

## Helpdesk Report: Voice and accountability interventions in the education sector

Date: 20 September 2012

**Query:** Produce a report on good practices and evidence of successful/effective voice and accountability interventions in the education sector focusing on:

- **Activities strengthening/empowering School Management Committee (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)**
- **Reducing teacher absenteeism**
- **Increasing awareness of quality of education**
- **Increasing access of marginalised children.**

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### 1. Overview

#### **School Management Committee (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)**

- Parent teacher associations are seen as a key forum for creating an effective school-community partnership in education, which will have a positive impact on teacher motivation and performance. Unfortunately, though, most PTAs are ineffective. The majority of PTAs exist on paper only and have no actual power to run a school or guide teachers.
- However, research shows school functioning has improved significantly in places where communities have been involved actively.
- Reluctance by community members and association leaders to get involved in matters that are perceived to be the responsibility of teachers leads to a gap developing between schools and communities.
- While traditional associations provide material contributions and support to schools, their participation in the internal decision making process as well as educational matters may still be limited.
- Effective local governance considerably impacts on access to education as well as the enrolment, retention and learning experiences of children in school.
- School based management can result in the following benefits:

- More input and resources from parents (whether in cash or in-kind)
- More effective use of resources because those making the decisions for each school are intimately acquainted with its needs
- A higher quality of education as a result of more efficient and transparent use of resources
- A more open and welcoming school environment because the community is involved in its management
- Increased participation of all local stakeholders in the decision-making processes, leading to more collegial relationships and increased satisfaction
- Improved student performance as a result of reduced repetition rates, reduced dropout rates, and (eventually) better learning outcomes.
- The key argument in favour of decentralisation is that it fosters demand at the local level and ensures that the kind of education that schools provide reflects local priorities and values.
- School based management shows positive results on mainly reducing grade repetition and failure, and improving teacher attendance rates, contrasted with the mixed results in test scores.
- Active involvement of the community has facilitated in identifying community specific education issues and formulating effective strategies to address those barriers by mobilising resources within the community.
- Poor communication can leave parents unaware formal engagement channels exist, resulting in public participation in improving education being negligible.
- There have been examples where decentralisation has not led to enhanced community participation (such as Indonesia).

#### **Reducing teacher absenteeism**

- Evidence suggests schools with PTAs that have met in the past three months have lower teacher absence.
- Teacher commitment and accountability clearly influence teacher attendance.
- Incentives and sanctions may improve teacher attendance.
- Pay is clearly a factor influencing motivation and morale. Other factors include workload, classroom conditions, management support, living arrangements and location.
- Peer pressure may reduce absenteeism, especially if a teacher is concerned for their reputation within a community.
- Teachers may have a legitimate reason for being absent, such as being summoned to undertake administrative tasks.
- The less a school is inspected by superiors, the higher the rates of absenteeism.

#### **Increasing awareness of quality of education**

- While education is thought to be a mechanism for achieving empowerment, there is also evidence to suggest that the way in which education services are delivered affects their outcomes.
- Community participation in schools is thought to be particularly effective in improving educational outcomes, whilst also contributing to the empowerment of the community. However, even here the evidence is mixed, and points to the importance of context in influencing results.
- A communal voice may well build citizen participation and some measure of accountability of service providers, but there is little measurable evidence that service quality has improved.

#### **Increasing access of marginalised children**

- The relationship between education and poverty is a circular one: the lack of secondary-level education may force poor households to engage in low-productivity

- activities, and results in poverty. On the other hand, poverty leads to low investment in education.
- Inequality in the access to secondary education is the main cause of persistent poverty.

## 2. Activities strengthening/empowering School Management Committee (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)

**Nazmul Haq. M. and Saijidul Islam, M. 2005, *Teacher Motivation and Incentives in Bangladesh*, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka.**

[http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0709/Teacher\\_motivation\\_Bangladesh.pdf](http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0709/Teacher_motivation_Bangladesh.pdf)

This paper summarises the key findings and recommendations of a review of teacher motivation and incentives in Bangladesh, focusing in particular on primary schools. Parent teacher associations are seen as a key forum for creating an effective school-community partnership in education, which will have a positive impact on teacher motivation and performance. Unfortunately, though, most PTAs are ineffective. The majority of PTAs exist only on paper only and have no actual power to run a school or guide teachers.

In contrast, non-formal schools provide a positive example of the positive impact parent involvement can have on school management. These schools convene monthly mothers' assemblies to discuss common concerns and explore ways how children can be supported both by the school and family. They have demonstrated how the effective involvement of parents, especially of mothers, can be promoted through a less structured forum for dialogue and sharing between parents, teachers and school authorities. This approach helps meet the common objective of helping children learn better.

This situation analysis clearly shows that much government attention needs to go into raising the professional and social standing of primary school teachers in Bangladesh to release their potential to improve the quality of schooling.

**Carney, S., Bista, M. & Agergaard, J., 2007. 'Empowering' the 'Local' Through Education? Exploring Community Managed Schooling in Nepal. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(5)**

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a780515805>

This paper unpacks the policy vision and discourse driving community management of schooling in Nepal and considers the ways in which these policies are being experienced by bureaucrats, teachers, parents and children. The focus is on the World Bank funded Community School Support Project (CSSP) launched by the Government of Nepal in June 2003 and was used as a basis for extending community management to all of the country's 26,000 public schools. It illustrates how national level policy prescriptions lead to a range of outcomes, many of which are unintended. Community-based schooling in Nepal is intended to shift the role of the State from manager to facilitator of schooling. However, it is suggested that reforms carried out in the name of greater efficiency, accountability and empowerment are driven primarily by a desire to limit the role of the State in the provision, but not necessarily control, of public education. The consequences of this include the on-going marginalisation of many of the country's poor and disadvantaged groups, a de-motivated and further politicised teaching force and continued chronic under-funding of public education.

**Pellini, A. 2007 *Decentralisation Policy in Cambodia: Exploring Community Participation in the Education Sector*. University of Tampere**

<http://acta.uta.fi/pdf/978-951-44-6978-7.pdf>

This academic dissertation analyses the characteristics of community participation in Cambodian rural schools. It looks at the spaces for participation created by the decentralisation reforms that the Government of Cambodia has undertaken in the education sector through school clustering and priority action programme. While institutionalised spaces of participation created by these policies are relatively new, Cambodian communities have traditionally provided support to schools through school associations.

The study explores bonding, bridging and institutional social capital to explore the characteristics of the horizontal links between community members as well as different forms of collective action, and the vertical links between community, schools and local government institutions.

Research in Kampong Thom shows the difficulty for communities and schools to bridge the gap that divides them, especially in terms of more active involvement in school activities. This is due partly to the reluctance by community members and association leaders to get involved in matters that are perceived to be the responsibility of teachers; and partly to the limited efforts by schools to provide greater room for participation in school activities.

The study concludes that while traditional associations provide material contributions and support to schools, their participation in the internal decision making process as well as educational matters is still limited. It is suggested that the trauma caused by conflict and the Cambodian socio-cultural norms are factors that explain the difficulty in establishing more democratic spaces for participation. Also, decentralisation education policies have promoted community participation in schools through the creation of *ad hoc* committees and councils that have failed to gain the same legitimacy enjoyed by traditional associations at village and community level.

**Govinda, R. 2010, *Changing Framework of Local Governance and Community Participation in Elementary Education in India*. Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity. Research Monograph No. 35**  
[http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf\\_documents/PTA35.pdf](http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf_documents/PTA35.pdf)

It is now widely recognised that effective local governance considerably impacts on access to education as well as the enrolment, retention and learning experiences of children in school. This paper provides an overview of the changing framework of governance of elementary education and community participation in India with a special focus on its role in improving the participation of children. An attempt has also been made to examine the extent to which grassroots level functionaries and local bodies like panchayat and Village Education Committees (VECs) are able to get involved in decision making processes and different approaches that have been taken by different states in regards to local governance of education. This paper critically examines the guiding principles of governance reform from two perspectives. 'Top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches are discussed, in terms of ensuring the effectiveness of the system and empowering people for active participation in decentralized decision making process.

Research indicates that that school functioning has improved significantly in places where communities have been involved actively. There are many instances where community members have been involved in volunteer teaching and Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) preparation in addition to monitoring regular attendance of teachers and students. Women's participation in local governance remains a critical concern across the states as generally their representation and effective participation even in panchayat meetings and VECs is found to be quite low. It was found that with more training opportunities, access to adequate information and NGO interventions, the participation of women could be increased resulting in considerable improvement in children's particularly girls' education. Participation of girls in school increases if Mother Teacher Association is actively involved, making schools more gender friendly and secured place for girls.

**Barrera-Osorio, F. Et al. 2008, *Decision-Making in Schools*. World Bank**  
[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079934475/547667-1145313948551/Decentralized\\_decision\\_making\\_schools.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079934475/547667-1145313948551/Decentralized_decision_making_schools.pdf)

There is growing evidence that more inputs are not enough alone to make schools work better. One important reason why education systems are failing to provide children with a solid education is the weak accountability relationships among policymakers, education providers, and the citizens and students whom they serve. It is not surprising then that the transfer of some decision-making power to schools has become a popular reform over the past decade. School Based Management (SBM) emphasises the individual school (represented by any combination of principals, teachers, parents, students, and other members of the school community) as the main decision-making authority, and holds that this shift in the formulating of decisions would lead to improvement in the delivery of education. They also seek to involve the local community in a meaningful way, making decisions about their local school. SBM puts power in the hands of the frontline providers and parents to improve their schools. Its basic premise is that people who have the most to gain or lose—students and their parents—and those who know what actually goes on in the classroom and school—teachers and school principals—should have both greater authority and greater accountability than they do now with respect to school performance.

SBM can result in the following benefits:

- More input and resources from parents (whether in cash or in-kind)
- More effective use of resources because those making the decisions for each school are intimately acquainted with its needs
- A higher quality of education as a result of more efficient and transparent use of resources
- A more open and welcoming school environment because the community is involved in its management
- Increased participation of all local stakeholders in the decision-making processes, leading to more collegial relationships and increased satisfaction
- Improved student performance as a result of reduced repetition rates, reduced dropout rates, and (eventually) better learning outcomes.

The key argument in favour of decentralisation is that it fosters demand at the local level and ensures that the kind of education that schools provide reflects local priorities and values. By giving voice and power to local stakeholders, decentralisation can increase client satisfaction and improve educational outcomes. School autonomy and accountability may help solve some of the fundamental problems in education. If schools are given some autonomy over the use of their inputs, then they may be held accountable for using those inputs in an efficient manner. Decentralising power to the school level also may improve service delivery to the poor by giving poor families a say in how local schools operate, and by giving schools an incentive to ensure that they deliver effective services to the poor and penalising those who fail to do so.

SBM transfers authority from the central government to the school level, devolving responsibility for and decision-making authority over school operations to local agents—any combination of principals, teachers, parents, sometimes students, and other school community members.

The number of rigorous studies of the impact of SBM is very limited. A few studies, rigorous and well documented, reliably measure the effect of SBM policies, but it is very difficult to standardise the sizes of the outcome variables because of differences in how they were measured in the various studies.

**Chen, D. 2011, *School-Based Management, School Decision-Making and Education Outcomes in Indonesian Primary Schools*. Policy Research Working Paper 5809, World Bank.**

<http://elibrary.worldbank.org/docserver/download/5809.pdf?expires=1347900131&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=94983AC7E5A9F53918CAB88165E166ED>

This paper examines the key aspects of the practices of school-based management in Indonesia, and its effect on education quality. It explores the relations among Indonesian parents, school committees, schools, and government education supervisory bodies from three tenets: participation and voice; autonomy; and accountability. Using the data from a survey of 400 public primary schools in Indonesia, it finds that the level of parental participation and voice in school management is extremely low in Indonesia. While the role of school committees is still limited to community relations, school facilities, and other administrative areas of school management, school principals, together with teachers, are much more empowered to assert professional control of the schools. The accountability system has remained weak in Indonesia's school system, which is reflected by inadequate information flow to parents, as well as seemingly low parental awareness of the need to hold schools accountable. The accountability arrangement of the Indonesian school system currently puts more emphasis on top-down supervision and monitoring by government supervisory bodies.

The findings show that although the scope of school-based management in Indonesia is limited, it has begun to help schools make the right decisions on allocation of resources and hiring additional (non-civil servant) teachers, and to create an enabling environment of learning, including increasing teacher attendance rates. These aspects are found to have significantly positive effects on student learning outcomes.

The paper draws on existing research that suggests school based management shows positive results on mainly reducing grade repetition and failure, and improving teacher attendance rates, contrasted with the mixed results in test scores.

The empirical work of this paper shows that although the scope of school-based management in Indonesia is limited today, it has begun to help schools make the right decisions on allocation of resources and hiring additional (non-civil servant) teachers, and to create an enabling environment for learning, including increasing the teacher attendance rate. All these aspects are found to have significantly positive effects on student learning outcomes.

**Pailwar, V. K., & Mahajan, V., 2005, *Janshala in Jharkhand: An Experiment with Community Involvement in Education*. *International Education Journal*, 6 (3)**

<http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v6n3/pailwar/paper.pdf>

Low level of literacy and education is one of the major challenges facing most of the underdeveloped countries. Active community involvement and participation has emerged as an effective mechanism in improving the sustainable level of education in many of these countries. This paper analyses the crucial aspects of community participation in education and supports its importance by reviewing the basic framework and outcome of Janshala – a Government of India-UN program in Jharkhand, India. Though community participation is not a panacea for addressing all barriers, the Janshala experience in Jharkhand and cross country experiences involving community in educational programs indicate that the active involvement of the community has facilitated in identifying community specific education issues and formulating effective strategies to address those barriers by mobilising resources within the community.

**Pandey, P., Goyal, S. & Sundaraman, V., 2009. Community Participation in Public Schools: Impact of Information Campaigns in Three Indian States. *Education Economics*, 17 (3)**

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a914034669>

This study evaluates the impact of a community-based information campaign on school performance. The campaign consisted of public meetings in villages across three Indian states to disseminate information to the community about its state-mandated roles and responsibilities in school management. No intervention took place in control villages. At baseline there are no significant differences in school outcomes. This paper reports on the first follow up survey that took place two to four months after the intervention. It was found that providing information through a structured campaign to communities had a positive impact in all three states. However, there are differences across states in where the impact occurs. The most notable impacts occurred on teacher effort, while impacts on learning were more modest. Some improvements were recorded in the delivery of benefits entitled to students (stipend, uniform and mid-day meal) and in process variables such as community participation in each of the three states.

**Banerjee, A. et al. 2006, *A Study of Primary Education in Uttar Pradesh, India. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper***

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/Khemani\\_CanInformationCampaignsRaise.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/Khemani_CanInformationCampaignsRaise.pdf)

This paper reports the findings from a survey in a rural district in Uttar Pradesh. Households, parents, teachers and Village Education Committee (VEC) members were surveyed on the status of education services and the extent of community participation in the public delivery of education services. Most parents do not know that a VEC exists, public participation in improving education is negligible, and large numbers of children in the villages have not acquired basic competencies of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Based on the findings of the baseline survey, this paper also describes a set of information and advocacy campaigns that have been designed to explore whether local participation can increase, and future research plans to evaluate the impact of these interventions.

**Rafi Khan, S. & Zafar, F. 1999, *Capacity Building and Training of School Management Committees, Sustainable Development Policy Institute. Monograph Series # 10***

<http://www.sdpi.org/publications/files/M10.pdf>

This study is based on three major sources of information. The first includes field visits, interviews with school staff, School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations (SMC/PTA) members, government line department officials, NGO members, educationists and donor organisation members and a review of documents and reports. The second source is an extensive review of the literature. The third is a small national field survey of government and NGO SMCs/PTAs. The findings from the three sources are broadly consistent and reinforce each other, although findings from the sample survey are more negative than those emerging from the literature review.

It was found that there has certainly been much activity regarding the establishment and training of (SMCs/PTAs) even though little has been achieved across the four provinces. Even so, at least the basic infrastructure has been established which could be improved and built upon. As things stand, the constitution of the SMCs/PTAs has in most cases been via sudden notification, so much so, that many parents who had no idea what a PTA represents became members overnight. The repeated re-constitution of these committees to enhance the role of parents without taking teachers into confidence created resentment among teachers. Even if teachers were taken into confidence, there is little reason to believe that they would welcome an additional layer of monitoring so close to home, particularly if it is by parents they consider their intellectual and social inferiors.

If participation of parents via SMCs were to make any progress, it would have to be accompanied by several concomitant changes. First, teacher's attitudes would have to be slowly and painstakingly changed so that they really do view parents as partners in the education of their children. Second, the incentive structures would have to be changed so that the teachers have a reason to listen to parents. Thus teachers' increments and promotions would have to be partly dependent on parents' assessment of teacher performance at least in terms of punctuality and good treatment of the children. The government officials have to accept the importance of this parental input and be welcoming of and responsive to this input. Finally, the training of SMCs/PTAs, in order to enable them to perform their mandated tasks, must accompany these changes.

There is much that needs to be done for improving educational administration. Even line department officials reported numerous wrong doings. Thus fake SMCs/PTAs were drawing funds, the process of issuing grants was susceptible to political interference and line department officials were demanding bribes to release grants. Research also showed that the basis of making allocations still needs much fine tuning to avoid misallocations and flexibility and committee discretion would be desirable in order for real needs to be met. Also, the SMC/PTA fixation with acquisition of school materials seems totally misplaced. Their major focus should be on working with teachers to improve attendance of students and teachers, co-curricula activities and other ways of generating greater interest in teaching and learning.

In many cases, prior to the formation of the SMCS/PTAs, communities had been engaging in collective action. Thus via collections they had built boundary walls and provided water and electricity for the school. Thus, the raw potential for collective action is certainly there. Harnessing this potential is the real challenge.

It is recommended that probably the most needed and effective reform is the genuine empowerment of parents who are central to realising the concept of "participation" in education. For this to happen, teachers and line department field officials increments/promotions must be partially based on the evaluation by parents. Until this happens, teachers will not take parents seriously and line department officials will have little incentive to interact with parent committees to improve the quality of schooling.

**Sui-chu Ho, E. 2009, Educational Leadership for Parental Involvement in an Asian Context: Insights from Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. *The School Community Journal*, 19 (2)**

<http://p-bourdieu-curriculum.wikispaces.com/file/view/insights+from+Bourdieu+theory+of+practice.pdf>

This article examines how educational leadership defines parental involvement and shapes the nature of home-school collaboration in schools in an Asian context. Results show three major types of principal leadership, or habitus of parental involvement: bureaucratic, utilitarian, and communitarian, which provide a more powerful explanation for the extent and nature of home school collaboration than parents' capital in this context.

The paper concludes that parents predominately from the working class are no more passive in their involvement in their child's school than are parents of students attending schools in more affluent communities. The study found that working-class parents are as involved and sometimes even more passionate about education than are their middle-class counterparts. Deficits in different kinds of capital can be mitigated by school leadership practices. The study has observed that school principals are the major definers of the practice of parental involvement. The principal's ideology actually shapes how parental involvement is defined by the school stakeholders and what forms of home school relationships are constructed in schools.



It was found that the construction of principals' leadership/habitus approaches towards parental involvement needs to be contextualised within the societal context (i.e., changing of family structure and family life) and the educational context (i.e., current education reform and educational policies) of the specific sponsoring bodies which establish the school. Principals' beliefs in education to include or exclude certain parents with different amounts of capital and principals' past interactions and experiences with parents are major factors affecting each leaders' habitus, which in turn influences their strategies and practices for home-school collaboration.

School principals with bureaucratic leadership approaches tend to consider parental involvement as being peripheral to the main concerns of the school (i.e., teaching and learning). In such situations there is a rigid division of work between home or parents' work and school or teachers' work. As a result, an alienated relationship emerges and parents and teachers are disconnected from each other.

School principals with a utilitarian leadership approach consider parents to be a tool or resource which can be utilised to support the school's educational practices and to promote the reputation of the school to the wider community. Therefore, only those parents who fulfill this concept of resource and have an appropriate knowledge base are accepted in the school's PTA. As a result, an instrumental relationship forms between the home and the school.

School principals with a communitarian leadership approach believe parents to be the co-owners of the school and, in conjunction with the school, pursue a holistic, quality education for all of the school's students. Communitarian principals recruit enthusiastic teachers to coordinate parent activities and parents are made to feel welcome in the school. They have space to volunteer in school activities. In such circumstances, teachers perceive parents as partners. Teachers connect with parents and provide opportunities for parents to learn through their involvement with the school. Parents feel empowered and a bond of mutual trust is established.

**Bruns, B. Et al. 2011, *Making Schools Work*. World Bank.**  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1298568319076/makingschoolswork.pdf>

Schooling is a basic service that most citizens expect from their governments, but the quality available is quite variable, and the results too often disappointing. This paper seeks to address what it will take for schools in developing countries to deliver good quality education. The 2004 World Development Report developed a conceptual framework to analyse the kind of government and market failures in service delivery that exist in a large number of developing countries: weak accountability leading to poor motivation and inadequate incentives for performance. That report proposed a set of approaches to remedy those failures that rely on stronger accountability mechanisms. But the empirical evidence supporting those approaches was limited. Over several years, World Bank researchers and project staff have worked with academic researchers and their counterparts in government and civil society to remedy this evidence gap. Their studies isolate and measure the impacts of reforms and expand the evidence base on the best methods for improving school effectiveness, especially through better information, devolution of authority, and stronger incentives for teachers.

This paper looks at the evidence on school accountability reforms in developing countries. It provides a measured and insightful review and assessment of the results of a variety of approaches that developing countries are experimenting with in their quest for better schools.

**Fitriah, A. *Community participation in education: does decentralisation matter? An Indonesian case study of parental participation in school management.* Master of Philosophy Thesis. Massey Universtiy, New Zealand.**

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1298568319076/makingschoolswork.pdf>

This paper seeks to examine the argument that decentralisation leads to deeper and stronger community participation by investigating the practice of community participation in the Indonesian decentralisation context, focusing on parental participation through access to and control over school financial resources. Drawing on a case study in Depok City, the practice of parental involvement has been explored by identifying the characteristics and the extent of parents' participation in school management. School Committees, as a mechanism of community involvement provided by the decentralised education policy, were also examined to develop an understanding of parental representation in school management.

The study found that the characteristics and the extent of parents' participation in school management have changed and decreased significantly as a result of a new Free School programme, introduced by the government in 2009, which freed parents from school operational costs. Prior to the programme, parents actively participated in terms of supplying resources and involvement in school meetings, had some access to financial information and had limited engagement with school budgeting through representation in school committees. The new absence of financial contribution by parents has affected parental participation by transforming it into a weaker form of participation where parents act as mere beneficiaries.

The study also revealed that in the Indonesian context, the school committees, as institutional channels for community involvement in education provided by the education decentralisation policy are not effective in terms of representing and engaging parents in school management. Based on the evidence above, this thesis concluded that in the context of the Indonesian education system, decentralisation has not necessarily enhanced community participation. In this respect, decentralisation is not the only possible answer for achieving a meaningful and empowering parental participation in education. Furthermore, other contextual factors surrounding participation also have to be taken into account. While FSP brings the benefit of allowing students to access education freely, the absence of parental financial contribution has been proved to impact parental participation in a way that is contradictory to one of the purposes of decentralisation policy, which is to engage the community in educational management.

**Mikayilova, U. 2006-2007 Strengthening community participation in the Azeri school governance: lessons learned from some project experiences. *Human rights education in Asian schools*, 11**

<http://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/pdf/asia-s-ed/v11/14Community%20Participation%20in%20the%20Azeri%20School%20Governance.pdf>

In Azerbaijan, the community has become a main target in the development agenda during the last ten to fifteen years. This process began in Azerbaijan with the shift in focus by the international aid community from short-term relief to long-term development. Since the 1990s, a number of reform projects in Azerbaijan targeting communities have been implemented. Community participatory projects in Azerbaijan were mostly unsustainable, rarely focused on community-school connections, implemented on individual project-basis and have not given a valuable feedback at the policy level. The paper suggested that reform should start with reform of school governance and community involvement.

### 3. Reducing teacher absenteeism

**Kremer, M. et al. 2005, Teacher absence in India: A snapshot. *Journal of the European Economic Association* 3 (2-3):658-67**

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/36660\\_Teacher\\_absence\\_in\\_India\\_EEA\\_9\\_15\\_04\\_-\\_South\\_Asia\\_session\\_version.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/36660_Teacher_absence_in_India_EEA_9_15_04_-_South_Asia_session_version.pdf)

This paper presents new nationally representative data on teacher absence from unannounced visits to Indian primary schools. The study covered 20 Indian states, representing 98 percent of the population, or roughly one billion people. Three unannounced visits were made to each of 3700 schools. The survey focused on government-run primary schools, but it also covered rural private schools and private-aided schools located in villages where government schools were surveyed.

The paper proposes that local communities could potentially provide an alternative source of monitoring. One way to interpret the lower absence rates in schools with more educated parents and high pupil-teacher ratios is that local monitoring is more effective when parents are more educated and more parents could potentially complain about absence. (Of course, alternative explanations, including reverse causality, are possible in each case.) Similarly schools with PTAs that have met in the past three months have lower absence. This could reflect either the importance of local community monitoring or a tendency for more conscientious teachers and headmasters to organise PTA meetings.

***Public Report on Basic Education in India, 1999, The PROBE Team in association with Centre for Development Economics***

[http://www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/public\\_report\\_basic\\_education\\_india.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/public_report_basic_education_india.pdf)

This *Public Report on Basic Education* (PROBE) report was based on a detailed field survey carried out from September to December 1996 in India. It covered all schooling facilities, and a sample of 1,376 households, in 234 randomly selected villages of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

The report found that teacher accountability derives from a variety of formal and informal incentives. An important incentive derives from a teacher's concern for his or her reputation in the village community. The strength of this reputation effect, however, depends on whether the teacher identifies with the local community, and on the extent to which parents understand what goes on in the classroom. There may be some community accountability, building on institutions such as PTAs, the village panchayat and informal channels of interaction between teachers and the community.

Another important example concerns examinations. Notwithstanding their flaws as a method of evaluating pupils, school examinations give parents important information about the performance of teachers. For instance, if all the pupils in a school fail the Board exam in Class 5, parents are likely to ask pointed questions about what the teachers were doing in the classroom. Knowing this, teachers have an incentive to ensure that children do reasonably well in the exams. However, automatic promotion of children until Class 8 or even Class 10 has become an accepted practice in many states, and so is mass copying when exams do take place. Here again, teachers' organisations have played a part in dismantling the examination system, yet their outlook has to be seen in the light of the paralysing burden placed on them by current examination procedures.

Similar contradictions have undermined other accountability mechanisms. Halting the erosion of teacher accountability calls *inter alia* for a new rapport between teachers' organisations and the education administration, based on a shared commitment to universal elementary education. Another important step is to improve the framework of teacher-parent interaction, which may well be the most promising basis of accountability in the schooling system.

For both a de-motivating environment, and lack of accountability, a cooperative rapport between teachers and parents (and the village community in general) can help a great deal. Going beyond that, education is intrinsically a joint task of parents and teachers, in so far as a child acquires education not only at school but also at home. It is all the more important that the efforts of teachers and parents should complement rather than undermine each other.

Example of accountability mechanisms	Why they are weak in practice
Teacher concern for reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Due to social distance from parental community, teacher may not be too concerned</li> </ul>
Peer pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corroded work culture</li> <li>- Collusion among teachers</li> </ul>
Community accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents have little power</li> <li>- Over-centralised administration</li> <li>- Inspectors don't consult parents</li> <li>- Parents may find it difficult to judge what goes on at school</li> </ul>

It is partly to tackle this problem of collective inertia that efforts have been made to set up formal institutions aimed at promoting greater interaction between teachers and parents. Two examples are 'parent-teacher associations' (PTAs) and 'village education committees' (VECs). The PROBE survey, however, suggests that these institutions are themselves quite dormant. Less than one-fifth of the schools surveyed had a PTA. And even the PTAs that did exist seldom went beyond formalities.

About half of the sample schools belonged to a village with a functional VEC, 'functional' being understood in the liberal sense that the VEC had met at least once during the preceding 12 months. Some cases of active VECs were found where the VEC helped the local teacher to do a literacy survey, and in a few other villages where the VEC seemed to perform some useful supervisory function. In areas where VECs are set up in the context of a broader and well-rehearsed effort to improve the schooling system, they seem to take off. By and large, however, VECs seem to be token institutions, with neither teachers nor parents expecting much from them.

**Pandey, P., Goyal, S. & Sundararaman, V., 2010. Public Participation, Teacher Accountability and School Outcomes in Three States. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Special article**

[http://eledu.net/rrcusrn\\_data/Public%20Participation,%20Teacher%20Accountability%20and%20School%20Outcomes%20in%20Three%20States%27.pdf](http://eledu.net/rrcusrn_data/Public%20Participation,%20Teacher%20Accountability%20and%20School%20Outcomes%20in%20Three%20States%27.pdf)

This paper presents findings from baseline surveys on student learning achievement, teacher effort and community participation in the Indian states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The results indicate low teacher attendance and poor student learning. Parents and school committees are neither aware of their oversight roles nor do they participate in school management. However, there is substantial heterogeneity in outcomes across states. Karnataka has better student and teacher outcomes, as well as higher levels of community awareness and participation than the other two states. Substantial variation was found in teacher effort within schools, but most observable teacher characteristics are not associated with teacher effort. One reason for low teacher effort may be a lack of accountability. However, the gains in test scores associated with higher rates of teacher attendance and engagement in teaching are estimated to be small in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, suggesting that teachers themselves may not be effective.

**Bennell, P. And Akyeampong, K. *Teacher Motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia*. DfID 2007**

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D//PDF/Outputs/policystrategy/researchingtheissuesno71.pdf>

This report synthesises the main findings and recommendations of an international research project on teacher motivation and incentives in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. A major conclusion of the extensive literature on school effectiveness in developed countries is that achieving better learning outcomes depends fundamentally on improvements in teaching. Increasing teacher motivation and capabilities are central to any systematic attempt to improve learning outcomes.

The report found that the degree to which teachers are properly accountable to their clients (children and parents) and their managers (head teachers and district and national level managers) has a powerful influence on teacher motivation levels. The higher level of accountability of non-formal 'community' schools to parents and the host communities is a key reason for their success. Communities have a sense of ownership of the school, which is largely lacking with government schools. However, these schools account for only a small share of total enrolments.

Teacher motivation depends critically on effective management, particularly at the school level. If systems and structures set up to manage and support teachers are dysfunctional, teachers are likely to lose their sense of professional responsibility and commitment. All of the country studies raise major concerns about the behaviour and performance of teachers, which relate directly to low levels of job satisfaction and motivation. Poor professional behaviour (lateness, absenteeism, laziness) seriously compromises schooling quality and learning outcomes. Also, weak teacher management and lack of a sense of accountability means that public school teachers often get away with under-performance and, at times, gross professional misconduct. High rates of teacher absenteeism have been consistently reported in recent surveys in Africa, Asia and South America. These can be directly attributed to low levels of teacher commitment and accountability.

Teacher accountability to school management and to parents and the community as a whole should be increased to improve attendance and motivation. This is particularly the case at government primary schools in most of South Asia where very limited teacher and school accountability seriously undermine the provision of quality basic education.

In South Asia, teacher absenteeism is undoubtedly a major problem. In Nepal, 40 percent of primary school teachers were absent for more than five working days during a 25-day period in late 2002. Such a high incidence of absenteeism is attributed to teachers' frequent engagement in farming activities and election activities. A 2004 school survey in India found that 24 percent of teachers were absent and, in about 63 percent of schools, no teaching was going on whatsoever. In Pakistan, 'ghost schools', which are set up to obtain government funding but do not operate, are common in rural areas. A recent survey found that close to one fifth of teachers in schools that were open were absent with no official permission. However, teachers in South Asia are frequently required to undertake official assignments outside of school. In Bangladesh, most absent teachers have legitimate reasons since they are frequently summoned to undertake a variety of administrative tasks.

It is widely noted that incentives for schools and teachers in the public education system to perform well are frequently weak due to ineffective incentives and sanctions. This is particularly the case when teachers cannot be effectively disciplined for unacceptable behaviour (absenteeism, lateness, poor teaching, abusive behaviour towards pupils) by school managements because it is very difficult to dismiss them and pay and promotion are largely unrelated to actual performance.

It is widely contended that the comprehensive decentralisation of school management functions will result in significant improvements in teacher recruitment and deployment practices and higher teacher motivation and overall performance. This is because school managers and teachers become more accountable to parents and other local stakeholders

and schools and/or communities have much greater direct control of teacher recruitment and deployment. There is a paucity of evidence, which can be drawn upon to assess these assertions in a robust manner.

Poor motivation and lack of accountability are widely reported to result in high levels of teacher absenteeism. However, the evidence base is weak. It is also difficult to measure teacher absenteeism that can be directly attributed to poor motivation and opportunistic behaviour. Research by the World Bank finds generally high levels of teacher absence in developing countries, especially in Africa and South Asia. However, most teacher absenteeism is for legitimate reasons, namely personal illness, official duty, and leave.

In South Asia, in particular, teacher accountability culture is very weak. In Nepal it was noted that primary school teachers at government schools seem to care little about the effect of their performance on student achievement as whether they teach or not, they are paid. The high level of accountability of non-formal 'community' schools to parents and the host communities is the single most important reason for their success. Communities have a sense of ownership of the school, which is largely lacking with government schools. However, these schools account for only a small share of total enrolments. Even in Bangladesh, this figure does not exceed six percent.

In order to be properly motivated, teachers must be fully accountable, not just to their school managers, but also to parents and the wider community. The effectiveness of school governance is a crucial issue. Teacher opposition to these reforms has been intense in some countries. In Nepal the teacher unions have resisted plans to hand over the management of schools to communities because they fear losing their rights and being excluded from decision-making. In Bangladesh, "there is widespread dissatisfaction with how school management committees are functioning. They tend to be dominated by head teachers and local political leaders and do not have sufficient resources to carry out their designated responsibilities" (Haq and Islam, 2005:7). Another common finding is that school and teacher relationships with local communities tend to be more problematic in rural areas.

It is recommended that teacher accountability to school management and to parents and the community as a whole should be increased. This is particularly the case at government primary schools in most of South Asia where very limited teacher and school accountability seriously undermine the provision of quality basic education.

Related recommendations are: (i) much improved school management through improved training of head teachers and other teachers with substantive management responsibilities; (ii) eliminate or at least seriously reduce non-school activities that teachers in India and other countries in South Asia are expected to undertake on a regular basis; and (iii) reduce the level of politicisation of the teaching profession in South Asia; and (iv) give more effective representation to teachers in key decision-making bodies.

**Haq. N. and Islam, S. 2005, *Teacher Motivation and Incentives in Bangladesh*, Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka**

[http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0709/Teacher\\_motivation\\_Bangladesh.pdf](http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0709/Teacher_motivation_Bangladesh.pdf)

As in other countries, it is asserted that low teacher morale and motivation in Bangladesh is reflected in high rates of absenteeism and poor timekeeping. Teacher absenteeism is noticeably higher in primary schools, which may be due to lower pay, more difficult working conditions and remoter, less attractive locations. Due to poor pay and heavy teaching loads, many teachers participate in secondary wage-earning activities, such as agricultural work in rural areas and private tuition in urban areas. Teachers are also active participants in politics, which can affect the amount of time they spend in the classroom. However, the situation has been improving in recent years. Better-trained managers are paying more attention to addressing punctuality and attendance issues.

Although absenteeism rates are high, it is important to emphasise that most teachers have legitimate reasons for being absent. The majority of secondary schools are non-government hence teachers are not called on to the same extent to undertake extra-educational duties outside of the school. Headmasters, however, often attend off-school meetings or are occupied with administrative work. Primary school teachers, on the other hand, are frequently summoned to undertake a variety of administrative tasks such as population censuses, national elections, and health and sanitation programmes. Teachers also are involved in child census in school catchments, the distribution of stipends for poor children, maintaining progress reports, the collection and distribution of government textbooks and the maintenance of many records. Collectively, these activities consume a significant amount of time away from the classroom. Head teachers are also involved in administrative activities such as attending monthly coordination meetings, reviewing/approving salary bills, conducting School Management Committee meetings, organising Parent-Teacher Association meetings, and attending to officials and other visitors.

Non-teaching duties are sometimes mandatory due to Education Office directives. Teachers interviewed expressed dissatisfaction regarding these duties. Generally male teachers are more burdened by these duties since some of these tasks are not considered suitable for female teachers. These non-teaching duties performed by teachers play an important role in their communities. The impact, however, of teacher absence has been found to depress learning outcomes. Teacher absenteeism both creates and results from lessened commitment to classroom teaching and general preparedness for classes (as demonstrated, for example, by the lack of proper lesson planning). Data on teacher absenteeism, however, remains very scarce and the education department does not keep any records or have a mandate for necessary actions.

(Also see Haq and Islam 2005 in Section 2)

**Kremer, M. And Holla, A. 2008, *Improving Education in the Developing World: What Have We Learned From Randomized Evaluations?* Originally prepared for the World Bank's Commission on Growth and Development**

[http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kremer/files/Annual\\_Review\\_081110%20-%20NO%20TRACK%20CHANGES.pdf](http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kremer/files/Annual_Review_081110%20-%20NO%20TRACK%20CHANGES.pdf)

Reforms that strengthen teacher incentives to attend school can increase student learning. Research has shown that linking teacher pay to students' test scores increases preparation sessions for exams but not teacher attendance. There is mixed evidence on whether it promotes student learning. Existing evidence suggests that simply providing information to communities on school quality without actually changing authority over teachers has little impact. On the other hand, allowing local school committees to hire teachers on short-term contracts outside the civil service system saves money and increases test scores.

**Rogers, H. And Koziol, M. *Provider Absence Surveys in Education and Health*. World Bank**

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTHDOFFICE/Resources/AbsenceBookletNoAnnex.pdf>

High levels of provider absence are both an indicator of general shortcomings in accountability within the education or health system and, it appears, also a direct cause of poorer outcomes. Research has indicated that higher absence is closely correlated with poor incentives and weak accountability. If a school had not been inspected recently, teachers were more likely to be absent; head teachers, who have no supervisors at the school level, were also absent more often. Conversely, if a school had better infrastructure or was closer to a paved road, which could increase the nonfinancial incentives for regular attendance, teachers were more likely to be present. Higher salaries were not associated with better attendance. Perhaps this should not be surprising: salaries of teachers and medical providers

are typically based on education and seniority, not on performance, and hence provide little incentive for attendance. Service delivery is a complex process, and there is never just one cause to the problem of absence.

**Chaudhury, N. Et al. 2004, *Roll Call: Teacher Absence in Bangladesh*. World Bank**  
[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSOUTHASIA/Resources/Roll\\_Call\\_Teacher\\_Absence\\_Bangladesh.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSOUTHASIA/Resources/Roll_Call_Teacher_Absence_Bangladesh.pdf)

This survey found:

- The average teacher absence rate in primary school is 15.5%
- The absence rate in primary schools is highest among headmasters - one out of every five headmaster was absent during the time of the survey
- Cross-sectional averages mask the extent of this problem -we find that 23.5% of primary school teachers were absent during at least one of the two visits
- The average secondary school teacher absence rate is 17.6%, with assistant teachers (19.3%) and headmaster (17.8%) having the highest absence rates
- The teacher absence rate in secondary schools increases with remoteness of the school: 10.8% in major metropolitan areas, 13.5% in small towns, 19% in rural areas
- The predominant reason given for why the teacher was not in school during the day of the visit was that the teacher was away performing official duties.
- Teachers are 10% more likely to be absent in secondary schools which have never been visited by education officials, highlighting the importance of formal supervision. There might potentially even be a stronger informal supervision effect emanating from the community.
- Secondary school teachers are 68% less likely to be absent in schools attended by pupils with better educated mothers.
- Education level of the community is certainly related to the income level of the community, but it also reflects the level of community empowerment and interest of parents in the quality of their child's schooling, hence, a potential proxy for direct monitoring of teachers by the parents.
- Teachers who engage in private tutoring as a side occupation are less likely to be absent. This might reflect the fact that teachers might be using class time to recruit clients for their private sessions.

#### 4. Increasing awareness of quality of education

**Pradhan, M., et al., 2011, *Improving Educational Quality through Enhancing Community Participation: Results from a Randomised Field Experiment in Indonesia*, World Bank, Washington, D.C.**

[http://real.wharton.upenn.edu/~maisy/documents/WorldBank\\_SchoolCommittee.pdf](http://real.wharton.upenn.edu/~maisy/documents/WorldBank_SchoolCommittee.pdf)

As school enrolment and attainment rise across developing countries, policymakers are increasingly directing attention to interventions that affect student learning. How effective is making schools accountable for performance in addressing deficiencies in service provision? This study evaluates the effect of four randomised interventions aimed at strengthening school committees, and subsequently improving learning outcomes, in public primary schools in Indonesia. It concludes that measures that foster outside ties between the school committee and other parties are more effective than reinforcing existing school committee structures or providing grants and training interventions.

**Nielsen, H. D., 2007, *Empowering Communities for Improved Educational Outcomes: Some Evaluation Findings from the World Bank*, *Prospects*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 81-93**

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/l81h1249r725m356/?MUD=MP>



How effective are community empowerment programmes in World Bank-supported educational programmes? Can community-led school management help to improve the quality of teaching and learning for the poor and disadvantaged? This article reviews 12 country case studies for evidence of their effectiveness. It suggests that school development features that contribute to learning outcomes – such as curriculum development, teacher assessment and student assessment – need to remain the responsibility of education professionals. A realistic model of community empowerment in support of basic education would involve both community and professional involvement.

**Banerjee, A. V. et al., 2008, *Pitfalls of Participatory Programs: Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation in Education in India*, World Bank, Washington DC**

<http://www->

[wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/04/23/000158349\\_20080423083903/Rendered/PDF/wps4584.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/04/23/000158349_20080423083903/Rendered/PDF/wps4584.pdf)

This paper evaluates three different participatory interventions aimed at improving education in Uttar Pradesh, India: providing information, training community members in a new testing tool, and training and organising volunteers to hold reading camps for illiterate children. It seems that participant attitudes are important – for example, the large group action entailed in information and testing was perceived as unsustainable and not worth the effort. Small group action, however, was found to be effective and requires little coordination. Sector differences are important: individuals can observe the non-delivery of health services more easily than the non-delivery of teaching. Other findings were that poor people may not perceive quality of education as worth fighting for, and that collective action needs to be learned over time.

One strategy designed to empower villages to demand better quality education is to provide villagers with information such as the names of local (village) officials responsible for education, the funds available for education, and the number of children in the village who are unable to read.

The authors examined the impact of a programme in India that attempted to raise school quality by hiring additional teachers, especially female teachers. An Indian NGO, Seva Mandir, runs nonformal schools that teach basic numeracy and literacy skills to children who do not attend formal schools and, in the medium term, attempts to “mainstream” these children into the regular school system. These schools are plagued by high teacher and child absenteeism, so the NGO decided to evaluate the impact of hiring a second teacher (where possible, a woman) in the hope of increasing the number of days the school was open, increasing student attendance, improving performance through individualized attention to students, and making school more attractive to girls. The programme reduced the number of days a school was closed (one-teacher schools were closed 44 percent of the time, whereas two-teacher schools were closed 39 percent of the time), and girls’ attendance increased by 50 percent. However, the program had no significant effect on the attendance of boys. One possible interpretation is that more girls are at the margin of choosing between some schooling and no schooling and that they would have been attracted to school by additional teachers independent of the teachers’ gender. Another interpretation is that girls were attracted by hiring female teachers. Some weak support for the latter hypothesis is provided by the fact that the effect on girls’ enrolment was smaller when the original teacher was female. This is consistent with the possibility that the presence of at least one female teacher is important in providing a role model for girls but that the addition of a second female teacher has a comparatively minor role-model effect. There is no clear evidence of the programme impacting test scores either positively or negatively.

**Gaumer, G. & Beswick, J. *Voice Interventions and the Quality and Responsiveness of Public Services in Low- and Middle-income Countries (LMICs) Does Voice Improve Quality and Responsiveness (Draft for Comment)***

<http://sihp.brandeis.edu/ighd/PDFs/Voice-Quality-Responsiveness-July-08.pdf>

Voice interventions of various kinds have been widely used to create accountability in managers of public programs. In this paper, evaluation literature was reviewed to understand the findings with regard to the impact of voice interventions on quality and responsiveness of public services. The literature on 'voice' interventions is broad, but very few studies focus on quantitative outcomes that bear on impacts of 'voice' interventions. Most of the literature represents case studies relating the design or implementation of projects, and the evaluation work is most concerned with fostering participation. While there is some evidence of these interventions not working at all, the primary finding is that voice may well build citizen participation and some measure of accountability of service providers, but there is little measurable evidence that service quality has improved. The studies do not really permit a comparative effectiveness assessment of different kinds of 'voice' interventions, even though the positive effects appear most pronounced for 'community scorecard feedback' types interventions.

**Glewwe, P. and Kremer, M., 2005, *Schools, Teachers, and Education Outcomes in Developing Countries*, University of Minnesota/University of Harvard**

<http://www.givewell.org/files/DWDA%202009/Interventions/EconEducationHandbook.pdf>

About 80% of the world's children live in developing countries. Their wellbeing as adults depends heavily on the education they receive. School enrolment rates have increased dramatically in developing countries since 1960, but many children still leave school at a young age and often learn little while in school. This chapter reviews recent research on the impact of education and other policies on the quantity and quality of education obtained by children in developing countries. The policies considered include not only provision of basic inputs but also policies that change the way that schools are organised. While much has been learned about how to raise enrolment rates, less is known about how to increase learning. Randomised studies offer the most promise for understanding the impact of policies on learning.

## 5. Increasing access of marginalised children

**Ahmad, A. 2003, *Inequality in the Access to Education and Poverty in Bangladesh*. "Access to Secondary Education and Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh" financed by SAREC. An earlier version of the paper was presented at the Poverty Conference, Stockholm 17-18 October, 2001 organised by Sida.**

[http://www.nek.lu.se/publications/workpap/Papers/WP03\\_5.pdf](http://www.nek.lu.se/publications/workpap/Papers/WP03_5.pdf)

This paper explores the relationship between levels of education and poverty through an analysis of household-level data from Bangladesh. The relationship between education and poverty is a circular one: the lack of secondary-level education may force poor households to engage in low-productivity activities, and results in poverty. On the other hand, poverty leads to low investment in education. The paper focuses on the access to education among different classes of rural household, variations of income according to occupation and educational level and the main determinants of income.

Poor households in Bangladesh cannot afford to keep their children until they complete the secondary level because of high costs – both direct costs and opportunity costs. Inequality in the access to secondary education is the main cause of persistent poverty in Bangladesh. The recent improvement of female participation rates in both primary and secondary levels confirms the favourable impact of targeted approach. Policies should be directed to both boys and girls from poor households.

Recent statistics indicates that while the access to primary education has improved the access to secondary education of male children has deteriorated especially among the landless households. In Bangladesh, non- farm activities generate higher income than farm activities, and the level of education determines the ability of households to engage in such activities. Unequal access to education has, therefore, serious implications - it perpetuates income inequality, and limits the impact of economic growth on poverty reduction.

The access of the poor population to education and its changes over time is reflected in enrolment rates at different levels. In 1988, a large proportion of children from the landless households were not enrolled in primary school (46 per cent). There is an increase of 44 percent in 12 years. By 2000, the enrolment rate has reached 98 percent indicating that almost everybody has access to primary level education. Progress has been made with respect to secondary level as well. However, both the level and the rate of progress are lower than the primary level. Only 29 per cent of children were enrolled in secondary school, and the figure went up to 41 per cent in 2000 recording an increase of 41 per cent compared to 44 per cent at the primary level.

Inequality in the access to education is reflected in the lower enrolment of poor children at secondary (41 per cent) than the general level (61 per cent). The rate of decline among the poor households is greater (7 per cent) than the whole population (3 per cent). Exactly the opposite is true for girls from the landless households. The rate of enrolment of girls has risen rapidly mainly because of the poverty alleviation programmes of many NGOs, and lower opportunity costs of sending girls to school even among poor households. Inequality is most evident at college level. Only 9 per cent of young people from poor households are enrolled in college compared to 24 per cent of the whole population. Although the rate of progress is high mainly because of the low initial base, there is a wide gap in the access to high education.

Investment in education depends on the demand for and supply of education, the demand being affected by benefits of education and supply by costs of education. In Bangladesh, social benefits of education are especially high for primary level, but for individual households in rural areas it is the secondary education that gives high returns.

While social benefits of primary education are high in Bangladesh due to its impact on health, mortality and fertility of the population, private benefits are higher for secondary education than for primary education. The analysis of household-level data indicates that poor households have limited access to secondary education due to high costs, mainly opportunity costs, of education at upper level. Hence, the rural poor in Bangladesh are trapped in the vicious circle of low education and low income.

Given the increasing importance of education in generating income in the non-farm sector, economic policies should be directed to improve the access of poor households to secondary education. This requires not only targeted subsidies to poor children at secondary level but also measures that would improve the performance of children at the upper level of primary school. Higher achievement at primary level would motivate the poor families to invest in the secondary level of education of their children. The recent improvement of female participation rates in both primary and secondary levels confirms the favourable impact of targeted approach. Policies should be directed to both boys and girls from poor households.

**World Bank. 2005, *Education sector strategy update.***

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/ESSU/Education\\_Sector\\_Strategy\\_Update.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/ESSU/Education_Sector_Strategy_Update.pdf)

This document builds on the World Bank's 1999 sector strategy for education. With the broad goal of achieving basic education for all, the 1999 strategy focused on the poorest children and girls, early childhood interventions, innovative delivery, and systemic reform. These

priorities remain valid today. Nonetheless, they need to take account of some significant recent changes in the international environment, including the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All Fast Track Initiative; wider recognition of the impact of HIV/AIDS on education; greater concern about the huge learning gaps across and within countries; higher demand for secondary education; and greater awareness of the role of tertiary education and lifelong learning in promoting knowledge-driven economic growth. Furthermore, our knowledge has deepened as a result of important new analytical work, including the 2004 World Development Report, Making Services Work for the Poor, and several reports prepared by the education sector.

**Kremer, M. And Holla, A. 2008, *Improving Education in the Developing World: What Have We Learned From Randomized Evaluations?* Originally prepared for the World Bank's Commission on Growth and Development**

[http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kremer/files/Annual\\_Review\\_081110%20-%20NO%20TRACK%20CHANGES.pdf](http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kremer/files/Annual_Review_081110%20-%20NO%20TRACK%20CHANGES.pdf)

Three randomized studies in Kenya measure the responsiveness of school participation to reducing out-of-pocket costs of education. Historically, parents of school children had to provide uniforms, which cost about \$6, slightly under 2 percent of Kenya's per capita GDP. Students in primary schools where funds for uniforms were provided by a third party, remained enrolled an average of 0.5 years longer after five years and advanced an average of 0.3 grades further than their counterparts in comparison schools.

Providing free uniforms to young primary school students was shown to reduce absenteeism by one-third, or 6 percentage points. Providing free uniforms to sixth grade girls was shown to reduced dropout rates by 2.5 percentage points from a baseline rate of 18.5 percent and reduced their childbearing by 1.5 percentage points (from a baseline rate of 15 percent). It reduced boys' dropout rates by 2 percentage points from a baseline rate of 12 percent. Subsidizing education can further increase school attendance.

Across a range of contexts, prices and subsidies such as conditional cash transfers have large impacts on school access. Merit scholarships can provide incentives for students (and households) to increase current investment in education. School health programs and programs that inform students about earnings differences among people with different levels of education offer an opportunity to improve school attendance at very low cost. In several cases, increasing existing inputs, such as teachers or textbooks, had limited or no impact on learning. A more detailed examination of the results suggest that this may be due to distortions in education systems, including curricula tailored to the elite and weak teacher incentives. Several evaluations found that technology assisted learning, remedial education, and tracking, which work around these systems distortions, can dramatically raise test scores at low costs, especially for students that typically get left behind.

**George Oduro and Mike Fertig, *School level initiatives to improve education quality for disadvantaged learners*, EdQual presentation, November 2010**

<http://www.edqual.org/publications/presentations/schoolinitiatives.pdf>

This presentation discusses measures that can be taken at a school level to enhance the quality of education provided. It looks at case studies and examples to show the importance of capacity building and community involvement to education at the local level.

## 6. Additional information

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