4. In preparing a position paper in 2008 as a contribution to the formulation of the PEDP3 program, CAMPE had made suggestions for the next phase of development in primary education. CAMPE had supported the spirit and principles of SWAp. It also had argued the case for the development of a matrix approach comprising workable options in policy priorities, major programme components, implementation mechanisms and responsibilities and financing mechanisms, rather than trying to fit these elements into a pre-conceived template under the label of SWAp. This kind of adaptation of SWAp was considered necessary to make a complex and multi-faceted programme with multiple providers and key actors work effectively. Flexibility in management and financing arrangements was considered essential with diversity in provisions and multiple key actors. (CAMPE, 2008). In the event, a partial sector approach with a centralised management structure was adopted in PED3.

5. The basic premise underlying the CAMPE position, consistent with national development priorities expressed in Vision 2021, was to support building Bangladesh as a middle-income country, democratic, progressive, and pluralistic, with a stake for all citizens in it. This vision required universal access to a unified and equitable primary school system of high quality, substantially expanded opportunities for secondary and tertiary education, and numerous opportunities for acquisition of skills for a globally competitive labour market. Conditions had to be created for the government, NGOs, broader civil society, the community and other stakeholders to contribute to achieving these goals (CAMPE 2008, 13). The architecture of future collaboration anticipating any subsequent education sector programme(s) is still something that needs to be considered in the light of experience. It is not too early to initiate this process.
6. CAMPE, as the national forum of education CSOs, emphasized the need for greater focus on early childhood care and education, education for out-of-school children, better learning outcomes for all children in primary education and stronger CSO participation in national education planning, management and monitoring as areas that could benefit from GPE partnership. These areas also are in accord with the priorities of GPE.
7. According to the GPE guidelines, the local education group (ELCG in Bangladesh) needs to submit the appraisal report of the country sector plan as the first step of the application process. In agreement with the GPE Secretariat, it has been proposed to appraise the education sector on the basis of the existing relevant documents - the PEDP3 Programme Document, National Education Policy (NEP 2010), Sixth Five Year Development Plan (SFYDP), and the Government's three-year rolling Medium Term Budget Framework (MTBF). The GPE working group in Education LCG consisting of government, DPs and CSO representatives agreed to request CAMPE to undertake the preparation of the sector appraisal and contribute to the process of GPE application by ELCG and MoPME.
8. At the request of ELCG and MoPME, a concept note was prepared by UNICEF outlining the rationale for GPE membership of Bangladesh, the character of the primary education sub-sector plan, the educational development context and areas of activities that would benefit from additional funding within the PEDP3 program framework. (UNICEF, GPE Concept Note Bangladesh, May 2014).
9. This appraisal of sector plan looks upon PEDP3 program plan document, based on a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP) developed in the context of NEP 2010, the Sixth Five Year Development Plan (2011-16) and MTBF, as the Primary Education Sector Plan.

10. It is recognised that a comprehensive sector plan covering the full education sector does not exist. In the Bangladesh context, MoPME is responsible for oversight of the Sector-Wide Program (SWAp) PEDP3 that covers pre-primary to grade 5. For the primary education sub-sector the elements of the sub-sector plan consist of the PEDP3 program plan and its backdrop provided by the other policy and planning documents. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for education from Grade 6 onwards. Secondary education currently starts at grade 6. The Education Policy 2010 states that grades 6-8 will become free and compulsory in the near future as well as one year of pre-primary education. It is expected that all children will participate in 9 years of basic education in the future. Implementation of one year of pre-primary has started and preparatory steps are being taken to make grades 6-8 free and compulsory. In order to be reasonably comprehensive and recognizing the current Bangladeshi context, this appraisal covers basic education defining it as PP-grade 8 with a focus on primary education.
  
11. The appraisal critically looks at the sector plan drawing on the earlier 2011 appraisal, the GPE concept note, and various civil society articulations of issues including Education Watch studies. Relevant inputs also have been derived from Bangladesh EFA 2015 review, in final draft, prepared by an independent study team under the auspices of MoPME (MoPME, 2014). The GPE guideline has been used as the basic guide for structuring this appraisal inclusive of the secondary level, adapting it to the specific characteristics and context of the Bangladesh situation. The guideline emphasizes a review of the sector plan preparation process including stakeholder engagement; a critical analysis of the plan itself including plan and programme design; and implementation aspects including system capacity, governance and management, resource position and indication of risks and ways of mitigating risks (GPE, Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal, November 2012). Although, the appraisal focuses on primary education, basic information about secondary education is included, taking into consideration the transition issues and the fact that grades 6-8, currently part of secondary education, according to Education Policy 2010, are proposed to become compulsory and free.
  
12. The appraisal, therefore, following sections I and II (Background and an overview of progress towards EFA 2015 goals in Bangladesh and progress in secondary education), comprises the following other sections: III - A description of preparation of PEDP3 Plan, stakeholder involvement, and appraisal; IV - A brief analysis of the PEDP3 plan including the features and characteristics of the program design; V - System capacity and response; VI - Governance and accountability issues; VII - Resource planning; VIII -Observations on the concept note; XI - Priorities that deserve support from additional resources; and X - Concluding observations and recommendations.

## II Progress towards EFA Goals and in Secondary Education

### Towards EFA Goals at-a- glance

13. The vision of education for all laid out in the Dakar Framework for Action and the goals set for 2015 have made a difference even if the goals remain to be fully realised. Despite commendable achievements, various primary education programmes including PEDP3 call for more concerted efforts to address the challenges of quality improvements, among others. Progress and constraints at-a-glance in Bangladesh indicate challenges in the run-up to 2015 and beyond. (This section is based on MoPME, Bangladesh EFA 2015 Review, Final Draft, 2014).
14. **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** Pre-primary education of one year before primary school entry at age 6 is now supported. Over 50 percent of pre-school children were estimated to be receiving some form of pre-primary education in 2012. An operational framework and GO-NGO collaboration guidelines have been adopted by the Government to promote pre-primary education with common quality standards. ECD preceding pre-primary is available to a small number of children mainly through NGOs (Akhter, 2012). A Comprehensive ECD Policy has been adopted in 2013, but the programmatic elaboration and plan are yet to be fully worked out (GOB, 2013).
15. **Universal Primary Education (UPE):** Remarkable progress has been recorded with net enrolment approaching over 97% coverage. Progress has also been made in reducing dropout and improving completion rates. However, over one fifth of those enrolled in primary do not complete the five year primary cycle (DPE/ASPR, 2014)
16. **Youth and adult learning needs:** With high non-completion in the primary stage, about 50 percent of youth aged 11-15 years are enrolled in secondary school. High dropout at the secondary level results in less than a third of the age group completing 10 years of schooling up to secondary school certificate. Only around 11 percent of out-of-school youth participate in formal or non- formal work-related training, with informal apprenticeship counting for more than half (Ahmed et al, 2012). Education Policy 2010 has proposed raising compulsory education up to grade 8 by 2018 and major expansion of vocational/technical skills with relevant content and quality.
17. **Adult literacy:** Literacy rates of people aged over 15 as reported in literacy survey in 2010 using the self-reporting method reached 59.8% (female –55.7% and male– 63.9%) (BBS, 2011). There has been no major literacy programme in the public sector since 2003, until a recent approval in February 2014 of a project to serve 4.5 million young adults in 3 years. Debate about a simplistic “eradication” of illiteracy approach through a campaign or a lifelong learning approach with basic literacy as the foundation through permanent networks of community learning centres has stymied action and mobilization of resources.

18. ***Gender parity and equality in education:*** Bangladesh has overcome gender disparity in access to primary and secondary education over the last two decades. At present, girls are ahead of boys in enrolment and completion, raising a concern about disadvantage of adolescent boys who are drawn into child labour to support their families.
19. ***Quality of education:*** This is a major and continuing concern. Average pupil-teacher ratio remains short of the interim target of 40:1. Moreover, 80 percent of the schools are run on double shift with learning time in a school year less than half of the international average of a thousand hours. The large class size and small learning time combine to limit effective contact hours. More efforts are needed to instil competency-based assessment of learning.
20. This summation indicates major challenges in ensuring better learning outcomes in Bangladesh. It is not merely a matter of pursuing current strategies and plans up to 2015. Substantial rethinking is in order regarding priorities for action in the immediate future and beyond 2015. Review and assessment in current programs, such as PEDP3, of which a mid-term review has been carried out in 2014, implementation of skill development strategies, and designing actions regarding the comprehensive ECD policy offer new opportunities.

### **A Brief Review of Secondary Education**

21. Secondary education in Bangladesh is divided into two levels: secondary education (grades 6–10) and higher secondary education (grades 11–12). Over 11 million students are now enrolled in about 20,000 secondary education schools and 10,000 madrasahs, which are Islamic religious schools, 99% of which are nongovernment schools. Bangladesh has made considerable progress in improving access to education at all levels. Since 1980, enrolment in secondary education has more than tripled, as has the number of secondary education institutions. Significant expansion of secondary education is due to (i) demand for secondary education reflecting a sharp increase of primary education enrolment and (ii) stipends given to 3 million girl students. The growth in girls' enrolment is commendable, rising from 500,000 in 1981 to more than 5 million by 2011. Girls now constitute 54% of secondary enrolment, outnumbering boys. (See BANBEIS, 2014; also Nath et al, 2008).
22. The Secondary Education Sector Investment Program (SESIP) has been designed by GOB, with Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the main development partner to implement key reforms in secondary education envisaged in the Education Policy using a multi tranche financing facility (MFF for 2013-2022) in a phased manner. SESIP will adopt a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) that supports the government to lead common

secondary education program framework with the enhanced harmonization of ADB and other development partners' assistance. SESIP aims at assisting the GOB to implement the NEP-2010 under its 4 components, viz. (i) Enhancing Quality & Relevance of Secondary Education; (ii) Increased equitable access and retention of all students, including indigenous people (IP) or Small Ethnic Communities (SECs); (iii) Strengthened education management and governance; and (iv) Strong monitoring and evaluation.

23. Despite impressive achievements in enrolment, completion rates and gender parity, secondary education does not equip students with the knowledge or skills the economy needs. Constraints on the provision of high-quality secondary education are (i) an acute shortage of trained secondary school teachers, especially in certain subjects, such as, science, math and English; (ii) issues of articulation, consistency and content burden in curricula across primary and secondary education; (iii) an inadequate teacher management system for recruitment, registration, and performance evaluation; (iv) the lack of teaching standards; and (v) shortages of teaching-learning materials and equipment.
24. The high dropout rate is a major challenge in secondary education. Only 46% of students complete the 5-year cycle of secondary education, reflecting a huge waste of financial resources and an inefficient education system. A gender gap shows 51% of boys completing the 5-year cycle but only 43% of girls. Multiple challenges related to gender and poverty cause the high dropout rate for girls. One factor is traditional values that favor early marriage for girls. Regarding results from secondary level public examination, boys slightly outperform girls, with 83% of boys and 80% of girls earning secondary school certificates in 2011.
25. Critical issues affecting access and retention are as follows:
- The introduction of participatory teaching learning methods and “creative questions” in examinations, secondary education aims to equip students with the analytical skills or creative thinking the economy needs. However, ensuring quality of education of a minimum standard in all secondary schools remains a challenge. Enrolment in science in grade 10 fell from 48% in 1980 to 20% in 2011.<sup>2</sup> This is caused by (i) a shortage of qualified teachers, (ii) teaching that emphasizes theory, (iii) a lack of science laboratories and equipment, and (iv) business studies' attracting more students. English is seen as an essential skill but is poorly taught in secondary school.
  - Classrooms are overcrowded and many school buildings unsafe and inadequate. In underserved areas, there are shortages of schools and classrooms. As efforts to improve the quality of primary education bear fruit, the number of students who complete primary education is expected to increase, requiring more classrooms in secondary schools and madrasahs.

- Segments of the population—including the poor, ethnic minorities, residents of urban slums, and those living along coastal and vulnerable lowlands—face financial or social barriers to attending and completing school.
- Bangladesh has no established system that allows students to transfer credits among secondary schools, madrasahs, and vocational schools. Offering various pathways of learning would stimulate horizontal movement and/or re-entry.

26. ***Gaps in sector management.*** The capacity of the Ministry of Education and the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) to supervise and monitor the secondary education sector has not kept pace with the rapid increase in the number of secondary schools and madrasahs. The secondary education system has weak organizational and supervisory competence. Improving the quality and relevance of secondary education would require good sector management. Key challenges are as follows:
- i. As part of on-going education reform, the DSHE has gradually decentralized responsibility for education management, including academic supervision in schools, to local education offices. However, limited capacity of these remains a great concern.
  - ii. A number of organizations, including teacher training colleges, higher secondary teacher training institutes, and the Bangladesh Madrasah Teacher Training Institute, provide teacher training in secondary education in different aspects (e.g., planning, implementation, and administration). However, coordination and institutional linkages among them need to be further improved. In addition, the rapid growth of nongovernment teacher training colleges, which operate commercially without the government’s proper quality control, has further undermined the quality of training.
  - iii. About 98% of all schools are nongovernment, their administration overseen by school management committees. These nongovernment schools and madrasah receive substantial government subsidies to pay the salaries of teachers of selected subjects, as well as block grants for construction and maintenance of school buildings. Given the enormous growth in nongovernment schools, their performance and accountability requirements are few. Government administrative and supervision capacity is not up to the task.
  - iv. Teachers in government schools are recruited by the DSHE, while teachers in nongovernment schools are recruited directly by schools in accordance with the government’s set regulations and procedures. However, instances of corruption and nepotism have clouded the transparency of the system, especially regarding teacher recruitment and salaries in nongovernment secondary schools funded by the government. More transparent systems are needed. Further, rural schools face hurdles recruiting teachers, as many candidates prefer to live in Dhaka and its environs.
  - v. In recent years, government has introduced a “creative question” system in SSC examination, emphasizing assessment of knowledge and skills as well as thinking and reasoning. It included a unified examination

provided by 8 regional education boards and the Madrasah Education Board. Challenges remain to improve methods and procedures, as the results of the public examination must be reliable and valid.

vi. Projects funded by the government and development partners have been major drivers of secondary education development. Capacity development provided by projects is often lost when projects end, with minimal institutionalization and long-term strategic planning for the continued professional development of personnel. For example, monitoring and evaluation is generally a project-supported activity and not institutionalized, leaving the system reliant on self-reporting without adequate verification. Evidence-based forward planning is rare. Sector planning needs to be strengthened with projection of future needs and demand. There is a need of improvement of current education management and information system and planning practices.

27. An issue of particular relevance for the present appraisal is how the National Education Policy recommendation of extending free and compulsory education up to grade 8 (by 2018, as mentioned in the policy) will be approached and implemented. It is not just a matter of shifting grades 6 to 8 to the administrative jurisdiction of Primary Education authorities. More complex issues concern provisions for teaching personnel, physical facilities, curricular continuity, and ensuring quality taking into account existing provisions and recognising that teaching learning at this level is qualitatively different from lower grades of primary education. Working out a transitional process and strategy with the two concerned Ministries (the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and the Ministry of Education) collaborating closely through a taskforce could be a sensible approach to deal with the challenge.

### **III Preparation of PEDP3 and Its Appraisal**

28. PEDP3 is the third in a series of large investments in primary education over the past two decades, supported by significant contributions from Development Partners. PEDP3's scope is intended to be the entire primary education sector, as reflected in results and financing frameworks, which encompass all interventions and public funding for development and maintenance of the pre-primary and primary education system. In practice, the focus has been on the government and newly nationalised non-government schools, which serve over 85 percent of the children in primary education.

29. PEDP3 has six results areas: learning outcomes, participation, reducing disparities, decentralization, effective use of budget allocations, and program planning and management. Results in these areas are achieved through activities in twenty-nine subcomponents. Most activities are intended to impact all primary schools in Bangladesh. Some activities reach out to all primary school age children whether they participate in formal or non-formal education.

30. Nearly all external financing flows through the Government's financial management system and the program is led and administered by Government line agencies. The Government and Development Partners have entered into a Joint Financing Arrangement covering the obligations of all parties, including Government's reporting requirements and Development Partners' disbursement arrangements. (MoPME, The Third primary Education Development Programme (PEDP3) main Document, 2011, p. v)
31. The technical appraisal of PEDP3 was carried out in different steps in 2010 and 2011 by a core group of Development Partners (DPs) during a series of working sessions with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) and its specialized institutions, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Planning (MoP) and civil society. The participating Development Partners were the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Canada, DFID, the European Union, JICA, the Netherlands<sup>1</sup>, SIDA, UNICEF and the World Bank. The results of the various steps were shared with the Education Working Group (EWG) of the Local Consultative Group (LCG) composed of the afore-mentioned DPs plus SDC, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, USAID, Save the Children on behalf of international NGOs and CAMPE as the umbrella organization of the education CSOs.
32. The first step was a pre-appraisal, conducted in May 2010, to (i) reach agreements on program objectives, scope and design; (ii) define key intermediate and final program outcomes and results, including key policy actions; (iii) define monitoring and evaluation arrangements; (iv) review options and reach initial agreement for the best aid and funding modality; (v) establish a roadmap towards developing and finalizing financial management, procurement arrangements, as well as environmental and social safeguard compliance; and (vi) reach initial agreements on the implementation, and institutional and partnership arrangements.
33. The second step was the appraisal conducted between November 2010 and February 2011, which confirmed key agreements reached between DP's and GoB as summarised below:
- i. The Program incorporates a sub Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) encompassing all interventions and funding that support pre-primary and primary education in Bangladesh;
  - ii. Development objectives: Recognizing the strategic objectives laid out in the National Education Policy, approved in 2010, and with the overall goals of providing quality education for all children, the Program aims to establish an efficient, inclusive and equitable primary education system delivering effective and relevant child friendly learning.

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<sup>1</sup> While the Netherlands participated in the preparation of PEDP3, it did not become one of the partners.

- iii. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) were selected to measure success in achieving the development objectives; targets were set and baselines were agreed upon; for those KPI's without baselines it was agreed when the baselines would be available.
  - iv. A Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLI's) matrix was agreed upon, consisting of targets for key performance indicators, including policy, institutional development and output indicators in the four components (learning and teaching, participation and disparities, decentralization and effectiveness, and planning and management). For each DLI a protocol was elaborated.
  - v. Implementation arrangements as well as fiduciary and safeguard arrangements were reviewed and agreed upon. The draft Environment Management Framework and the Social Management Framework were revised and published in February 2011
34. Upon completion of the appraisal, GoB presented a new draft of the Program Document. The final draft of the Program Document (June 2011) reflected agreements between Government and DPs on various issues including the budgeting details, the procurement arrangements, details of fund flow mechanisms, the DLI matrix and the KPIs.
35. The National Education Policy, the Sixth Five-Year Plan (SFYP) and the MTBF 2011-2016 were used as GoB's policy and planning framework for the design of the Program. The Program also reflected the overall vision as defined in the EFA National Plan of Action II (NPAII), 2003-2015 (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, NPAII, 2003).
36. MoPME, DPE, BNFE and other stakeholders emphasized the need to take a comprehensive approach to address the challenges to achieve EFA goals within a long-term and sustainable vision for equitable access to quality education. Contrary to previous programs, PEDP3 emphasized a comprehensive and holistic approach for primary education.
37. As stated in the Sixth Five Year Plan document, the political pledge of the Government reflected in Vision 2021 and Education Policy 2010 provided the framework for determining objectives, priorities and strategies for the education sector in the sixth plan. "Achievement of universal primary education, extending this stage to grade 8; elimination of illiteracy; removing the education gap between the poor and rich, creating a new generation equipped with technical skills and scientific knowledge; better remunerations for teachers; and overall improvement of quality and equity in education are key education goals of Vision 2021. Other related targets pertinent to education are building Digital Bangladesh, empowering local government as the engine for delivering services and carrying out development activities, ensuring equal status for women in all spheres of

society and state, and creating gainful employment for the labour force.” (Government of Bangladesh. n.d. Sixth Five Year Plan FY 2011-FY2015: Part 1, p.117).

## **IV An Overview of the Primary Education Sector Plan (PEDP3)**

38. The PEDP3 program development focused on determining what could be achieved in terms of concrete results (DLIs and KPIs) and on how these results would be monitored. The final Program Document (June 2011) reflected a common understanding between government, development partners and other stakeholders of the expected outcomes in terms of quality improvement in the system and the mutual commitments to achieve them. The Program Document was updated in October 2014, which incorporated conclusions from the mid-term review of PEDP3 in 2014.

### **Key Features**

39. The following summarizes the key features of PEDP3 Plan (PEDP3 Main Document, June 2011 and update, October, 2014):
- a. **Scope, goals and objectives:** The scope of PEDP3 is the whole primary education sector plus gradual inclusion of one pre-primary year. PEDP3’s goal is to provide: *“quality education for all our children.”* The overall objective will be approached through this specific objective: to establish *“an efficient, inclusive and equitable primary education system delivering effective and relevant child-friendly learning to all Bangladesh’s children from pre-primary through Grade V primary.”*
  - b. **Results based management:** Programme implementation would be carried out through a results-based-management (RBM) model. There are six results areas where outcomes will be monitored through fifteen Key Performance Indicators. These areas are (i) Improved Learning Outcomes (ii) Universal Participation and Completion, (iii) Reducing Disparities, (iv) Decentralization, (v) Increased Effectiveness of Budget Allocation, and (vi) Programme Planning and Management. Results in these areas will be achieved through activities and outputs in twenty-nine sub-components. RBM is a flexible model; plans can be adjusted to improve performance.
  - c. **Performance-based financing:** In PEDP3, performance is directly linked to external financing. More than 70 percent of Development Partner finance is triggered by achieving outputs in nine sub-components. These sub-components are monitored through Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs). Progress is assessed annually, and the majority of Development Partner funds are disbursed based on the number of DLIs fully achieved that year.
  - d. **Use of Government’s financial management and monitoring systems:** PEDP3 uses the Bangladesh Government’s systems for financial management and monitoring. The programme follows an agreed

combination of Government and Development Partner systems for procurement and reporting. Under this financing model, Development Partners will place their contributions into a Consolidated Fund under the Ministry of Finance where it will mingle with funds from many sources. Nearly all financial procedures will follow the Government's regular procedures, and PEDP3 will be managed as any other Government funded program. Some Development Partners will provide parallel funding amounting to about three percent of the external funds.

- e. **Joint Financing Arrangement:** The Government and Development Partners will enter into a financing arrangement. The arrangement will indicate Development Partner contributions and disbursement schedules, joint consultation and decision making processes, government reporting requirements, joint review and evaluation procedures as well as specifics regarding procurement, audits, financial reports and other matters.

#### **A knowledge and evidence based program approach**

- 40. Overall performance of the primary education sub-system over the past years has been systematically monitored and is well documented (See DPE, Annual Sector Performance Reports 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014). In addition to the regular data collection, surveys have been done which have provided valuable complementary data that show that some critical issues need to be addressed in terms of reducing access and quality disparities within the primary education system. These critical areas are at the core of the National Educational Policy with its emphasis on minimum quality standards and a common core curriculum for all primary schools. It is also emphasized in the SFYP, pointing out that the present inefficiency of the system leads to an unacceptable wastage of human capital.
- 41. The National Education Policy asserts that "Steps will be taken to remove the difference in facilities amongst the different primary education institutions (community schools, unregistered educational institutions, registered educational institutions, government educational institutions, kindergartens, educational institutions in the village and the city." The policy further emphasizes that "All primary schools including general, kindergarten, English medium and all kinds of madrasahs will have to follow rules and register with the proper authorities." (GOB. National Education Policy 2010, Chapter 2, paragraph 4).
- 42. The monitoring and evaluation arrangement for PEDP3 emphasized the reduction of these disparities by focussing on learning outcomes, building upon the improvements achieved during the previous PEDP2. The focus on learning outcomes is also reflected in the DLIs and KPIs. The DLI on the annual school census (ASC) aims at enhancing the quality and reliability of the data generated by the ASC and on improving the data

collection and validation mechanisms. The agreed KPI and PSQLs were expected to further strengthen the quality and reliability of the data. Based on these agreements a set of steps was taken.

- i. **Annual School Census:** The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Division prepared reports on the Annual School Census (ASC) in terms of standard education sector variables and indicators.
- ii. **Annual Sector Performance Report:** The M&E Division also prepared the Annual Sector Performance Report (ASPR). The ASPR attempted to track performance at the outcome level in terms of fifteen Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Focusing on strategic issues, the ASPR analyzed trends and interpret findings in terms of policy and strategy implications. ASPR data sources include the ASC, National Student Assessment (NSA), and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES). NSA, a key instrument of quality monitoring, is described further in the next section.
- iii. **Primary School Quality Level indicators:** Data on the PSQL indicators were collected through the ASC and the school inspection reports to track minimum service standards in primary school.
- iv. **DLI Progress Reports:** Activities in nine of the twenty-nine sub-components were linked to disbursements. DLI progress reports were compiled twice a year by the Programme Division from the reports prepared by the line divisions and other units accountable for the DLI sub-components.
- v. **Sub-Component Progress Reports:** Each unit accountable for the twenty sub-components not linked to disbursement were required to prepare a progress reports based on annual milestones included in the Results and Programme Matrix.
- vi. **Safeguard Assurances:** Monitoring and reporting on environmental and social safeguards were to be undertaken by the line divisions of DPE.
- vii. **Inclusive Education and Gender Action Plans:** Progress in inclusive education and gender equality were monitored and reported by the Policy and Operations Division, DPE, for which specific frameworks were designed.

#### **School and classroom-based assessment**

43. The improvement of tools and methods for school and classroom based assessment of learning outcomes is at the core of the Program which underscores its focus on the quality of learning and teaching. Using learning outcomes and terminal competencies defined in the new curriculum, teachers or teacher networks would prepare simple assessment and examination tools to record pupil progress at the school level. Continuous assessment for Grades 1 and 2 was envisaged. For Grade 3 and above first and second terminal and annual exams would provide school-based assessment of student learning.

44. A completion test after Grade 5 introduced in 2010 is held on common question papers with proper invigilation and monitoring. In addition, every two years national assessment surveys have been conducted to assess achievement of competencies in Bangla and mathematics in Grade 3 and Grade 5.
45. School based assessment tools and methods have been piloted. These are expected to be mainstreamed by inclusion in the new Dip-in-Ed course, Continuous Professional Development activities, Teachers' Guides, and local training through teacher professional networks. This would enable all schools to conduct their own assessments and each teacher to base her teaching on what each child has learned and where there are gaps that must be filled.

#### **Integrated database for all primary schools**

46. One of the weaknesses in monitoring and management is the absence of an integrated database that comprises all primary schools and learning centres. DPE has been gradually expanding the scope of data collection, given that the Program intends to cover all types of schools. This data integration is to be initiated at the upazilla level and the process might be coordinated with Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) through partnership arrangements. The integrated database would lead to coordinated annual reporting on all schools and improved comparability of the data. During the life of the Program this would lead to integrated data collection, storage, access, analysis and reporting to gradually support all children enrolled in pre-primary and primary education, as envisaged in the program document.
47. The baseline data of the indicators to assess primary school quality level standards (PSQL) and to monitor the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and their outcomes have been subject to serious discussions and reviews so as to ensure that reliable and valid benchmarks were agreed upon. For example, one of the expected outcomes is "regional and other disparities in participation, completion and learning outcomes". Some of the indicators, baselines and targets are expected to be available with Upazila specific data collected and validated. (See also paragraph 46.)
48. The measures noted above reflect ambitious and complex objectives, demanding strong commitment, effective leadership, and enhanced professional capacity. It may be argued that a systematic and rigorous assessment was not made of the feasibility of the scope and reach of the proposed activities of the Program. It was more of a general consensus that the activities were essential to produce the expected outcomes. Technical expertise and staffing of key positions were identified as a constraint that could hamper program implementation. Therefore, a flexible arrangement was agreed upon for the delivery of technical assistance in critical areas. (ELCG, EFA/FTI, Draft Appraisal Document, July 2011, p.4\)

## **V. Quality with Equity – System Capacity and Response**

### **Setting Quality Standards**

49. Primary School Quality Level (PSQL) indicators, formulated under PEDP II and adapted for use under PEDP III, are intended to guide and monitor improvement of school performance. PSQL set minimum standard/target which are related to student enrolment, teacher-students ratio in the class, availability of textbook and teacher resources, physical environment in the school (classroom, health and hygiene, water and sanitation facilities), contact hour, SMC performance, and teachers and head teachers training (DPE, 2012). Similarly, 15 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), introduced under PEDP2, have been updated and are applied to PEDP3, which are used to assess progress in program implementation and to apply disbursement-linked indicators (DLI) for fund disbursement.
50. For improving the quality of classroom teaching, Directorate of Primary Education, the implementing agency for PEDP II and III, started a pilot project “Shikhbe Protiti Shishu – Each Child Learns” - which is being implemented in selected schools in parts of the country. Through this project activity based learning and continuous assessment is being implemented in the classroom. A total of some 700 schools in two districts participated in the project so far by 2013. Taking into account the lessons of the pilot, the quality initiative is planned to be replicated widely (DPE, 2012, 2013).
51. Efforts in quality improvement have been carried out over the last two decades in articulation of policy, development of quality standard, training and professional development of teachers, improvement in classroom practices and development and strengthening of learning and physical environment in the schools.

### **Assessment of student learning achievement**

52. In primary education, the quality is adjudged as mastery of the 29 terminal competencies of the new curriculum, termed as Essential Learning Continua (ELC). Competencies are also set according to subject and grade. At the end of each grade students are expected to achieve class and subject wise attainable competencies. At the end of grade five (last year of primary school) children are expected to achieve terminal competencies.
53. The National Student Assessment (NSA) carried out under the auspices of DPE is intended to be a monitoring tool of learning achievement. A sampling of primary school students at the end of grade three and grade five are tested in every alternate year on their capability in Bangla and mathematics. The 2013 NSA results showed that at the end of Class 5, only one-quarter (25%) of students mastered Class 5 Bangla competencies. It was the same proportion in mathematics in 2013. Assessment in 2011 had shown the same level of performance in Bangla, but

better performance in Mathematics with one-third (33%) of students acquiring Class 5 Mathematics competencies. At grade 3 level, it was reported that 75% of the students acquired specified competency in Bangla and 57% did so in mathematics in 2013. The results of 2011 and 2013 NSA raise several concerns: i) The majority of the students are falling short of achieving relevant competencies in primary education. ii) There is a significant loss in achievement level from grade 3 to grade 5, which needs to be better understood, explained and necessary remedial measures should be taken. iii) The explanation for deterioration in Math competency between 2011 and 2013 was not readily available and should be probed. The targets for competency level in Bangla and Math for 2016 have been set at mastery by 50% of the students in Bangla and 60% students in Math. (DPE/ASPR 2013, 2014). This is a modest goal, but perhaps realistic.

54. A major concern regarding learning achievement and its assessment is the inconsistency between NSA results and the high pass rates in primary school completion examination at the end of grade 5. In 2013 PECE, for example, 98.3% of those who sat for the examination including students in madrasas and non-formal centres passed the examination. Clearly, the nationwide public completion examination was not measuring the same knowledge and skills as NSA. The question then is what exactly the completion examination results mean and what NSA and PECE results tell about the quality of education and learner achievement in primary education.

#### **Professional development of teachers and SMC Members**

55. According to the Annual Sector Performance Reports, three types of short in-service training (subject-based training, training for a sub-cluster of neighbouring schools on various topics, and within school mentoring) are being offered for continuing professional development of teachers. In 2013, almost two-thirds (62.4%) of the teachers in GPS and newly nationalized former non-government schools (NNPS) benefited from subject-based training and 89.4% received sub-cluster training. (DPE/ASPR 2014)
56. Besides subject based and classroom teaching training, head teachers also received training on school management, teacher support and community mobilization (DPE ASPR 2014);
57. How the training is reflected in classroom teaching and better student learning outcome, however, is often a question in training programs. Trainers are sometimes not sufficiently qualified and experienced and there is a dearth of necessary training materials. The relatively small number of trainers is also overburdened with heavy workload. Teaching methods as well the assessment approach encourage students to memorize textbook contents rather than develop their skills and competencies (DPE, 2012).
58. In 2012, two thirds of schools (both GPS and RNGPS) had at least one SMC member who received training and under one third had at least three members trained (DPE, 2013). Despite the training, participation of SMC

members and engagement of community in school management is not considered to be of kind and at the level that made a significant difference in majority of schools. Reasons behind this situation appear to be limited scope of decision-making and authority of the managing committee and also a lack of clear delineation of responsibility and accountability of SMC members and understanding about this among the members.

59. Along with the provision for teaching aids such as teachers' guide, effort has to continue to ensure that the contents are relevant and can contribute to better teaching-learning. This can happen with trial, assessment, feedback from teachers and students and continuous development of these materials with the involvement of subject and pedagogy experts. A review of curricula has been initiated in 2013 by NCTB for primary and pre-primary levels.

### **Classroom provisions and practices**

60. **Student-teacher ratio.** Although PSQL standard is that there should be no more than 40 students per classroom, by 2012, 20% GPS and 21.7% RNGPS met the standard. Average annual classroom contact time in Bangladesh is one of the lowest in the world, set officially at 578 hours per year in two shift schools, but actual hours are often less. In almost 80% of the schools run on two shifts, students in grades 1-3 attend in the morning and students from grades 4 & 5 in the afternoon (DPE data).
61. The primary completion examination based on textbook contents and set questions at the end of lessons, are being redesigned to encourage students to move away from memorization and to demonstrate ability to reason and apply skills and knowledge to solve problems. Active teaching learning methods are emphasized in teacher training, though many teachers find it convenient to stick to traditional ways of teaching. (Sommers 2013). Total learning time and ineffective classroom teaching activities affect student learning adversely which leads to virtual/silent exclusion of learners.
62. Effective physical environment of schools influence the quality of teaching-learning process. For improving the infrastructure of the schools, new classrooms were constructed under PEDP2. In 2012, 98% and 95% classrooms of GPS and RNGPS were brick made (pacca) respectively and 89% GPS and 79% RNGPS classrooms were rated as 'good' or of 'moderate' quality (DPE, 2013).
63. In 2012, most of the GPS (88%) and RNGPS (81%) had at least one functioning toilet for the students. PEDP-II had a target for separate toilet facilities for boys and girls in each primary school by 2011, but these existed in 65% of GPS and 60% of RNGPS respectively. (DPE, 2013). The ASPR 2013 indicated that 79% of schools had safe water supply.

### **Overcoming gender and other inequalities**

64. A pronounced difference among socio-economic categories in enrolment, repetition, dropout, and participation at the primary level is found in different studies (Ahmed, et al., 2005). Longitudinal data reveal a progressive improvement in net enrolment rate of “very poor” children compared to children from “surplus wealth” category. However, a 13-percentage point gap was still there in 2008, though this came down by half since 1998 (Education Watch Household Surveys 1998, 2005 and 2008).
65. It was found that in spite of overall gender balance in primary education fewer girls in indigenous communities are enrolled. (UNICEF, 2013, ASPR 2012). Pockets of inequality have affected both children and women. About a quarter of the primary school age children (6-10 years) are still out of school. Although there is little difference between boys and girls, out-of-school children are proportionately much higher in remote and ecologically disadvantaged districts and sub districts (UNICEF 2013). There is need for a systematic inclusive education approach in addressing inequity arising from ethnicity as well as special needs and disability, as discussed below.
66. To achieve all children’s access to and completion of primary education without discrimination, an Inclusive Education (IE) and Gender Action Plan was developed under PEDP2 and included in PEDP3. The goal of IE and Gender Action Plan was to improve learning outcomes and completion rates for all boys and girls creating a gender-friendly and inclusive learning environment. (PEDP3 Plan 2011)
67. The gender and inclusion framework has indicated actions, recommendations, and guidelines for addressing inclusive education and gender issues and has worked out a strategy expressing it in operational terms. Its four major components are a) learning outcomes, b) participation and disparities, c) decentralization, and d) planning and management have been looked at with a gender and inclusive education lens.

### **Non-formal and second chance primary education**

68. Recognizing persistent inequities arising from economic, ecological and other socio-cultural differences, flexible, non-formal and “second chance” approaches have been promoted as initiatives complementary to formal primary education, the main focus of PEDP 2 and 3 (Bureau of Non-formal Education, 2006). Well-established non-formal primary education programme of BRAC has served on average a million children per year through its NFPE centres for over two decades. This approach has now come to be recognized as an essential strategic approach to reach and serve disadvantaged children, not served effectively by the formal school. Other than BRAC, two other sizeable projects have been initiated with support of donors who are also contributors to PEDP3.

69. The Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC) project also known as Ananda (joyful) school, funded mostly by World Bank, run along the line of the BRAC model of one-teacher, one cohort of around 30 children, had an enrolment of 549,000 children in over 15,000 centres in 2012. The main difference is that the DPE field structure including the Upazila Primary Education Office, rather than a major national NGO, is directly involved in planning and managing the activities including the selection of local community organisation and formation of the centre managing committee (ASPR 2013, p. 21).

70. Another second chance initiative known as SHARE (Supporting the Hardest to Reach through Basic Education) is funded by European Union. Started in 2011, with funding pledged for six years, it is carried out through partnership with four clusters of NGOs. In 2012, the four sub-projects served 655,000 children in 219 sub-districts both in rural and urban locations. SHARE includes a specific innovative component designed “to learn and disseminate lessons about what works best and why and to help build result-based management capacity and culture. (ASPR 2013, p. 107).

### **Addressing Special Needs**

71. Data show that enrolment in primary school of children with special education needs has doubled within half a decade from 45,680 in 2005 to 89,994 in 2012 (MoPME EFA 2015 Review, 2014). This is impressive, but not sufficient to meet the needs. Enrolment of girls that lagged in the beginning is gaining ground.

### **Imperative of Quality with Equity**

72. Bangladesh has demonstrated a commitment to achieve EFA quality with equity goal and progress has been made in this regard. Elimination of the gender gap in primary and secondary education enrolment is a commendable success story in Bangladesh. Inequity and disparity in other ways, mirroring traditional, historical and structural inequality and disparity in society, persist in the education system. Even in respect of gender, traditional gender disadvantages are reflected in vocational and technical education, skills development, tertiary education and professional education.

73. Both PEDP2 and PEDP3 have taken quality with equity as the central thrust of their programmatic strategies. There are, however, persistent issues and challenges regarding quality with equity, which have to be addressed, as explained below. (This section draws on MoPME, Bangladesh EFA 2105 Review, Draft, 2014). Present policies and programs for achieving quality should be critically reviewed and plans and strategies, such as those for PEDP3, should be modified appropriately to ensure better results in equitable and inclusive access to quality learning of disadvantaged groups. PEDP3 mid-term review undertaken in 2013-2014 has attempted to examine the access-equity-quality thrust of the program. The specific concerns that have to be addressed systematically include:

- School and community-based and targeted approaches have to be developed, tried out and encouraged to address specific and diverse disadvantages of groups and individual students.
- Greater and systematic efforts are needed to develop quality curriculum, teaching-learning materials (for students and teachers) and their proper use. Class size and contact hour should be appropriate for quality teaching. Classroom teaching-learning processes must be relevant and related to competencies. Multiple ways of teaching-learning should be practised in the classroom, which will remove silent exclusion, foster creativity and enable students to achieve learning outcomes including cognitive and non-cognitive capabilities.
- Student assessment policy and system should be revisited. Learning assessment activities should be linked with student learning and be an integrated part of the classroom teaching-learning process. Continuous, formative classroom assessment should be emphasized. Further effort is needed to remove the memorization culture, identifying students' learning difficulties and helping them to achieve mastery.
- Opportunities for basic competencies, skills and capabilities for out of school youth and adults for life and work should be expanded in a major way with regular public budget support, not just as externally assisted projects. Facilities and resources should be developed for ensuring wider coverage with a plan to build lifelong learning opportunities through a nationwide network of community learning centers.
- New thinking is needed for mobilizing and using effectively necessary resources to achieve the quality objectives. The number of teaching personnel has to be increased and their quality, competence and performance improved in a major way. Effective implementation of reform in teacher education and introduction of the new diploma-in-education would be important for this purpose. These measures will have a large resource implication in the labour-intensive education sector.
- Second chance and non-formal education programmes have to be recognized and promoted as an essential strategic component of the strategy to serve all children ensuring equity and quality for all. It has to be guaranteed that “second chance” does not turn into “second class” and cheap options for the poor.
- Various equity policies and interventions in the education system have contributed to mitigating the deeper inequalities of society. The challenge is to turn education into a force for building a just and equitable society, breaking the cycle of trans-generational disadvantage. The Inclusive Education and Gender Framework has to be implemented dynamically to end various forms of disparity and inequity in education. A rights perspective, recognizing basic education as a right and the means to realize other economic, political and civil rights, can be used as the framework for policy advocacy, assessment and evaluation of educational progress, and determining society's priority (Nasreen and Tate, 2007).

## **VI. Governance, Management and Accountability Challenges**

### **Need for consensus on governance priorities**

74. The continuing concerns and problem areas in educational development and difficulties of finding effective resolutions point to dilemmas in policy development, policy ownership, building consensus on key objectives and strategies and their effective implementation. The difficulties in consensus building on governance issues are rooted in the socio-economic divisions, power structure and political dynamics, which have resulted in the co-existence of three parallel streams of the vernacular general education, the religion-based madrasas, and the English medium schools.
75. The contribution from external development partners (DPs), roughly one-third of the government's annual development budget in recent years in primary and secondary education has given the DPs influence in the development of policies and strategies throughout the education sector and the opportunity to bring into policy discourse relevant international experience. .
76. 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 clearly articulated strategy on the part of donors that recognizes the potential of non-government entities in professional capacity building, improving services in the national system and strengthening and expanding public-private cooperation in this respect has still to be developed. .
77. The progress and constraints related to the EFA goals indicate accomplishments and challenges as well as unresolved policy and strategy issues point to continuing issues in respect of:
- Ambivalence about the contribution of non-government actors towards fulfilling the right to basic education of citizens;
  - How to move the sub-sectors of primary and secondary education away from a pattern of low investment and low performance;
  - Deficiencies in developing and implementing workable strategies for literacy, lifelong learning and building skills and capabilities; and
  - Improving governance and management in education.
78. Bangladesh EFA 2015 review drew attention to key lessons based on recent relevant studies and research including the Education Watch Surveys and the CREATE studies on basic education access, equity and quality.

(MOPME, 2014; see also CAMPE, Education Watch reports and Ahmed, 2011). These lessons are about coping with economic and poverty effect on school participation, late enrolment of children, area-based planning and management of education access and participation, and disadvantages of children in urban slums.

### **Overcoming adverse economic status effects**

79. Nearly two-thirds of children who never enrolled in primary school came from households “always in deficit” in respect of staple grains (ultra poor) and “sometimes in deficit” during the year (poor). Fifty- five percent of children who dropped out came from “food deficit” households though only 45 percent of the population fell in this category. Lack of food security, a proxy for general poverty, clearly affected enrolment and continuation in school adversely (Hossain and Zeitlyn 2011, ch.2).
80. Education and local government authorities need to find ways of identifying disadvantaged households and children and support them through targeted school-based action. Pre-primary education of satisfactory quality can contribute to overcoming the disadvantage of children in poverty-stricken homes (ICHD, 2013). At the national policy level, planning efforts and resources have to be directed at overcoming disparities and disadvantages based on geography, poverty status, ethnicity, and personal attributes (special needs).

### **Establishing the culture of schooling at right age**

81. The consequences of not being enrolled in primary school at the designated age are manifested in dropout in later years, In the case of males, the opportunity costs for attending school for children from poor households becomes high when they are seen as ready to be engaged in paid or unpaid work. For girls, there is pressure from family and community for marriage soon after the onset of puberty. There is increased concern for safety and security for older unmarried girls (Hossain, 2011. Ch. 4).
82. About 60 percent of the non-enrolled children were reported aged 6-8 years, suggesting that the culture of enrolling at the right age is yet to catch on. A casual approach is still evident among families with low educational and economic status. This can be overcome by rigorous birth registration and its use in school enrolment. (Ahmed et al. 2011, Ch. 12). School Level Improvement Planning (SLIP) introduced in PEDP2 and continued in PEDP3 has created an opportunity for school-level action to promote children’s entry to primary school at the appropriate age. Effective pre-primary education also can contribute to this end.

### **Area-based planning of compulsory education**

83. There is a notional catchment area for GPS and former RNGPS, however children are not required to be enrolled in the neighbourhood school. Nor are schools, it appears, required to enrol all children from the neighbourhood seeking admission. There is a need for rigorous and systematic planning for geographical distribution of schools and making provisions and plans for schooling of all children for a geographical unit. UPEP could be considered

a step in that direction, but has not been pursued systematically with appropriate planning. (Sabur and Ahmed 2011)

### **Children in urban slums**

84. Children of the growing urban slum population appear to be at a greater disadvantage than rural children. An investigation in Dhaka slums found that three quarters of the primary age children were enrolled there against a national average of over 90 percent. About 42 percent of the enrolled children were in government schools compared to double that proportion in public institutions nationally. Clearly, the educational participation of children in urban slums deserves priority attention (Cameron, 2011; UNICEF, 2010)

## **VII. Resource Planning for Basic Education**

85. Absolute amounts of allocation for education in the national budget have increased five-fold in seven years in nominal terms – from Taka 51.4 billion in FY 2007 to Taka 250.9 billion in FY2014. (Khaled 2013 citing Ministry of Finance data.). However, the trend shows that share of the education sector budget both as percentage of the GDP and of the total budget has decreased during FY2010-2014 with an average around 2% and 11% respectively (MOF Website) It remains low as a proportion of GNP and in per capita terms, especially if inflation is taken into account. In 2011, per student government expenditure (recurrent and capital) was Taka 4,676 (approximately USD58) at primary level and Taka 5,358 (approximately USD 68) at the junior secondary level.

86. It is worth-noting that for adult and non-formal education, budgets remained dependent almost entirely on external assistance for specific projects. The project approach and absence of regular public budget have hindered sustainability of adult and non-formal education activities. This has been one of the reasons for the absence of a major adult literacy initiative in recent years.

87. ***Moving away from a low-cost and low-yield system.*** As noted in the Sixth Five Year Plan document, Bangladesh has a low cost and low-yield education system, even compared to other least developed countries (GOB, Sixth Five Year Plan, p. 121). Household Expenditure Survey and Education Watch data indicate that per capita household expenditures amount to a similar amount as per student government recurring expenditure in primary education. (BBS, 2010; Ahmed et al, 2007; Nath and Chowdhury, 2009)). The amount of household expenditures in different sub-sectors of education has policy implications regarding mobilization and effective use of resources as well as equity. One issue is potential of combining public and other resources to promote equity in education; and implications for public-private partnerships on policy and program priority setting and in improving quality in educational services.
88. Quality improvement, desperately needed at all levels of education, will require additional resources. It is in this context that civil society bodies and professional circles raised the demand to increase the share of GDP for education allocated in the government budget to 6 per cent in the medium term, with commensurate increase in the education share of the government budget, looking at a target of 20% for education.
89. The stagnation in public education resources in real terms has to be ended and education allocations brought at least to comparable international level. Government and development partners concerned about education need to engage in discussion about resource gaps and develop a viable plan with a timeframe to increase education resources very substantially. This discussion should include questions of governance and management to ensure effective use of resources.
90. The discussion of resources, as reflected in revised PEDP3 Program document and the “Record of Discussion,” dealt with execution and operational aspects of budgets and availability of resources within the current programme and cost structure. The JARM/MTR conclusion was that the program development objective, description, sub components and activities would remain unaltered. The subcomponents and program matrix descriptions have been updated in some instances, but “These do not change the objective of the sub components or their expected impact on the result areas of the program.” (PEDP3 Consortium, Record of Discussion, 2014, para. 5). It was agreed, “the program continues to perform in a satisfactory manner.” However, specific mention was made of the need to report on KPI 4 about the size and attributes of out-of-school children and KPI 8 about participation of children in education by income quintile. It was mentioned that the information would be available from then on-going Education Household Survey being undertaken by DPE and BBS. (Ibid. para 8).

91. Agreement was reached in the course of MTR that the total budget estimate, accommodating the extension of time period to end of 2017 and some enhanced activities, would be raised to BDT 76,500 Crore or USD 9.8 billion at current exchange rate including DP contribution of USD 1.5 billion as shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 1: Revised Program Costing of PEDP3 (billion) Taking Account of Currency Value Change**

	Revised Program Costing 2011-2017			
	BDT	% Of total	USD (USD1=BDT70)	USD (USD=BDT78)
<b>Total Revenue Budget</b>	432.80	57	6.18	5.55
<b>Total Development Budget</b> <i>(Including Discrete Projects linked to PEDP3)</i>	332.20 <i>(150.66)</i>	43 <i>(20)</i>	4.75 <i>(2.15)</i>	4.26 <i>(1.93)</i>
<b>Total Program Cost</b>	<b>765.00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10.93</b>	<b>9.81</b>

Source: As indicated at MTR.

92. The revised budget estimate includes additional external contribution of USD 0.667 billion from DPs on top of original commitment of USD 1.075 billion. The current proposal for mobilising external assistance over the coming years is:

- (i) ADB: USD 120 MN (year 4, 5, 6 50% DLI/50% FX)
- (ii) WB/IDA: USD 400 MN (year 4, 5, 6 100% DLI)
- (iii) EU: Euro 34.5 MN (currently equivalent to USD 46.66 MN) (FX and Variable Tranche)
- (iv) GPE: USD 100 MN (tentatively Year 5/6).

The estimated total DP contribution is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Indicative summary of DPs Contribution (millions)**

Development Partners	Currency	Total Estimated Disbursement in commitment/disbursement Currency		
		Total DLI	Total FX*	Total
ADB	USD	235.56	204.44	440.0
DFAT	AUD	27.19	21.81	49.0
DFATD	CAD	32.0	32.0	64.0
DFID	GBP	66.5	33.0	99.5
EU	Euro	49.5	36.0	85.5
IDA (World Bank)	USD	700.0	0	700.0

JICA	USD	12	18.0	30.0
SIDA	USD	18.94	22.18	41.22
UNICEF	USD	0	0.60	0.60
GPE	USD	100.0	0	100.0
TOTAL	USD	--	--	1,509.82

\* FX stands for Fixed Tranche funding. This funding is distributed after demonstrating satisfactory overall progress in the education sector. (Amounts as indicated at MTR.)

The proposal and indicated amounts are subject to further negotiation with and approval of the respective agencies.

93. **Resource Gap and cost pattern.** The discussion in MTR about budget and resources have been within the present structure of costs and resources without challenging the basic inadequacy of resources in terms of per student expenditure necessary to assure quality and the capacity of the system to provide enough teachers, classrooms, learning materials and facilities, and an adequate physical environment for learning.
94. Government funding for education remained around 2% of GDP in recent years (2.2% for FY 2014). As proportion of government budget, education share for FY2014 was 11.7%, lower than the average of 14% in recent years. A DLI on education sector financing is to align budget allocations with the Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) in order to enhance predictability and better planning. Recent annual education budgets since FY2010 has been in line with MTBF, but there has been volatility in development and non-development allocations – deviating from projection by up to 27%. In FY2012, for example, non-development budget was 20.7% less than MTBF estimate and development allocation was 24.4% higher in the same year. (DPE/ ASPR 2014, p.100). The major issue of course is the overall stagnation of public expenditure for education at a low level leading to inadequacy of resources to achieve the goals of quality-with-equity in the educational system.
95. A major issue is the cost pattern of the primary education program – per student annual cost, number of teachers to ensure acceptable student-teacher ratio, financing adequate supervision of teachers and teacher development, remuneration and incentives to attract capable people to the teaching profession, funds for acceptable provisions for classrooms and other facilities, adequacy of learning materials, etc. which are essential to achieve acceptable quality standards, as indicated by PSQL. The budgetary limitations have to be recognized. At the same time, there has to be a time-bound plan and commitment to increase public resources for education. A financial gap indicated in the concept note, though definitive numbers still have to be calculated, poses obstacles to a rational

planning and resource and program management process, even within the present inadequate cost and resource structure. The gap would be larger if resources are expected to match the objectives of quality-with-equity.

There has to be a better explanation and indication of what resources are likely to be available for the remaining three years of PEDP3 and the resource prospects beyond this period. The recently adopted budgetary allocation for FY2014 does not reverse the recent relative slide in public allocations for education in proportional terms.

There has to be a commitment by GOB to initiate and accelerate the reversal of the trend.

96. It has to be kept in view that there is a threshold of resources that must be available for ensuring acceptable quality; not recognizing the threshold is false economy, leading to poor outcome and waste of resources. Much of the cost and budget pattern in Bangladesh primary education may be under the quality threshold.

## **VIII, Observations on the GPE Concept Note**

### **GPE and PEDP3**

97. The Concept Note was prepared as a first step to initiate Bangladesh's participation in the Global Partnership for Education funding facility. It is a succinct, well-written paper, which presents the context of primary education development in Bangladesh, the objectives and strategies for PEDP3 and its antecedents, and the sector-wide approach applied in PEDP2. It notes some of the challenges in PEDP3 implementation indicated by its mid-term review as well as resource and capacity shortages in primary education, and suggests objectives and activities, which may be supported by the infusion of funds from GPE.

98. The concept note asserts that –

Funding from the GPE will be utilized to increase the capacity of GoB at national and decentralized levels to strengthen specific critical areas that have been identified by Government and stakeholders as crucial to the further strengthening of equity, education quality and learning outcomes. These are also areas, which have been noted through JARM/MTR as those requiring attention in the remaining period of the program. As noted above, GPE funds will be added to the Consolidated Fund under PEDP3 Implementing Arrangements, which do not allow any earmarking of the funds.

99. Under GPE procedure, there will be a Supervising Entity (SE). The SE is usually one of the participating DPs. SE is expected to participate in PEDP3 Planning and Financial Working Group. It will be the channel for transmitting GPE funds to the Government's Consolidated Fund (in the Bangladesh Bank) managed by the Ministry of Finance.

100. Funds are to be transferred on a reimbursable basis in line with PEDP3 practice, rather than as advances to Government. Disbursements follow 2 modalities: 1) variable, performance based, tranche releases triggered by evidence showing fulfilment of DLIs (“disbursement linked indicators”) agreed to be met for a fiscal year and submission of a satisfactory expenditure report and 2) fixed disbursements of funds upon receiving information on overall program progress and withdrawal request for reimbursements submitted to each DP by MOPME. GPE’s own objectives and operating principles suggest the second modality as more appropriate for GPE partnership in PEDP3.

101. The Concept Note prepared for ELCG on GPE membership application of Bangladesh noted that the process of the mid-term review of the PEDP3 commenced in the last quarter of 2013. In March 2014 GoB, jointly with DPs and civil society groups, met to assess the progress of the program and review the performance reports and recommendations of the various technical Working Groups following an intensive process of review of the DLIs, KPIs and the PSQLs. The assessment of the program resulted in the following decisions:

- An extension of the PEDP3 to June 2017
- Reaffirmation of the focus on interventions to increase education quality
- A commitment to address the issue of low teacher-student contact hours
- Focus on the issue of out-of-school-children.

These decisions along with other operational and financial conclusions were confirmed by government and development partners as indicated in MTR record for discussion finalised in October, 2014.

## **IX. Priorities Deserving Additional Support and Attention**

### **Indicated areas of emphasis with GPE partnership**

102. The concept note, which was based on fairly extensive discussion among stakeholders including MoPME and DPE officials, concerned people from CAMPE and INGOs, and DPs, put forward the following ideas regarding GPE support. Recognizing that there is no earmarking of funds and, therefore, no separate portfolio of activities to be specifically funded by GPE, it is understood that GPE funding support would mean that as a PEDP3 partner, within the program framework and plan of PEDP3, GPE would participate in decision-making, planning, review and assessment of the program and would have the opportunity to influence and support strategies and activities, which are in accord with GPE principles and priorities and are also in line with identified objectives, results and indicators of progress in PEDP3.

**Overall Objective of GPE Support: To strengthen equity in education, learning outcomes and decentralized accountability as per established results under components 1, 2 and 3 of PEDP3.**

103. Expected key programme activities and results which would be promoted with GPE partnership are:
- Children in grades 1-3 acquire grade-wise and subject-wise expected learning outcomes and competencies (Result areas 1.1 – Each Child Learns and 1.4 – Production and Distribution of Textbooks of PEDP3)
  - Coverage of Second Chance Education is expanded and aligned with formal schools in partnership with NGOs (Result area 2.1.1 - Second Chance and Alternative Education of PEDP3)
  - All 5 year old children are enrolled in PPE and have trained teacher in new PPE curriculum with focus on disadvantaged children (Result areas 2.1.2 – Pre-primary Education and 2.1.3 – Mainstreaming Gender and Inclusive Education of PEDP3)
  - Schools, upazilas and districts are effectively planning and managing with accountability on expected results as per the DLI and PSQLs (Results area 3.1.2 – Decentralised School Management and Governance of PEDP3)
104. GPE partnership and funding support for PEDP3 would be utilized to influence decisions and support specific and critical areas that have been identified by Government and stakeholders as crucial to further strengthening of equity, education quality and learning outcomes in Bangladesh’s primary education system.

**What GPE partnership may promote**

105. Regarding the four components noted above that could be emphasized and given a higher profile within the PEDP3 program framework with GPE participation in PEDP3, the important questions to be considered collaboratively by GPE, the GOB and DPs are - a) Are these the right areas and items that merit an extra thrust with GPE involvement? b) Can the objectives be achieved through the strategies (indicated below only in outline at this stage) within PEDP3 programs and plans?
106. The four areas identified have emerged from formal and informal discussion among stakeholders including the Government, concerned NGO/civil society and DPs. It can be said that PEDP3 MTR discussion and conclusions support and justify the pertinence of the proposed items in furthering the goals of universal primary education with quality and equity – the central aim of PEDP3.
107. Whether the activities and strategies outlined for each of the four areas will produce the intended outcome is the critical question. Are the definition of the problem, the scope and nature of the activities, and the implementation process and mechanism within PEDP3 plan adequate for achieving the objectives? Various

questions need to be answered and clarified in these respects as noted below against each of the areas of activities in order to promote the common priorities of PEDP3 and GPE.

108. **Each Child Learns (ECL)**--a pilot on learner quality has been initiated namely Each Child Learns (ECL) to promote activity- based learning so that all children in grades 1-3 acquire grade-wise and subject-wise (in Bangla and mathematics) expected learning outcomes by the end of each grade. PEDP3 anticipates ECL to be extended from present 700 schools to 10,000 in 3 years.
109. The approach expects to introduce pedagogy applied relatively successfully in NFPE in Bangladesh – such as, learning milestones, supportive teaching-learning materials (TLM), continuous training and support for teachers, frequent refresher, and strong and intensive supervision by dedicated and experienced supervisors. A manageable class-size of around 30 children and teacher-parent rapport are also the features of the NGO-run NFPE.
110. The critical factor for the success of ECL, which is corroborated by experience so far, is the supervisor who is knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated and always ready to support the teacher. Can the upazila and district education officials play this role by their training, temperament and the work-burden they already have? A more promising approach may be to use the URC in each Upazila as the base for creating a resource team who can perform the supervision/support role. The resource team may comprise of interested Upazila education officers, experienced primary and secondary teachers, and NGO trainers and supervisors who would pledge a certain amount of time weekly to support, visit and offer refresher to the classroom teachers. The resource team, headed by a team leader, could make plans and manage the implementation of ECL in the upazila. The planning should include manageable class size and deployment of adequate numbers of teachers in the school with adequate resources made available for this purpose.
111. **Pre-primary Education** – GPE partnership may support expansion of quality PPE to serve 26,000 newly nationalised primary schools (NNPS or former RNGPS) and community-based additional PPE services to bring all 5+ children into the fold of PPE. Collaboration with NGOs will be a key strategy.
112. It appears that planning and resource allocation in PEDP3 fall short of the objective of bringing all 5+ children into PPE of acceptable quality. Adequate provisions have not been made for a dedicated teacher trained for the purpose and dedicated space for PPE in each primary school with a class-size of no more than 30 children – essential conditions for PPE of acceptable quality. This scenario cannot be realized without a collaborative approach with NGOs active in PPE/ECD, which was anticipated in PPE operational framework and GO-NGO

cooperation guideline, but not implemented adequately. An upazila-based assessment of what services exist, what is required, and what different actors including NGOs can offer should be the basis for planning and managing a program in each upazila for extending PPE to all eligible children (Mostafa, 2012). Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN), which has a membership roll of 165 NGOs active in ECD, can be helpful in facilitating GO-NGO collaboration.

113. **Second chance education.** GPE partnership may promote bringing out-of-school children into second chance programs by strengthening capacity of appropriate government entity for decentralised management and coordination of non-formal second chance primary education with effective NGO participation, and develop M&E framework and data base for out of school children.
114. NFPE pioneered by BRAC almost three decades ago came to be recognized internationally as a successful approach to offering second chance to out of school children. It has developed a model of collaboration with small local NGOs to run the NFPE centers cost-effectively. A similar approach has been supported by European Union, implemented by selected NGOs, known as the SHARE project. ROSC is another out-of-school children project, under the auspices of DPE, which is supported by World Bank. A project under BNFE auspices has relatively small Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC), supported by UNICEF and CIDA. All of these activities have been outside the framework of PEDP3. The concept note does not seem to portray fully the situation regarding second chance.
115. The MTR record of discussion noted that due to a number of constraints there were delays in developing plan and implementing second chance education (SCE) in the first half of the program. It was agreed at MTR that DPE would be responsible for implementing SCE for the remaining part of PEDP3. The justification for placing non-formal or second chance primary education under DPE auspices, rather than BNFE, is not entirely clear. The focus would be on: a) developing a baseline to assess the extent of out-of-school children in the country, b) implementing SCE pilot(s) based on current approaches followed by different GOs/NGOs; and c) learning lessons from these and other non-formal education approaches in the country and the region. The aim would be to provide SCE to at least 300,000 out-of-school children by the end of the program using these approaches. By the end of PEDP3, the aim is to develop: a) a comprehensive ten year vision for reaching all out of school children in Bangladesh with quality education that meets their needs, and b) a responsive strategy based upon comparative evidence on models that work best to achieve this.
116. Second chance clearly has to be an essential element of the UPE strategy. It has been offered by NGOs successfully without much public support. Its recognition in the public sector has not come too early. But

shouldn't the public sector support build on the successful model that has been long in existence, rather than run parallel programs, such as ROSC under DPE? A policy recognition of second chance NFPE as a component of UPE requires a public sector home base for second chance (for overall policy direction, coordination, standard setting and monitoring), which very well can be BNFE, though the MTR decision has been in favour of DPE taking this responsibility. Whichever body has this task, defining the policy-making and standard-setting role of this body, clarifying the operational modality and building capacity to this end would be important.

117. Developing a Government-NGO partnership model for second chance (building on successful models run by NGOs), which BNFE or DPE can facilitate; without running parallel programs such as ROSC under DPE, remains a relevant issue. In this respect, there is a case especially for trial and development of models for urban disadvantaged children and other socially and economically deprived groups such as *dalits* and working children, which would be in line with GPE global objectives. Such trials and their replication have to be run by NGOs with track record of commitment and capacity, with a government body providing support in policy, ensuring quality and helping mobilise funding. The MTR conclusion, noted above in paragraph 115, opens the door for steps in this direction.
118. **Decentralised planning and accountability.** To promote decentralised management and increased accountability of primary education, PEDP3 envisages upazila education officers, head teachers and SMC members to be trained to implement SLIP and UPEP and establish local level PSQL monitoring.
119. There is much rhetoric and not enough real action in respect of decentralized planning and management of primary education. It is overstating the case to say, as it is done in PEDP3 plan, that “the SLIP and UPEP planning processes are excellent mechanisms to enhance school governance, community partnership through the school management committees (SMCs), local ownership and accountability on expected results from schools as per the PSQL through the process of school development planning.”
120. SLIP has been conceived very narrowly, confined mostly to physical improvement and supplies in an individual school, with a very small amount given to a school under restrictive conditions. UPEP has been defined mostly as training about planning activities, rather than actual planning and managing resources, but even then there has been little progress so far. It is unrealistic to think that more training of education officers and managing committee members will make much difference until roles and functions of school committees, head teachers and upazila education authorities are re-defined with greater authority and accountability for a range of decisions devolved to these levels including control over resources.

121. However, decentralisation is no panacea and risks and pitfalls cannot be underestimated. This is why experiment and trial of decentralization for school, upazila and district level roles and authority should be undertaken, in the spirit of the Constitutional requirements for decentralized local government and educational decentralization envisaged in the national education policy. Such experimentation in selected districts, upazilas and schools would lay the ground for effective decentralization in the system, serving the goal of education with quality and equity. The trial would provide the lessons regarding obstacles and constraints and how these can be overcome. The acronym CAP-MMM (Coordinated Area-based Planning, Management, Mobilization and Monitoring) represents an approach that could be adopted for trial to devise meaningful and effective educational governance mechanism that is participatory, transparent and accountable.
122. **CSO Role and contribution.** There has been involvement of CSOs in some of the MTR and JARM discussions. Whether this level and nature of CSO participation has influenced the deliberation and decision-making in PEDP should be assessed. Of particular relevance is how CSOs participate continuously and systematically in the decision-making mechanisms and working groups for guiding and monitoring of implementation of PEDP3. What the major outcomes of the mid-term review are and how these may affect the course of PEDP3 in the second half of its life, how these may shape primary and basic education development in general, and how CSOs may contribute need to be better understood. This is particularly relevant at this juncture when post-2015 education and development agenda, preparation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (supporting progress towards Vision 2021) and laying the groundwork for any subsequent education sector program has to be given attention. CSOs, particularly CAMPE as the principal civil society forum in education, the government and development partners need to be alert and pro-active about the possibilities and opportunities for CSO participation and contribution. This is in the interest of achieving PEDP3 objectives and in accord with GPE principles of cooperation.

## **X. Concluding Comments and Recommendations**

### **Concluding Comments**

123. It is eminently appropriate and necessary that Bangladesh becomes formally a GPE partner and benefits fully from the global EFA initiative. The process that has been sputtering for a long time should be intensified and systematically moved forward to result without further delay in Bangladesh membership of GPE and the collaboration that this entails.

124. The opportunity for civil society led by CAMPE to prepare this appraisal of primary education sector plan and contribute to the GPE partnership building process augurs well for constructive government-civil society-NGO collaboration.
125. GPE partnership offers the opportunity to look beyond the immediate future to any subsequent education sector program, start building new modalities of collaboration among key stakeholders in the country and explore how to deal with the challenges not fully addressed in PEDP3. To move forward the process rapidly of GPE membership and funding support, practical issues that may arise need to be addressed by the key concerned parties - especially, GOB, GPE and ELCG. All need to approach the dialogue with flexibility, with a longer term perspective, and keeping foremost in view the interest of the children to be served.
126. Some of the practical issues which need to be considered include:
- a) To what extent the fungible and un-earmarked GPE fund, put into PEDP3 account can serve specific identified areas and concerns within the program framework and implementation structure of PEDP3? The high level policy dialogue and support for a comprehensive sector reform by all stakeholders including the government through SWAp may yield higher results than a stand-alone project which may not result in any institutional change, provided that the partners share the concerns and agree on the appropriate strategies.
  - b) Arguably, GPE partnership is not just filling a financial gap in PEDP3, but to make a contribution to addressing certain concerns not addressed effectively in current PEDP3, such as, dealing with innovative approaches and even doing things differently in later phase of PEDP3 and in any subsequent education sector program succeeding PEDP3 (with possibly a larger GPE involvement). Part of doing things differently may be a greater involvement of non-government actors (NGOs, civil society, academic institutions, and private sector) and new government actors, such as local government, Ministry of Health etc.
  - c) In the areas of activities indicated – ECL, PPE, second chance and decentralization –how can the opportunities for doing things differently, with an effective “partnership” approach with non-government actors, be explored proactively? These issues have been part of MTR discussion and what actually happens will depend on stakeholder engagement with these issues.

The practical and operational issues can be resolved if all concerned are willing to exercise some flexibility and all approach the issues with good faith and a common understanding of the main objectives. It would be helpful to spell out through dialogue where flexibility and consensus are required.

## **Recommendations**

127. Primarily, this appraisal recommends that the ELCG and GOB support Bangladesh’s application for membership of the Global Partnership for Education, undertake necessary steps for GPE membership and engage in discussion with GPE to this end.
128. It is necessary to have clarification and common understanding regarding next steps, various documentation requirements, timetable and assignment of specific responsibilities, and the decision-making process. GPE and ELCG should take the lead in this regard with necessary consultation with GOB and others, as appropriate.
129. It is understood that World Bank will serve as the Supervising Entity (SE) for GPE cooperation. The role and responsibility of SE in the PEDP3 context should be clarified with ELCG taking the lead in this matter for consultation with GOB and GPE. It is essential that all major parties – MOPME/Government, ELCG, Civil Society/CAMPE and GPE – be on the same wavelength in developing and implementing Bangladesh-GPE collaboration. All involved in the preparation and documentation process for Bangladesh participation in GPE facility should give it due priority and make the utmost effort to move expeditiously.

In the light of PEDP3 MTR and JARM conclusions, how the proposed activities with GPE partnership link to the second half of PEDP3 need to be elaborated. It is recommended that the concerned parties endorse the four areas identified in the concept note, as the basis for developing a proposal for GPE partnership. They need to look at the modality of placing GPE collaboration within PEDP3 framework of management, monitoring, financial disbursement and accounting with flexibility and a spirit of accommodation so that the common Bangladesh and GPE objectives are realized.

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