Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity

Supporting Non-state Providers in Basic Education Service Delivery
Pauline Rose

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Consortium for Research on
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List of Acronyms

ACBAR   Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief

AFED   Association of Formidable Educational Development

APPS   Association of Private Proprietors of Schools

CARE   Cooperation for Advancement, Rehabilitation and Education

CBA   Community-Based Approaches

CSRSP   Community Supported Rural Schools Programme

EFA   Education for All

INGOs   International Non-Governmental Organisations

MOEST   Ministry of Education

NAISA   National Alliance of Independent School Associations of Southern Africa

NEF   National Education Foundation

NGOs   Non-Governmental Organisations

NSPs   Non-State Providers

PRISAM   Private Schools Association of Malawi

RNGPS   Registered Non-Government Primary Schools

SAP   Social Action Programme

SD   Social Development

SSA   Sub-Saharan African

UPE   Universal Primary Education

Acknowledgements

Preface

This research review is one of a cluster of CREATE research outputs that address questions concerned with the roles that non-government providers can play in extending access to unserved children and communities. The paper was commissioned by DFID's Policy Division to contribute to greater insight into the nature of Non State providers, and the potential for them to contribute to the achievement of the education related AFA goals and MDGs.

The paper offers definitions that help distinguish different types of providers, discussions of issues of quality, accountability, choice, comparative advantages, contracting out, and modalities for support. The sectors is large and is growing in some of the poorest countries. The insights from this paper will inform subsequent empirical research.

Professor Keith Lewin
Director of CREATE

Summary

Basic education is commonly regarded as a state responsibility. However, in reality, non-state providers (NSPs) have always been involved in basic education service delivery, and there is often a blurring of boundaries between state and non-state roles with respect to financing, ownership, management, and regulation. In recent years, the focus on the role of non-state providers (NSPs) has intensified within the context of the move towards achieving Education for All (EFA). The paper considers this shift, with particular attention towards service delivery to 'underserved groups', defined as those for whom access to affordable government services of appropriate quality is most problematic. In some cases, this refers to particular sub-groups of a population within a country. In other cases (notably fragile states), it can refer to large sections of the country's population. The paper indicates the wide range of NSPs that exist to serve different underserved groups. It notes that NSPs are commonly viewed as having a comparative advantage over state provision - in terms of quality, cost-effectiveness, choice, accountability to citizens etc. However, in reality there is very limited robust analysis to support some of these claims.

The paper then considers the ways in which non-state providers engage with the state in education service delivery, including with respect to contracting, policy dialogue, and regulation - and the role that donors play in this relationship. The paper concludes that relations between NSPs and the state are not straightforward given the range of different providers involved in education service delivery, with those serving the better-off tending to dominate engagement with government. This can be at the expense of smaller-scale, informal providers aiming to support those otherwise under-served by government provision. As such, the paper argues that there is a need for 'real' on-going dialogue which recognises the diversity amongst NSPs, to ensure collaboration between NSPs and government benefits the underserved and so assists in moving towards the achievement of EFA goals.

Supporting Non-State Providers in Basic Education Service Delivery

1. Non-State Providers

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is on 'basic education services', with concern for the minimum service required to support basic needs. This requires attention to the primary level of education as this is the level at which education is both understood as a fundamental right, as well as important for human and social development (Colclough, 1996; Hannum and Buchmann, 2005). It is, however, recognised that other levels of schooling play an important role both in achieving universal primary education (for example, in ensuring sufficient numbers of trained teachers), as well as through ensuring appropriate skills to contribute to development.

State provision of primary education has commonly been justified on the grounds that there would be under-investment if left to the market. At the heart of this justification is the notion of education as a 'public good' given that benefits of educational investment not only accrue to individuals through enhanced life opportunities but also have positive contributions to society at large (Colclough, 1996). These benefits include contributions to economic growth through increased productivity in the labour market, as well as 'externalities' in terms of reduced fertility, improved health etc. Arguments in favour of state provision are made most forcefully in support of lower levels of education, while private benefits at higher levels are considered to outweigh social benefits (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002). Despite the attention given to achieving universal primary education since targets were set at UNESCO regional conferences in the 1960s, which have gained even greater national and international attention since the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All, approximately 115 million children of primary school-going age are estimated to be out of school (UNESCO, 2005c).

The paper is particularly concerned with service delivery to 'underserved groups' – meaning those for whom access to affordable government services of appropriate quality is most problematic. This raises important questions about assessment of 'appropriate quality', which cannot be easily identified in the context of education (UNESCO, 2005a). For the purposes of this paper, quality will be considered from the perspective of those potentially using the service. This includes low income households not sending children to government schools available on the grounds of their perceptions of poor quality, and so 'choosing' private schools. Consideration will also be given to the 'underserved' in terms of those unable to access government-provided primary education due to supply-side constraints. In the education context, 'underserved' also raises issues of other forms of exclusion (gender, street children, pastoralists, indigenous groups, language, faith, disability, refugees, etc.) (Sayed and Subrahmanian, 2003; UNESCO, 2004). These forms of exclusion may interact with income-related poverty, but can also result in children not being able to go to school for socio-cultural reasons etc. (Colclough et al., 2003).

In recent years, attention is being paid to the role that non-state providers are and could play in scaling up service delivery, particularly to those under-served by the government system. This is, in part, in recognition that the state has been unable to fulfil its role in extending access of appropriate quality to all children in the context of the Education for All (EFA)

agenda since the 1990s. As emphasis has been placed on expanding access to primary schooling including through fee abolition, private provision at relatively low fee levels has grown to fill the gap. In addition, in some countries, NGOs, faith-based and philanthropic associations also play a role in supporting education provision to those underserved by the government system. In addition, the global governance agenda questions the need for direct state provision – i.e. that while it is important to ensure schooling is available to all; this could be achieved through the support of different providers rather than necessarily through state provision, although the state generally continues to be seen as provider of last resort (World Bank, 2002d). Given that these non-state providers (NSPs) are potentially contributing to the achievement of EFA, questions arise of the ways in which government can collaborate with these providers, in particular to ensure that children underserved by state provision are not denied access to a basic education, and the role that external agencies could play in supporting this. Examples of such collaboration are drawn from the countries which formed the focus of the DFID NSP programme[1], supplemented by evidence from other countries – particularly ones designated as 'fragile' – in order to gain a broader range of experience.

1.2 Defining Non-State Provision in the Education Context

Private education has been defined as:

> 'all formal schools that are *not* public, and may be founded, owned, managed and financed by actors other than the state, even in cases when the state provides most of the funding and has considerable control over these schools (teachers, curriculum, accreditations etc)' (Kitaev, 1999: 43).

This definition highlights the complexity of distinguishing between private/public spheres in education, with different arrangements possible in relation to provision/financing/regulation. Even where schools are owned and managed by the private sector, they are often subsidised by the government who pays the costs of curriculum development, inspection, examinations, and teacher training. In most cases, the state attempts to maintain some control over all education institutions (both private and public) through regulation (see below).

'Actors other than the state' may include NGOs, faith-based organisations, communities and commercially-oriented private entrepreneurs ('edupreneurs'), each with different motives for their involvement in education. There is, however, a blurring of the distinction between for-profit and not-for-profit institutions, and the motivations for profit-making in education may differ between schools, with implications for the type of education offered. Tooley (2001) suggests, for example, that headteachers of private schools interviewed in Andhra Pradesh, India which were run on commercial business principles, claimed to be motivated by a concern for the poor communities in which they worked. On the other hand, NGOs, commonly thought to be philanthropic in their aims, may be established as a means to acquire donor resources (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002).

Data collected by UNESCO as part of its 'World Education Indicators' survey classifies an educational institution as private 'if is controlled and managed by a non-government organisation (eg religious group, association, enterprise) or if its governing body consists mainly of members not selected by a public agency' (UNESCO, 2005b: 45). The report notes that this classification is based on governance rather than financing criteria. It further differentiates between government-dependent private schools – ie ones receiving more than

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[1] Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

50 percent of their budget from the state; and independent private schools – ie ones receiving less than 50 percent of their budget from the state.

There are a variety of other ways in which private and public roles intersect to provide education. Voucher schemes are advocated on the grounds of allowing parents and students to choose between different types of schools, where vouchers can be redeemed to help offset all or part of the cost at either public or private schools (World Bank, 2002c).[2] It is suggested that vouchers can help to encourage innovation and, through promoting competition and choice, improve efficiency in both public and private schools (Patrinos, 2005). Vouchers are more common in relatively developed systems, including examples in Latin America, but there are extremely few examples of these in low-income sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. Higher proportions of private enrolment are evident in countries where voucher schemes are in operation (UNESCO, 2005b). However, there are very few rigorous evaluations of voucher schemes in developing countries (Kremer, 2003).

A more recent development is 'contract schools' which remain publicly owned and funded, but are managed by the private sector in exchange for a management fee, although again there are no examples of these in the sub-Saharan Africa context, and few in low-income countries more generally (World Bank, 2002c). It is also noted that this has been controversial in countries where it has occurred (Patrinos, 2005). Within public education institutions there may be contracting-out to private companies of some aspects of the service (for example, education management services, quality assurance services etc) (Pampallis, 2004). The private sector may also be involved in education through the supply of educational inputs to both private and public schools – including publication of textbooks and other learning materials, building schools and other infrastructure, running student hostels etc (World Bank, 2002c).

Private tutoring is widespread in some countries, occurring most frequently in urban areas. Some tutors specialise in this activity and take it on as a full-time occupation, but more often it is undertaken by teachers employed in the public sector working outside school hours to earn extra income. In some societies this type of work is an economic necessity because teachers' salaries are very low (Bray, 2003).

There are numerous examples where NGOs and communities have provided support to state schools without taking over the overall management, with the primary responsibility for delivery remaining with the state. There is some concern that in sub-Saharan Africa this has resulted in forms of extraction from poorer communities. In reality, rural communities have been expected to provide support in the form of materials and labour, even though the intention has been to empower the communities to hold schools more accountable, while governments continue to support urban schools where 'communities' are more fragmented (Bray, 2000; Rose, 2003a). There are more notable innovative examples of non-state support to government provision in South Asian countries (Boxes 1 and 2). Even so, there is concern here too that government emphasis on community participation is resulting in shifting of responsibility. For example, in India, the 2003 Free and Compulsory Education Bill has been criticised for shifting the state's constitutional responsibility to parents and local communities (Nair, 2004).

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[2] Some define voucher schemes more broadly, to include 'voucher-like schemes' such as targeted scholarship programmes (or conditional cash transfer programmes) aimed at low-income households, girls etc (see, for example, Patrinos, 2001). In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asian countries, these are often supported by international agencies and are usually focused on increasing access to government schools at the primary level.

Box 1 NGO support for government schooling in India

Pratham, an NGO that started in 1994 in Mumbai and today is operating in 13 states of India, runs numerous education programmes, two of which involve strengthening education in state schools. Its Balsakhi Remedial Education program focuses on municipal schools and is designed to help children who are identified by their class teachers as lagging behind academically. A Balaski (meaning child's friend) is provided by Pratham, and is selected from the local community with a 12 grade education. The Balsakhis work with 25-30 children and are sent to schools on the request of the headteachers.

Its Akhar Setu Programme focuses on children who are working or supporting their parents and therefore are unable to attend regular school. Under this programme children are formally registered in a nearby Government school with the rights and privileges similar to that of children regularly attending that government school. Pratham holds regular classes for these children in the community. Children are allowed to participate in all the extra curricular activities of the schools. All the children are required to take the exam conducted by the school and get their certificate from the school. The head teacher of the school to which such a student is affiliated is required to make a periodic and random visit to this class and verify attendance once a month.

Source: http://www.pratham.org/ [accessed 1/2/2006]

Box 2 Non-state support to primary teacher training in Pakistan

Some philanthropic or high-fee charging schools in Pakistan have engaged in programmes that can help strengthen the quality of education in government primary schools. For example, the Ali Institute's Training and Resource Centres, which are primarily meant to serve schools with poor children, are hosted in a well-off private or philanthropic school in the area. The school provides the space for the resource centre and the training sessions. It also covers other expenses, at times including the trainers' salaries, while the trainer provides training to all the state schools and non-formal community schools in the area. These schools, however, bear none of the costs. The reason the well-off schools agree to such an arrangement is that this is still a more economical way for the richer schools to train their teachers rather than sending them on the teacher training courses run commercially by the Ali Institute or Aga Khan Institute of Education, Karachi. Some international donors, including DFID, have supported this initiative at various stages.

Similarly, VSO teacher trainers are popular with the private and philanthropic schools given the high demand for primary and English language teacher trainers. However, due to its growing focus on working with the poor, VSO in the past few years had started to refuse providing trainers to elite schools. But, given the continuing demand for trainers from the elite schools on the one hand, and the failure of the Pakistani government to utilise these trainers on the other hand, VSO Pakistan adopted a 'cluster approach'. Under this approach, the elite schools requesting for the VSO trainer host the trainer and provide the monthly salary but they have to share the trainer with four to five government or community schools in the area

Sources: VSO, 2000 & 2001. http://www.aie.edu.pk/tarcAreas.htm [accessed 1/2/2006]

In summary, definitions of NSPs indicate a blurring of boundaries between state and non-state responsibilities, indicating different ways in which they can cooperate in service delivery.

This ranges from NSP support to government service delivery in relation to supporting the supply of inputs, management, and associated services to non-state management and running of government schools, as well as their independent establishment of non-state schools (Table 1). In addition, governments and NSPs may take responsibility for different aspects of service delivery, requiring different forms of interaction (Table 2). Each of these forms of interaction imply a different relationship with the state, which can range from informal to formal contractual arrangements, as well as different roles in policy dialogue, forms of regulation, and of facilitation, as discussed below.

Table 1 Summary of scope and forms of non-state provision for basic education service delivery

Types of providers	Forms of non-state provision
• Commercially-driven private entrepreneurs • NGOs • Faith-based organisations • Philanthropic associations • Spontaneous community-based	*NSP support to government service delivery* • Supply inputs to government schools (eg learning materials) • Support infrastructure development (eg school building) of government schools • Support management of government-run schools • Supply associated services (eg inspection, teacher training) *NSP service delivery* • Manage and run government schools • Establishment and running of non-state schools • Private tuition to supplement government provision

Table 2 Examples of areas of government/NSP responsibility

Function	Government/Private responsibility
Setting of policy objectives	Predominantly government, with varying but often weak consultation and engagement with NSPs.
Curriculum development	Government responsibility in all but usually high cost international, private schools
Assessment and examinations	Government responsibility except in high cost schools taking international qualifications
Monitoring and regulation: • setting of fee levels • length of school day/year • language of instruction • teacher pay and conditions • class size • type of facilities	Government regulation/self-regulation Fee levels often not regulated by government Generally set by governments but often not regulated, with variations for NGOs in particular In principle, expected to conform with national policy, but in practice often in an international language (eg English) in private schools Usually at the discretion of NSP; may or may not be subject to labour law requirements Under control of governing bodies and proprietors; may be subject to nominal regulation Generally specified in government regulations for licensing and registration of private schools; often not enforced
Funding and taxation	Wide range of wholly NSP funding to subsidies of different kinds, including payment of teacher salaries in some systems

Source: Adapted from Rose, 2005a.

2. Scale and Importance of NSPs

In most countries, it remains the case that government is the main provider of education, with private providers filling the gap in poor quality government provision (meeting excess demand); NGOs, philanthropic associations and communities providing access to those unable to access the government system (due to insufficient or inappropriate supply), and religious organisations meeting differentiated demand. Some non-state providers provide access to schooling opportunities for the poor, either explicitly as part of the design of their programme or by default, in response to excess demand to which the government is unable to respond.

NSPs have a long history of educational service delivery in many developing countries. These include the activities of missionaries and other faith based organisations, those of not-for-profit community and international NGOs often focusing on under-served areas, and those of for-profit private institutions catering to domestic elites. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, NSPs were established prior to mass public education (Peano, 1997). In many of these countries post-independence, education systems were nationalized. However, in practice this was untenable and, by the 1980s, in the context of economic liberalization more generally, governments began again to recognize and tolerate their existence, and sometimes actively encourage their provision.

Of the NSP countries, with the exception of Pakistan, most children gain initial access to primary schooling (UNESCO, 2005a). However, apart from South Africa, a significant number of children are unable to complete the primary cycle, with dropout from school caused by both demand-side factors related to cost and labour demands, and supply-side factors affecting distance from school and (perceptions) of quality (Colclough et al., 2003). The poor are most likely not to be in school (Figure 1). These children are most likely to reside in rural areas, where school provision is most constrained (UNESCO, 2005c).

Figure 1 Out-of-school children by poverty status
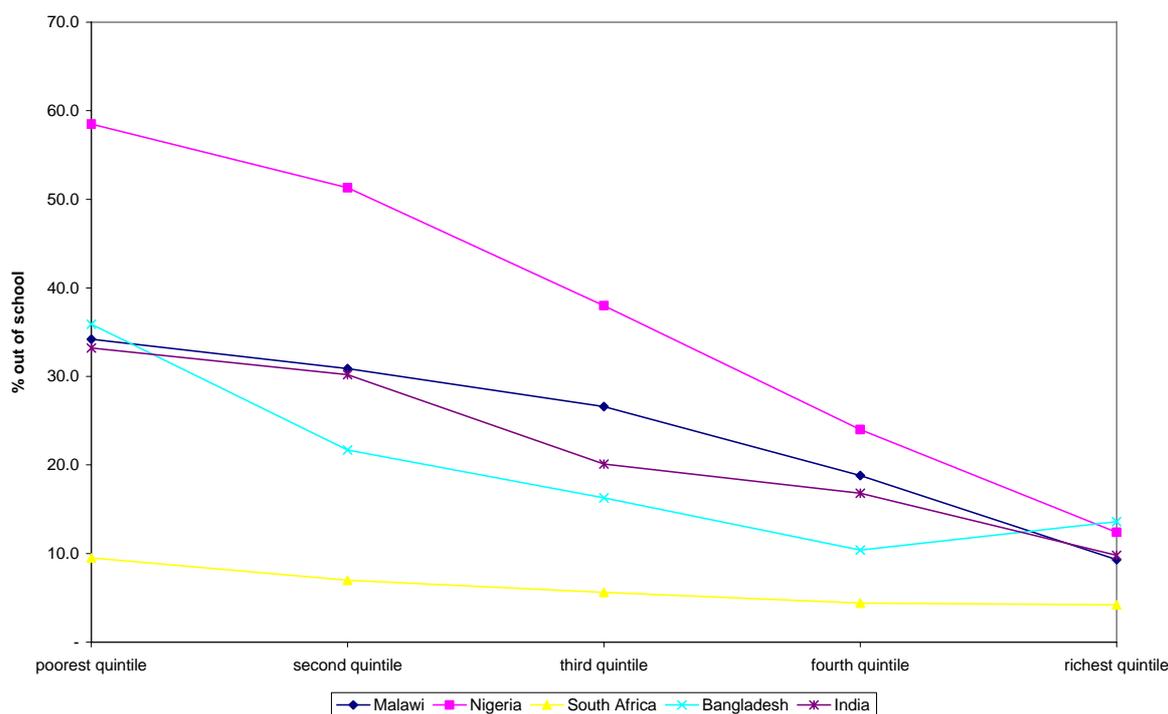
Note: DFID NSP project countries - Data unavailable for Pakistan. However, alternative sources confirm this pattern in Pakistan - the net enrolment rate is 37 percent for the poor compared with 59 percent for the non-poor. This pattern persists across rural and urban regions of all provinces (World Bank, 2002a).

(Source: UNESCO, 2005c).

2.1 Private Provision

Private providers of basic education in many developing countries offer services across a wide spectrum of fee levels. Those of particular concern for this paper are ones charging relatively low fees, including unregistered schools. Such schools are usually small scale (often with fewer pupils, teachers and space compared with nearby government schools), and owned by individual proprietors. Providers mainly run schools as a business drawing on their own capital, motivated partly by profit although this is not always explicit particularly where it is not legally permitted, as in South Africa.

World Bank poverty assessments and education sector studies for most DFID priority countries highlight that demand for primary schooling is on the rise, which in some countries has led to excess demand for government school places. Universal primary education campaigns accompanied by abolition of primary school fees in many countries during the 1990s are considered by many as an important factor in increasing the demand for education in these countries. In Uganda Universal Primary Education (UPE) campaigns, together with abolition of primary school fees in 1997, are reported to have led to heightened demand for education (World Bank, 2002b). In India, from 1986 there were numerous educational initiatives ranging from the Total Literacy Campaign and Operation Blackboard to District Primary Education Programme and Lok Jumbish, that concentrated on building up parental

demand for education and on expanding and improving the government school system especially at primary level**.** This increased demand for primary education also seems to have influenced the mushrooming of private schools (De et. al., 2002).

UNESCO is the main, and most widely cited, source of internationally available data on private education.[3] However, these data only include officially registered private enrolment, and do not differentiate between the different types of private schooling, which can often range from those catering for the elite, to low-budget private schools. Data from this source need to be treated with *utmost caution*. Variations between countries and fluctuations between years are as likely to be due to differences in definitions and data collection as they are to changes in enrolment patterns.[4] Comparisons between countries are also problematic due to different lengths of school cycles (for example, the primary level in Malawi is an eight year cycle, while in Bangladesh it is five years). The limited evidence available suggests that private provision has been growing in recent years, although it remains small compared to government provision at the primary level (see Appendix 1) (Rose, 2005a).

National data on private schools are usually available in some form, although still often with significant gaps, either because data are not collected for unregistered schools, or because governments do not see it as their responsibility to collect data on private schools even where these are registered, and/or because private schools do not consider that they need to inform the government of their activities (Kitaev, 1999; Kingdon, 2005). It has also been argued that school return data are unreliable because failing/unpopular publicly-funded non-state schools exaggerate their student numbers in order to justify their existence (Dreze and Kingdon, 2001). Available national data in the DFID NSP project countries suggest that the share of private primary enrolment is highest, on average, in countries where overall enrolment is lowest (approximately one-fifth of those enrolled are in private schools in Pakistan), and lowest where the vast majority of children are able to complete the primary cycle (three percent in South Africa) (Kardar, 2001; Kardar, 2002; Dieltens, 2002; Rose, 2005b; Hinchcliffe, 2002).

There are indications that the increase in for-profit private schools is a relatively recent phenomenon for most countries. Even China, which has maintained a centralised state schooling system for many decades, has in recent years started to encourage involvement of the private sector. In the early 1980's private schools were set up in cities like Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Beijing. By the end of 1998, there were about 8.6 million students at private elementary schools, although this was still only approximated to 1 percent of the total enrolment in elementary schools. With liberalisation of the economy more general, their share is steadily growing (Jiang, 2000).

Private provision also varies considerably within countries. Tooley's mapping of private schools in selected urban and peri-urban areas in India, Ghana and Nigera provides an indication of the extent of private provision in such contexts, highlighting that it can often be

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[3] The Statistical Profile of Education in SSA (SPESSA) database set up by ADEA (www.adea.org) also includes data on the percentage of private teachers in private schools, and of private schools at the primary and secondary levels. On the whole, these show similar patterns to the enrolment data shown here. The World Bank EdStats database (www.worldbank.org/edstats) includes information on private expenditure on education, although this does not differentiate between expenditure in private and public institutions.

[4] For example, UNESCO data indicate relatively high private enrolment in Bangladesh: this is due to the inclusion of Registered Non-Government Schools which are heavily subsidised by government (who pays most teacher salaries and other recurrent costs).

extensive, implying that the efforts required to achieve EFA in these areas might be less than conventionally expected. For example, in Ghana, Tooley's (2005) study suggests that some private schools, many of them 'unrecognised', operate in low income urban periphery areas and provide better quality primary education to poor households, than state schools. His research indicates that in a slum area (Ga) outside the capital, Accra, approximately two-thirds of children are enrolled in private schools, one-third of whom are in unregistered schools. Tooley's analysis of the low income urban periphery cannot, however, be extended to a typical rural household population. Low income urban populations, such as the Ga district in Ghana, actually have access to resources that the typical rural poor is unlikely to have, even to afford the most highly subsidised private school. A USAID sponsored survey (2002) of public/private schools in Ghana in 2001 found that most parents of pupils attending private schools were traders (34%) or had jobs in the public sector (about 15%), while over one-half of parents of children in government schools were farmers.

In Nigeria, three-quarters of children in school are estimated to be enrolled in registered and unregistered private schools in the economic centre of the country of Lagos state (Tooley, 2005) compared with around one-fifth in Enugu (Hinchcliffe, 2002). Even so, according to Tooley's estimates, about one-quarter of children remain out of school even in Lagos. In Pakistan, before 1990, less than 20 percent of all private schools established were located in rural regions, but from 1990 to 2000, this number has increased, and now remains stable at close to 50 percent. However, the enrollment in urban private schools still outnumbers that of rural private schools by a ratio of 3:1 (World Bank, 2002a). A study comparing a rural and urban school in Balochistan, Pakistan, shows that urban parents were more willing and better able to pay for private schooling. Also, the authors argue that rural areas are less likely to support large number of private schools simply because of practical modalities of running private schools. In the urban areas, the schools have advantages like attracting good managers and teachers at a relatively low cost and are particularly successful in attracting female teachers (Alderman et. al., 2003).

India has also witnessed a surge in private schools. According to official statistics, in 1993, only 2.8 per cent of all rural primary school students in India were studying in private schools but according to household survey data for the same year, 10.1 per cent of all rural Indian 6-10 year old school attendees went to a private school (Kingdon, 2005). Household survey data over time shows that in urban India, 61 per cent of the increase in total primary schools enrolment in the period 1986-1993 was absorbed by private schools. In rural India the rate of expansion of private primary schooling was slower: only about one-fifth of the increase in rural primary enrolment was taken up by private schools (Kingdon, 2005). Kerala is the state in India that subsidises the highest proportion of private schools in addition to providing scholarships and transportation subsidies. It is argued that this could have supported the high proportion of children in school compared with other states (although an important reason for this is historical emphasis on social development in Kerala, with relatively high levels of government expenditure). Even so, government schools are found to serve the poor more than private-aided schools, with the smallest proportion of the poor in private-unaided schools (World Bank, 2003, cited in Nair, 2004). There is some evidence in India of elite private schools providing school places for the poor, albeit through providing a differentiated education maintaining an advantage to those who are able to pay (Box 3). While differentiation may support children who would otherwise have difficulties learning in a language with which they are not familiar, for example, it can raise implications for post-schooling opportunities for different groups of children depending on the type of education they are offered.

Box 3 Elite schools reaching out to the poor - case from India

In India some private schools have initiated 'private school outreach' programmes. These private schools go beyond their usual remit of providing fee-charging education to the middle/upper classes and extend their services to provide a fee affordable education to children in the local area who are out of school. However, a study of three such schools suggests that most of their efforts do not bridge the existing gap marking the quality of education available to the rich and the poor. These private schools provide formal English medium education to a largely middle/upper class clientele, which follows a set curriculum with school leaving examinations that are officially recognized by the government. Their outreach programmes, on the other hand, only provide a basic education in the vernacular medium to children who would otherwise be out of school.

Source: Ashley Day (2005)

2.2 NGO Provision

Since the late 1980s, across many DFID priority countries, there has been a rise in a relatively new form of civil society organisations/NGOs. The New Policy Agenda which focused on economic liberalisation and democratic governance had an important role to play in this, leading to channelling of international development aid to developing countries through non-state groups (Edwards & Hulme, 1995). Most NGOs in these countries draw on donor funds, often channelled through international NGOs who in turn work with national NGOs. NGOs focus on reaching out to children from poor communities, particularly in the underprivileged areas of these countries.

Two types of international agency-supported NGO schools are discernible: ones intending to integrate ultimately into the state system (a model adopted by SCF-UK – see Molteno et al., 1999), and ones operating as an alternative to the state system (as adopted by SCF-US, with the support of USAID). Those intending to integrate into the state system usually operate in a similar way to state schools, using the same curriculum for example. The involvement of the community in these schools is more limited, and can be seen as a temporary, stop-gap, solution in response to the lack of government resources.

A USAID assessment of NGO education programmes in Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi and Mali (where USAID is supporting national NGOs through SCF-US) argues that their roles are similar across the four countries. Most are working at the community level to mobilise parents and other local non-governmental actors to improve conditions and accountability at school levels. It shows that some types of NGO-supported community schools exist in all four countries, often with donor funding. It further argues that in all four countries governments were keen to have NGOs involved in social mobilisation or sensitization programmes to encourage demand for schooling, an activity usually beyond the current scope of government activities (Miller-Grandvaux et al., 2002). In countries such as India and Bangladesh, there is a relatively long history of indigenous NGO service delivery (with BRAC non-formal provision dating from 1985, and dating from the 19th century social reform movement in India) (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005; Nair, 2004).

Examples of non-state provision intentionally aimed at delivering services to the poor are most evident with regard to NGO provision, with experience from Bangladesh frequently cited as providing an innovative example. One of the motivations of NGO involvement in

education in Bangladesh is reported to be related to a small (but growing) educated urban elite which has a strong commitment to modern education for the masses for instrumental reasons (i.e. to transform behaviour and attitudes of the poor in ways which are likely to have broader benefits) (Hossain et al, 2002). While such NGOs provide an important contribution to those underserved by the government system, even in Bangladesh this only comprises about seven percent of total enrolment (CAMPE, 2004). Of these, 60 percent are enrolled in the BRAC primary education programme, with BRAC also sub-contracting primary education programmes to smaller, local NGOs (BRAC, nd). Moreover, the BRAC model has been replicated in other contexts, including in countries such as Malawi and Pakistan, with support from international donors and INGOs, with varying results (see below). In Pakistan, NGOs of this kind are a more recent phenomenon, evident in particular since 2000 (Bano, 2005), emphasised under the heavily donor funded Social Action Programme (SAP).

Alternative provision by NGOs to meet the needs of those excluded from formal schooling (including, for example, those in remote areas, pastoralists, street-children, refugees etc, requiring more flexible modes of delivery) may be considered more acceptable by governments than commercially-orientated private provision because they exist between state and market, and so do not threaten their monopoly over formal schooling (Bennell, 2003). However, there may be limits to this. As NGO provision expands, it is likely to lead to concern for alignment of NGO and government provision to ensure graduates from NGO schools can attend government secondary schools, for example, requiring some equivalency of qualifications, as the experience of BRAC indicates. On the other hand, NGOs may also compete with governments for donor resources, which can result in antagonism between NGOs and governments.

In some cases, NGO provision may be the only form of provision, rather than an alternative – for example, in fragile environments where states do not have the will and/or capacity to provide (Meagher, 2005 – Table 3).[5] This is particularly apparent where donors are supporting service delivery, but unable or unwilling to work through governments. In Afghanistan, NGOs have supported a similar kind of non-formal community based school, even during the Taliban period. The NGOs working in the education sector along with other NGOs also established the umbrella Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR). Similarly, in the post-war reconstruction plans for Afghanistan NGOs have been given a prominent role by all donors in establishing primary schools as well as improving the services of the state schools (Asian Development Bank, 2002).

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[5] More review of education service delivery approaches in different types of fragile state will be addressed more systematically in another paper currently under preparation.

Table 3 Fragile states and service delivery

Type of fragile state	Service delivery options
Deterioration	• Where some willingness exists: central government approaches viable. • If low willingness, use local government provision supplemented by client power approaches: INGO provision, CBAs, co-production, markets. • Local government partnership depends on revenue autonomy, may require support for tax recovery and budgeting. • Supplement market approaches to SD with livelihood support.
Post-conflict transition	• INGO provision is dominant; CBAs may also be important. • Engage government early to build capacity where willingness exists, to establish social policy framework, to plan complementary interventions (e.g. livelihoods and schooling). • Prioritizing, sequencing, and bundling are necessary. • Emphasis on security, public safety, peace-building, low-tech service packages for remote or rebel-held areas.
Arrested development	• Priority is on client power approaches: INGO provision, CBAs, co-production, markets. • Where possible, strengthen information flows, client purchasing power. • Seek out willing ministries and local governments, but engage with caution, due to likely political control by regime.
Early recovery	• 'Adopt' central ministries where appropriate; plan for handover. • Build capacity of state and service providers; strengthen social policy framework.

(Source: Meagher, 2005).

In all the DFID priority countries, there are examples of NGOs focusing on advocacy with the aim to influence government education policy, and this can play a more important part of their role than direct service delivery. National NGOs and coalitions in Malawi and Nigeria, for example, are more concerned with campaigning for improved quality and coverage of government schooling rather than their own direct provision since they see basic service delivery as the responsibility of the state. Advocacy roles can be bolstered by piloting of NGO schools, drawing on innovative experience for campaigning purposes (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005; Adelabu and Rose, 2005).

2.3 Spontaneous Community Provision

The establishment and support of schools by communities has always been evident in many countries, often as a response to the failure of government provision. Colenso (2005) notes two phases in community-based approaches to education - first, investing in 'traditional' links between schools and communities (e.g. parent-teacher associations, school management committees, 'voluntary' cash and in-kind community contributions); and second more formal transfer of school management and service provision to communities. Community participation has been continuously promoted and formalised through both international and national policy, with even greater attention paid to it in recent years. It is not coincidental that a more explicit emphasis on community participation has corresponded with the economic

crises which have adversely affected education systems in sub-Saharan African countries since the 1980s, together with rapid expansion of school systems in the context of the drive for achieving universal primary education and associated abolition of fees to stimulate demand, necessitating the search for alternative sources of resources (Bray with Lillis, 1988; Bray, 1996; Shaeffer, 1992; Watt, 2001).

With respect to community involvement in service delivery, there are examples of communities organising themselves to temporarily fill a gap in government provision. However, there are fewer examples of schools established through the initiative of communities themselves which are sustained without external influence of an NGO, government, or a donor.[6] Where there is dependence on community provision without other forms of support, there is concern for an inferior teaching environment given the severely constrained resources available, including for paying teachers. This is evident in Zambia, for example, where community-initiated schools multiplied in the 1990s as government resources to its own provision dwindled in the context of economic austerity measures (Kelly, 1998, cited in Bray, 2000). As a result, community schools became overflow 'state' schools in urban Zambia, differing from government schools as they are completely funded by local contributions and fees (Hyde, 2003). Bray (2000) argues for government partnerships with such types of community schools if they are to survive and be effective.

Spontaneous community schools involve the community in construction and management of schools. In Kenya, for example, the secondary system evolved largely as a result of community support through *Harambee* schools. These are seen as one of closest examples in sub-Saharan Africa to 'spontaneous grassroots initiative for the delivery of education' (Rugh and Bossert 1998: 36). However, over time, the lower quality of these schools compared with government schools became increasingly apparent, given the limited time and resources communities were able to provide. In general, boys benefited more from the better-resourced state schools while girls were over-represented in the poorer quality community schools (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). *Harambee* schools became merged into the government system in the mid 1980s, when all non-private schools began to receive the same per student government subsidy, although their structures and facilities remained of poorer quality.

Bangladesh offers an interesting example of community-initiated schools, where approximately one-quarter of children are enrolled in Registered Non-Government Primary Schools (RNGPS) (Primary Mass Education Division, 2002). These schools primarily serve relatively poor areas of the country, with a recent study indicating that a larger proportion of those enrolled in RNGPSs are from households below the national poverty line, compared with those in government schools (Asian Development Bank, 2003). As discussed below, once these schools become registered they share characteristics with government schools, although differences remain with respect to recruitment of teachers and aspects of school management which continue to be locally-based.

Payne and Fraser (2004, cited in Colenso 2005) suggest that, where no other providers (government or other forms of NSP) are delivering education, that communities will manage to set up schools, find teachers and pay them, with evidence of this occurring in conflict-affected areas and fragile states. Most schools opened during the civil war in southern Sudan are referred to as 'bush schools', mainly with outdoor classrooms. The curriculum context and

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[6] The majority of the examples of community schools included in Miller-Grandvaux and Yoler's (2002a) review are ones supported by international NGOs and so are considered under the previous section in relation to NGO provision for the purposes of this paper.

school syllabus are not standardised across the primary schools, with the school syllabus of the neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Kenya often adopted. According to an education baseline survey report, almost every primary school in southern Sudan has a community or parents' group involved in its management. Besides building schools, the local communities maintain these schools, cover part of teachers' salaries or incentives and pay school fees for their children (Brophy, 2003; Deng, 2003).

2.4 Faith-based Provision

In many countries, faith-based provision of schooling preceded, and formed the basis for, government provision. In most of African countries, the Church has been an important provider of education, and established formal schooling in many countries in the late 19th century. While these were mainly nationalised following independence from colonialism, the church continued to play a role in the management of the schools that they established. In Lesotho 90 percent of the schools are still run by churches while the government covers most of the costs, including paying teachers (World Bank, 2005b). From early this century until 1953 all education for the African population of South Africa was provided largely by religious organisations, mainly the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church (Mazibuko, 2000).

In both Malawi and Nigeria, the role of church in their schools has changed over the last century, from running and financing, to handing over responsibility to government, with more recent discussions about handing these responsibilities back to the churches. Ministry of Education data in Malawi indicate that, in 2000, churches owned about 64 percent of the primary schools, while government and local education authorities owned about 34 percent (MIM and IPRAD, 2004). As in other parts of SSA, the reasons for this are historical: formal education was introduced by missionaries in the late part of the 19th century and from that time until independence in 1964 they were the major providers of education (Kadzamira and Kunje, 2002). The synods owning the schools aim to ensure that the headteacher is of the same faith, and also have representatives of the church on the school management committee. In other respects, they are funded, managed and regulated in the same way as government schools with some additional support provided by church education secretariats. More recently, financial pressures have led to the government considering handing back assisted and grant-aided schools to their proprietors. However, the government backtracked after it realised that this would comprise the majority of government schools, and would mean relinquishing its control over the education system. In addition, churches realised that taking back control of their schools would effectively mean privatising them as they would no longer receive financial support from the government, and do not have sufficient resources of their own. Unlike previously, the churches no longer receive a substantial amount of donations from missions overseas, and so now have to be self-sufficient. As a result, they would have to charge fees to maintain the schools. Thus, only 8 out of 2834 schools owned by churches are classified as private (MIM and IPRAD, 2004).

In South Asia, missionary schools have also traditionally been important providers of education. At the same time madrasahs (Islamic religious seminaries) have provided free boarding and lodging to their students. Unlike the Church, which in some countries educated the elite while in others was the main provider of education, madrasahs in Pakistan cater exclusively to the poor. Currently, 1 percent of the total school going children are estimated to be enrolled with madrasahs (Andrabi et al, 2005) although some studies give much higher

numbers. For example, International Crisis Group (ICG) estimates that 33 percent of Pakistani children enrolled in schools go to madrasahs (ICG, 2002).

Provision through madrasahs can vary with respect to the extent to which they are primarily run in parallel with the government system (as has been the case in Pakistan), or are complementary to government provision, integrating the national curriculum alongside more traditional Islamic teaching (as currently emphasised in Northern Nigeria). Motivations for governments (and donors) to engage with such religious schools might have less to do with concern for their effectiveness and more to do with political concerns. In the 1980s, for example, the Pakistani government started to give grants to madrasahs but at the same time it encouraged Pakistani madrasahs to support and train the Afghani fighters for the soviet-afghan war. Madrasahs which took in large numbers of the Afghan students received increased government grants (Malik, 1996). Since 2001, the Pakistani government is again providing financial incentives to madrasahs under a US-funded programme, but this time for exactly the opposite reason: to disarm these madrasahs of militancy that the state itself had encouraged in the 1980s. In India, attempts by government to register madrasahs has had limited effect. For example, in the pro-muslim state of Uttar Pradesh, a Madrasah Education Board was set up. However, only 120 out of approximately 20,000 madrasahs registered given fears that this would result in excessive government control (Thakore, 2002, cited in Nair, 2004).

2.5 Philanthropic Provision

Philanthropic provision also has a long tradition in some countries. In South Asia philanthropic associations funded both by individual donations as well as family trusts have been devoted to provision of primary education (PCP, 2002). These organisations have normally focused on the poorest sections of the society. In the Northern Areas of Pakistan, the Aga Khan Foundation, which currently runs 130 schools in the area, has provided free education to the local communities since 1940s (Harlech-Jones et al, 2005). Free schooling for orphan children, including lodging facilities, remains to date one of the most dominant activities among the charitable organisations in Pakistan. *Anjuman-Hamayiat-Islam* (Lahore), and *Anjuman Faizul Islam* (Rawalpindi) are two of the most prominent examples. Innovative experience of philanthropic associations supporting government provision is also evident in the example of the Cooperation for Advancement, Rehabilitation and Education (CARE), supported by philanthropic contributions from individual and corporate funders in Pakistan. In addition to establishing its own private schools, since 1998 it has been involved in the rehabilitation and management of dilapidated government schools in Lahore characterised by high rates of teacher absenteeism.

There is extremely limited evidence of philanthropic provision in sub-Saharan African countries. This gives the impression that such provision is less visible. A possible explanation for this is the importance of a sizeable middle-class and elite for such philanthropic work which might be more apparent in some South Asian countries than in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the validity of this requires more systematic exploration.

2.6 Summary

Overall, from the available evidence on the size and scope of NSP provision according to these different types of providers across DFID priority countries drawing on available

evidence,[7] it is apparent that data are often not available or are extremely unreliable, and information available by type of provider is variable (Rose, 2005a). In order to obtain a clearer picture of the types of provision that exist and so the possibilities for scaling-up to underserved groups, there is an urgent need for mapping of provision in most countries. Where mapping of private schools has been undertaken, this has usually been in a relatively confined context. For example Tooley's work (2005) in India, Nigeria and Ghana has focused on urban and peri-urban relatively-densely populated areas, which cannot be generalised across countries, particularly where the majority of the population live in more sparsely populated rural areas where private entrepreneurs might also be less apparent – as in many sub-Saharan African countries.

The evidence available does indicate, however, that different NSPs cater to those underserved by government provision in a variety of ways (Table 4). Variations of the types, roles and scope of providers across different contexts is likely to depend on the ideological disposition of the state (based on a neo-liberal or rights-based orientation), its capacity and will, as well as the nature of civil society (including the existence of a middle class committed to a modernisation agenda, in which education is seen to play a role). These will be considered below.

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[7] Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam

Table 4 Forms of exclusion addressed by NSPs

NSPs	Exclusion addressed	Government recognition	Funding	Examples
Private	Low-income groups in urban and peri-urban areas, supporting excess demand in context of perceived low quality government provision. Do not address exclusion of poorest, or non-income exclusion, eg gender, caste	Include registered and unregistered schools – unregistered schools do not receive state support. Contribution is often not explicitly recognised in government policy.	Private entrepreneurs Re-invested profit from fees Household contributions	Low-budget private schools in many countries
NGOs	Hard-to-reach groups requiring alternative service delivery models, adopting small-scale innovative approaches – eg pastoralists, street children, language minority groups, refugees etc.	Registration often not on education-related criteria. Usually do not receive state support. May or may not be explicitly recognised in government policy	Donors Charities (eg Comic Relief) Individual/ corporate sponsorship	INGOs, eg Save the Children BRAC, Bangladesh Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, Pakistan
Faith-based organisations	Responsive to differentiated demand, and may include moral obligation to cater for the poor	Some registered (particularly if grant-aided), and recognised in government policy Others choose to avoid government interference	Religious associations/ missionaries Individual/ corporate sponsorship	Madrasahs in India and Pakistan Church-owned schools, Malawi and Nigeria
Spontaneous community approaches	Demand-driven provision often in rural areas	Often undergo process of registration to gain government support	Community Government	Registered Non-Government Primary schools, Bangladesh
Philanthropic associations	Focus on poorest	Often seek government recognition	Individual/ corporate sponsorship	CARE, Pakistan

3. Comparative Advantage of NSPs in Reaching the Underserved

Most stakeholders (including NGOs and the government itself) continue to view primary education provision as the responsibility of the government, with non-state provision seen as complementary to this. From an economic perspective, social benefits are considered to outweigh private benefits particularly at lower levels of education. This is complemented by a rights-based perspective reinforced by concern for the importance of education's role in national cohesion through a common curriculum and opportunities for social mobility. Where NGOs are involved in provision this is usually viewed as a short-term solution to inadequate government provision as well as providing innovate approaches from which lessons can be learnt. NGOs usually intend to have exit strategy seeing their role as temporarily supporting government provision, although the transition from NGO to government provision can be difficult to achieve in practice (see below).

There are exceptions to the view that education should be primarily government's responsibility, particularly from a neo-liberal ideological perspective, with some private providers and other proponents of private provision viewing NSPs as not only desirable in filling an immediate gap, but also seeing possibilities for its extension given their perceived advantages over government provision. This view is supported by the International Finance Corporation arm of the World Bank (Tooley, 2005; Karmokias and van Lutsenburg Maas, 1997).[8]

As discussed in this section, poor quality of state education, lack of state ability to provide state-schooling to all, as well as cost-effectiveness, responsiveness and accountablity of private fee-charging schools, are key reasons put forward for the recent attention paid to NSP.

3.1 Extending Access to Those Underserved by Government Provision

As mentioned, the EFA agenda has been an important influence on increasing demand which is not always satisfactorily met by government provision of appropriate quality. At the same time, some marginalised groups continue to be underserved due to the type of government provision offered.

The abolition of primary school fees in a number of countries in SSA has had a significant impact on enrolment. In Tanzania, the number of children enrolled in primary schools increased by 3 million in 2001, with this rapid growth largely a result of the decision to abolish primary school fees (Wedgwood, 2005). In Uganda, primary enrolment doubled following the 1997 abolition of fees, and increased by 50 percent in Malawi, resulting in a narrowing of primary enrolment gaps between rich and poor and between boys and girls in both countries (Colclough et al., 2003). The effects of fee abolition indicate that demand-side financial constraints had been by far the most important reason for low primary enrolment across different SSA countries. However, this has been accompanied by deteriorating quality of schooling (particularly noticeable with respect to large class sizes in lower primary school grades) as governments have been constrained by limited resources and capacity and so have not been able to respond sufficiently to the quantitative expansion (World Bank, 2002b; Kadzamira and Rose, 2003). As a result, in Malawi, for example, for-profit private schools are reported to have mushroomed in urban and peri-urban areas following democratic elections

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[8] See also www.ifc.org/edinvest

leading to both the introduction of Free Primary Education in Malawi as part of the election promise, simultaneously with the change in the political climate. Even so, observations suggest that the size of NSP is very small relative to state provision (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005).

As noted, flexible approaches adopted by NGOs enable them to reach parts of the population that the government is unable to reach, including in remote areas, pastoralists, refugees, street-children etc., which require alternative and more flexible modes of delivery. Part of their advantage is the ability to work innovatively on a small-scale, at a local level. The intention might then be for such provision to be scaled up and integrated with government provision.

3.2 Choice

A key argument in favour of NSP in education is that this will provide a choice, with a view that this can be important even to relatively low income groups:

> 'It is sometimes argued that many of the lowest-cost private schools provide a very low-quality education and, consequently, poor parents are defrauded by such disreputable schools…Nonetheless, a strong case can be made that a wide quality-price range is efficient and responsive to the variety of felt needs…*Attendance in low cost, low quality private schools is a result of free choice*. Consequently, there is no a priori reason to believe that consumers are not making a rational benefit/cost/risk calculation when they decide to enroll and re-enroll their children or themselves in such schools, given that they have the public school option available to them. *It makes little sense to deny lower income groups such choices, simply because educational standards in some inexpensive schools have lower quality standards than more expensive schools patronized by higher-income groups*.' (Karmokolias and van Lutsenburg Maas (1997): 1 and 12. Emphasis added).

Alternatively, in some cases non-state provision might be the only option for some, often the less well-off who are unable to get access to the limited public school system. An extreme example is highlighted by Salmi (1997), who points out that, in the case of Haiti where the public sector caters for just 10 percent of the primary school-aged population, some families only have the choice of private schooling where 75 percent of primary school children are enrolled. Thus, the growth of private schools has been a substitution for public investment, not an addition. This has occurred in conditions where internal political conflicts have been accompanied by the disintegration of public institutions (Wolff and Castro, 2001).

A study by VSO in Punjab, Pakistan, records concerns of the government school teachers that student attendance in government schools can be undermined by competition from NGO schools, which provide financial incentives, for example school feeding programmes and take-home rations of edible oils (VSO, 2005).

3.3 Cost-effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness is an important motivation for the advocacy of NSPs. It is argued that lower costs per student in private schools can be apparent alongside higher quality and efficiency. However, given problems in delineating the private education sector, and in obtaining accurate information on its financing, very few studies are available to examine adequately the validity of claims that private schools are more cost-effective than public schools. It is often difficult to calculate the precise amounts spent on private institutions since

some of the resources are provided through tax breaks, government funding of teacher training, curriculum design, and sometimes contributions to teacher salaries. Religious institutions often receive substantial funding from their affiliated organisations, not all of which may be accounted for. Where textbooks are provided to private schools this is another form of government subsidy which is often not accounted for.

Furthermore, the objectives of private and public education may differ, making direct comparisons problematic. For example, social goals of public schools may give them a mandate to educate disabled students, the costs of which are likely to be significantly greater (Wolff and Castro, 2001). By contrast, private schools may focus attention on examination success, rather than ensuring a broader education to students. As such, Colcough (1996) argues that relative cost effectiveness may never be satisfactorily answered, perhaps because in many contexts public and private schools are very different products. According to Peano (1997: 64), there is 'an eternal debate' on whether private or public schools are more cost-effective, with studies presenting conflicting conclusions 'using against each other arguments of biased approaches and inaccurate comparisons'.

An important reason why low-budget private schools (as well as NGO schools) can operate at lower costs than government schools is because of possibilities of paying lower teacher salaries, which usually comprise a significant proportion of the recurrent education budget (with teachers often employed on temporary contracts). Tooley (2001) notes that, on average, teachers in private schools visited in India earned significantly less (between $9.50 to $119) than their counterparts in state schools (varying from $95 to $200) although both sets of teachers are generally qualified. In addition, his evidence suggests that teachers are more likely to be absent from state schools than private ones. He proposes that lower teacher salaries is an important reason for lower costs in these schools, while quality is maintained as a result of low pupil-teacher ratios (between 22:1 and 35:1), below that in government schools. High levels of teacher absenteeism observed in government schools could, however, be caused by the existence of private schools. In some countries, where private schools exist alongside government schools, teachers could choose to teach in private schools in order to supplement their government salary. In addition, teacher conditions of service in private schools are often less secure, with teachers employed on short-term, temporary contracts. On the one hand, this is put forward as an argument to support private schooling as it is suggested that it results in more committed teachers. On the other hand, it raises concerns that teachers are likely to be 'motivated' by fear of losing their jobs, and is also not sustainable as cadres of lower paid teachers are likely to unionise to demand improved conditions of service (as has happened with teachers in RNGPSs in Bangladesh).

The few studies available examining the relative efficiency and cost-effectiveness of private and public schooling mainly refer to secondary schools, and usually do not differentiate between different types of private schools (i.e. ones serving the elite as opposed to low budget schools) (see, for example, Lockheed and Jimenez, 1994). More recent evidence in Tanzania, suggests that public secondary schools do perform better on average than their private sector counterparts (Lassibille, Tan and Sumra, 2000). An important reason for higher performance in government secondary schools at this level is due to the selection process. These studies indicate that students do not have a choice between different types of service providers, but rather their only option will be to go to private school if they do not get a place in a better quality government school (although quotas exist by region and gender). A study by Lassibille and Tan (1999) is a rare example of an attempt to measure cost-effectiveness based on disaggregation of different types of private schools. They find that performance deficits in

private schools persist even controlling for school inputs, suggesting that the private schools are actually less efficient than government schools. They recognise that this contradicts earlier evidence from Tanzania and elsewhere which suggested that private schools were more cost-efficient and effective than public schools (Cox and Jimenez, 1990; Lockheed and Jimenez, 1994; James, 1993), implying that the new generation of low-budget private schools which are emerging to fill the gap in the market could be at the expense of equity, quality and achievement. As these studies highlight, it is important to explore complex issues of the relative cost-effectiveness of private and public schools in more detail, with similar approaches needed for gaining an improved understanding with respect to primary schooling.

It is also often suggested that NGO provision is more cost-effective but evidence is limited. Evidence that is presented usually does not include costs of monitoring, administration etc. (which is included in government costs). Given that these forms of support are often an important reason for their success, it is necessary to include such costs in order to consider possibilities of scaling up and replication. Tietjen (1999) offers a rare attempt at assessing cost-effectiveness of NGO education provision, although she recognises gaps in information on some aspects of their costs. She concludes that, while they have a range of benefits, NGO provision cannot necessarily be considered a cheap alternative to the state system as often claimed. In Bangladesh, for example, it is suggested that BRAC's success is more to do with its efficient administration, rather than the role that the community plays (Bray, 2000). Even so, it is important to note that, since NGOs target the most hard-to-reach, they are likely to face high marginal costs given the need to work under difficult conditions in areas where other forms of infrastructure (such as roads) may not be available. In general, even where costs are lower in NSPs, there is a need to examine the reasons for cost differences, and whether lower costs could be sustained, or higher costs maintained, when provision is scaled-up.

3.4 Accountability

Tooley (2001) presents evidence from the Public Report on Basic Education in India (PROBE) that the quality of education is higher in private schools because of the accountability of private schools to parents. While it is undeniable that accountability is important, whether this can only be attained through the private sector, or why it would be more apparent in a situation where a properly functioning market is not evident (as in education), is debatable. The World Bank, for example, proposes that attempts can be made to promote accountability within fee-free government provision through improved community-school relations (World Bank, 2005). Even so, community involvement in schooling can be problematic, as it is often the voices of the most powerful in a community which are heard. Evidence from Malawi indicates, for example, that emphasis on community involvement can reinforce gender divisions of labour where women are expected to undertake unpaid work for the school (for example, carrying water), while men are involved in management committees, or are paid for school construction work etc (Rose, 2003a). This raises questions of who schools are accountable to within a community.

A distinctive feature of NGO-run schools, such as BRAC and its replicas, is attention to encouraging different forms of community participation, with the intention of promoting local accountability. Emphasis is often placed on involving the community in improving the quality of education in schools by involving them in decision-making processes and management of schools, including with respect to recruitment of teachers, monitoring of teacher and student attendance, modification of curriculum (including fewer, more relevant subjects, and choice

of language), etc. The close relationship between communities and schools is generally considered to be a key aspect of the success of these schools.

In Malawi, SCF-US encouraged community roles with respect to recruitment of teachers, discipline of teachers with regard to punctuality and performance, attendance and discipline of students, and timetabling (Dowd, 1997). As a result, communities and school committees from the Village-based Schools were observed to perform more diverse roles than school committees in government schools, most of which were dysfunctional. The role of school management committees in monitoring and following up on absenteeism in Village-based Schools is reported to have reduced dropout rates, particularly for girls. However, the evidence indicates that once SCF-US became less involved in the programme, community involvement was not sustained, in part due to the absence of local NGOs to support this. Malawi's experience indicates that community involvement in contexts where civil society capacity is weak requires sustained external facilitation and support and, even then, could be a burden for poor communities (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005).

Local accountability is particularly key where schools themselves have been established by the community, as in the case of RNGPS in Bangladesh. Although the 'community' is supposed to initiate the establishment of a non-government school through a demand-driven process, it appears that the initiative often does not come from parents in the community but rather from unemployed youth and/or local politicians. The main difference between government and non-government schools relates to their governance – management of RNGPS is decentralised to the school level including with respect to teacher recruitment, while management of government schools is highly centralised - recruitment of teachers being undertaken by the Ministry of Education. In practice, appointment of teachers in RNGPS occurs as a result of local patronage rather than following procedures of recruitment through school management committees, as intended. Given the dominance of local leaders in these decisions, decentralisation to the school level does not result in greater accountability to clients, or increased voice of the poor in decision-making, in practice (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005). Furthermore, there is concern that reliance on community involvement in RNGPS can result in demands placed on poorer communities which already lack capacity, and which do not have the power to prevent elite capture (World Bank, 2002d).

3.5 Quality

Problems of quality of education in state schools are again a common concern in the majority of the countries under study. An important reason for the selection of private schools by parents is the search for better quality of education in the light of concern for deteriorating standards in government schools as a result of expansion in enrolment. As noted, in some African countries, the removal of primary tuition fees has resulted in significant increases in enrolment putting further pressure on already limited government resources for education. This has been accompanied by a growth in parents who are concerned with government school quality, paying for their children to enrol in private schools in urban areas in particular. In Uganda, in tests administered to national random samples of 3rd grade pupils, the number of pupils who achieved a satisfactory score declined from 48 percent in 1996 to 31 percent in 1999 on the mathematics test, and from 92 percent to 56 percent in English oral test (World Bank, 2002b). In Malawi, only seven percent of those taking an achievement test at grade five in 1995 (a year after the fee abolition) showed attainment of basic competencies for that level (UNESCO, 2004).

In this context, arguments are put forward that private schooling can offer better quality as a result of competition and the need to be accountable to those paying for the service. As mentioned, quality may be defined in many different ways in the context of education. Arguments in favour of private provision tend to focus on perceptions of quality, and evidence of learning outcomes in terms of academic achievement. With respect to perceptions of quality, in India and Pakistan, many parents seem to have given up on government schools, although authors question the basis for parental perceptions of better quality in private schools, and argue that going to a private school is more of a mark of social privilege (Khan et al., 2003; De et al., 2002 – Box 4) – an issue also raised in many other contexts.

Box 4 Perceptions of private school 'quality'' in Pakistan and India

'Private schools [in Pakistan] were often able to get away with poor performance because relatively uneducated parents had only abysmal government schooling to compare with private schooling. Indeed, much of the discussion of focus group meetings with parents whose children were in NGO and private schools centered on the disastrous state of government schooling. Many put their children in private school as much from a vague sense of doing best by their child as for the status symbol this has come to represent. More disturbing, poor parents sometimes judged quality by the fee they were paying.'

'Parents [in India] face a difficult choice between low quality and no quality at primary level - and the enrolment in the new schools is mainly at this level. Government schools could be absent (urban areas), or dysfunctional (rural Rampur), or just casual. Parents often helplessly observe while their child struggles through government primary schools and after two or three years of such struggle they put him in a nursery class of a (possibly low quality) private school out of desperation. Often the government school parents have little idea that their child has not learned much. There were, however, also cases where the parents were disillusioned with private schools and moved helplessly from one to the other and even went back to the government school.

(Sources: Cited from Khan et al., 2003; De et al., 2002).

In Malawi and Nigeria, perceptions of quality by parents influencing their demand for private schools include tuition in English, evidence of discipline of both pupils and teachers, and smaller class size. Proprietors stated that, since they are concerned about ensuring that they receive a return on their investment, they monitor the teachers closely. If teachers are not performing (including if they are found not to be teaching in English), proprietors commented that they would sack them. This is possible, given that, unlike in government schools, teachers in private schools do not have permanent contracts, and are often hired on a piecework basis. In addition, proprietors suggested that, unlike governments schools, their schools are not affected by teacher absenteeism due to strikes or moonlighting. Proprietors also claimed that pupil discipline is better in private schools, in part because of smaller class size making it more manageable for teachers to maintain control in the classroom (with often less than 30 in a classroom, compared with over 100 in government schools). In addition, in some situations, teachers are on the premises in these schools until late hours, so that it serves as a childcare centre after school finishes, which is particularly beneficial where both parents are working which is most evident in urban areas, where women work as market traders, for example. As elsewhere, there is little, if any, evidence on the performance of private provision in these countries, although there are concerns that some of these schools operate in unsuitable

facilities (in former bars or houses, for example), with unqualified teachers who are preferred by proprietors as they are cheaper to recruit (Adelabu and Rose, 2005; Kadzamira and Rose, 2005).

Focusing on learning outcomes, some evidence indicates that academic performance is higher compared with that in neighbouring government schools for those able to gain access to private schools (Tooley, 2005). While this is used to suggest that quality is better in these schools, this focuses on academic achievement (which is usually the main concern of the private schools), and does not include a holistic understanding of quality with respect to other learning outcomes that might be desirable (eg critical thinking, influencing of attitudes, values and practices etc). This is not to say that these outcomes are apparent in government schools either, and evidence also indicates that private schools may perform better in terms of teacher attendance etc. (Tooley, 2005). However, it also does not mean that the EFA goal has been satisfactorily been met.

Performance of children in NGO schools is reported to be at least as good as in government schools in these countries (CAMPE 1999; Hyde et al 1996; Dowd 1997; Miske and Dowd 1998; National Rural Support Programme, 2004). In general, the average length of NGO programmes (including BRAC's) is three years, raising concern of whether children can achieve sustainable basic literacy and numeracy in this limited time. This is evident in Bangladesh, where adult literacy rates have remained consistently low, despite efforts of BRAC over the past 20 years.[9] One issue that arises from BRAC's own studies relates to problems students face when transferring from NGO programmes to formal government secondary schools. Graduates from BRAC programmes are allowed to continue their education in these schools although some other NGO programmes are not recognised in this respect given the lack of an equivalency system. Even so, those from BRAC programmes often face difficulties as they are not prepared for the different teaching and learning styles and, therefore, may dropout (Nath, 2002).

With respect to spontaneous community schools in Bangladesh, qualifications of teachers and physical facilities are generally worse in RNGPS compared with government primary schools (Asian Development Bank, 2003; CAMPE, 2001). Despite this, studies indicate that the achievement of basic competencies, which is low overall in the country, tend to be higher on average in RNGPS compared with government primary schools (Asian Development Bank, 2003; CAMPE 1999; CAMPE 2000).

3.6 Equity

Considerations of 'quality' and 'relevance' in comparing government and NSPs do not often extend to attention to broader processes and outcomes from learning (including with respect to the hidden curriculum which can reproduce inequalities through schooling). These are likely to give rise to equity issues – both in terms of access, as well as with respect to post-schooling outcomes.

Equity is probably the most important argument used against NSPs in primary schooling. Despite evidence that private fee-charging schools vary in fee-structure, with low-budget schools catering to the poor, most studies acknowledge that they do not reach to the 'extreme' or ultra-poor. Given the massive increase in enrolment in response to fee abolition in many

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[9] There are, however, no evaluations of the outcomes from BRAC programmes in terms of sustained literacy or livelihood opportunities.

countries, this would suggest that the extreme poor would be unable to afford the fees of private for-profit schools. Evidence suggests that even relatively informal unregistered schools are likely to be beyond the reach of the poorest, many of whom reside in rural areas (Lewin and Sayed, 2005; Rose, 2005b; Lewin and Akyeampong, 2005). For example, even relatively modest fees of $3 per month cited by proprietors of private schools in Malawi are likely to be beyond the reach of the poor (even before other costs of education are taken into account), as this would comprise over one-third of resources available per person in a household for the 65% of the population below the poverty line (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005). A study looking at six locations in educationally disadvantaged districts in India shows that costs remain an excluding factor for private schooling. The extreme poor are dependent on government schools and can generally access only the government primary schools seen to be the worst in the sector (De et al, 2002). According to a recent Census of Private Schools (2000), Pakistan has as many as 40,000 of such private schools, which are mainly a result of significant growth in private schooling over the 1990s (World Bank, 2002a). The increases were distributed across the all expenditure deciles though most pronounced in the higher income groups, with private share in primary enrollment growing from 5 to 10 percent for the lowest decile and from 35 to 60 percent for the highest decile (World Bank, 2002a).

Even so, government schools are not always cheaper for the poor despite being fee-free. Government schools also include many indirect costs, which can be significant for the poor. Sometimes community schools end up being cheaper and thus a more viable option for poor when the indirect costs are taken into count. In Zambia, the government has made education free in all its schools but some state schools still turn away students whose families cannot afford uniforms, books or fee of Parent Teacher Associations. Parents working on sugar plantations say that they choose the private school because it is more practical and cheaper for them to pay its 62 pence monthly fee than to send their children to the nearest state funded school 10 kilometres away (Ngalati, 2006).

Even proponents of private education generally acknowledge potential adverse equity effects, since better quality private schools will tend to attract children from better socio-economic backgrounds, whose parents can afford to pay fees, and perceived social status of attending such schools is likely to provide a signal to future employers. However, proponents consider that the benefits of competition can be balanced with bursaries to support the 'deserving but needy', at the same time as freeing up scarce government resources for public schooling. Tooley (2005) provides evidence that some private providers themselves provide such bursaries – although it is doubtful that they could operate if coverage of these were to extend to the vast majority of populations in low-income countries who are below the poverty line. Colclough (1996) suggests that, while evidence may not be strong enough to suggest privatising existing public sector schools, in countries which are resource-constrained and where excess demand for education remains high, allowing the private sector to meet part of that demand could result in increased levels of enrolment in schools of adequate quality, at no direct cost to the poor (provided government provision is maintained).

In addition, where the middle classes (and now even low-income families) send their children to private schools, they could be inclined to vote for low-cost, low-quality public schooling (James, 1997, cited in Peano, 1997). This is likely to exacerbate a two-tier system – with those able to afford to opt out less willing to pay taxes to support improvements in those 'left behind' in government schools. Certainly, one reason put forward for parental choice of private schools is with respect to their perceived status. An unanswered question is whether children now attending private schools were those who were previously enrolled in fee-

charging government schools (it would seem unlikely that those previously out of school partly because of inability to pay government school fees would now enrol in fee-charging private schools). While their movement to private schools could have freed up some space in overcrowded government schools, the motivation for the choice of private schools could be to maintain social differentiation (that previously existed when they attended government schools, while those from lower social strata remained out of school). This requires exploration of the educational trajectories of those now attending private schools.

Despite international attention given to the promotion of gender equality in education, very little analysis of gender implications of private education is available. There is, however, some evidence of private schools being allowed to operate on the grounds that they are catering for girls who are underserved by the system while, in practice, boys are attending these schools (partly due to low demand for girls' education) (Jha and Subrahmanian, 2004).

With respect to private tuition, Bray (2003) highlights that among the most problematic cases are where teachers are employed in state schools but give private tutoring to those pupils able to pay in the same subjects and sometimes even in the same classrooms. This provides an incentive for teachers to under-teach during official school hours, as an enticement to parents to pay for tuition to ensure children cover the curriculum required to pass examinations thus advantaging children from better-off households. Private tuition is sometimes illegal, but restrictions are not easy to enforce.

Given the importance of certification for gaining access to particular kinds of jobs, involvement in non-formal NGO provision might not facilitate such opportunities. There is extremely limited information comparing opportunities available to children from different types of schooling, with concern that different forms of provision could be reinforcing inequalities beyond schooling rather than offering possibilities for social mobility (Rose and Dyer, 2006).

3.7 Innovation

An important aspect of NGO provision is often its intention to pilot innovative practices on a small scale, with the intention that lessons can be learnt for government provision, rather than necessarily scaled up by NGOs themselves. In Malawi, for example, it is argued that SCF-US supported NGO provision played an important role in the formulation of the National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management, which has been devised by CARE Malawi with support from DFID and in collaboration with Ministry of Education (MIM and IPRAD, 2004).

4. State Purchase of Basic Services

While there is an increased focus on possibilities for state purchase of basic education services, in practice, there are very few examples in low-income countries of formal contracting of education service delivery by government to NSPs (LaRocque, 2005; Patrinos, 2005). Government contracting of NSPs is more evident in infrastructure services contracts and professional services (such as production of textbooks) to support inputs, than through formal arrangements to support the process or output of education services (Table 5). This is perhaps not surprising given the need for 'an enabling policy and regulatory environment and a strong legal framework' (LaRocque, 2005: 36) which, as noted below, is not generally apparent in such countries. This is reinforced by government commitment (including through legislation) in many countries to provide education, which means that while governments are willing to tolerate NSPs, they may be less keen to be seen to be explicitly encouraging it, as this may be interpreted by its electorate as abdicating responsibility.

Table 5 Typology of contracting in education

Contracting form	Description	Contract types
Auxiliary/professional services - input	Government contracts to the private sector to undertake education related functions eg inspection, curriculum development etc	Auxiliary/professional services contract (eg for curriculum design)
Infrastructure – input	Government contracts private sector to design, build, finance educational infrastructure, such as classrooms and hostels	Infrastructure services contract
Operational services - process	Government contracts with a private provider to *operate* an existing public service using public infrastructure	Operational contracts
Management - process	Government contracts with the private sector to *manage* an existing public service using public infrastructure	Management contracts
Education services delivery – output	Government buys student places in private schools (contracts with schools to enrol specific students)	Contract for education of specific students
	Government contracts with a private provider to deliver a specified service/set of services using private infrastructure	Service delivery contract

(Source: Adapted from LaRocque, 2005; and Patrinos, 2005).

There is some experience of government contracting education service delivery to hard-to-reach groups through formal arrangements with NGOs. This most often occurs where donor resources are being provided for such support, with decisions made to channel these through government rather than supporting NGOs directly. It occurs in particular when donors are concerned about undermining the legitimacy of the state, and wants to support its state-building, where they recognise that the state has the political will but not the capacity to provide. Such contractual arrangements have, however, themselves suffered from problems encountered with state capacity, as examples from Bangladesh and Pakistan illustrate.

During the 1980s, Bangladesh had short-lived experience of government contracting of NGOs, the funding for which primarily was provided by international donors. Initially, some well-resourced NGOs felt this arrangement would be beneficial, both because it would enable them to influence policy from within, and also to have access to alternative sources of funding (Miwa, 2003). However, difficulties in contractual arrangements, including inefficient and untransparent procedures, tended to stifle innovation and reduce NGO flexibility and responsiveness to local needs. Some NGOs also felt uncomfortable with competitive bidding as it was felt that this encouraged a business approach to education (Cummings et al., 2004). In addition, the process of selection of NGOs resulted in the contracting of some 'briefcase' NGOs, established by former civil servants with the aim of obtaining funds rather than for the purpose of providing education (Miwa, 2003).

Similarly, in Pakistan, the Social Action Programme (SAP) was a major multi-sectoral programme designed by all the major donors, including the World Bank, UN System, ADB, and the Governments of Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Japan and the USA in collaboration with the government of Pakistan. Though managed by the government, one of the key conditions of the programme set by the donor community was ensuring involvement of NGOs and private sector in the delivery of the projects. The government had to contract a set number of projects through NGOs. While this resulted in the development of a large number of 'community' schools in a relatively short period of time (Harlech-Jones et al, 2005), the programme proved a failure primarily due to major corruption issues on the government side.

In the Punjab, Pakistan, two versions of 'public-private partnerships' have been established in the recent climate of donors' support in developing such partnerships in recognition of improved state will but weak capacity. These public-private partnerships are a relatively recent phenomenon and was heavily promoted by the first Federal Minister for Education under General Musharraf's rule from 2000 onwards, who herself came from an NGO background. Most of her advisors were also from NGOs and the donors worked very closely with this team. In the first example, under-used and dilapidated government school buildings are being leased to private schools for an afternoon shift. The scheme was designed because government schools were deemed to be under-performing due to poor public management, and inadequate teachers and equipment. The private school cannot directly compete with government provision in the morning shift - it has to offer education in the next higher grade, or to provide other types of education such as computer and English language classes. The private provider has to upgrade the facilities of the government school, pay all utility bills for both public and private provision, contribute to other operating costs, and pay 10 percent of any profits to the government school council. The private provider may charge a fee for the afternoon school according to a schedule agreed with government (with a ceiling for primary schools of Rs 200 - £2). This has improved diversity of provision, and access to higher levels. However, tensions have arisen as private providers feel that financial demands placed on them

are onerous, raising criticisms that 'partnership' is resulting in extraction rather than facilitation (Hossain and Batley, 2005).

Second, a local philanthropic association in Lahore (CARE) has taken responsibility for running and managing government schools, with arrangements agreed through a memorandum of understanding with the government although roles and responsibilities have not been sufficiently clearly specified. Funds from individual and corporate local donors have been used to rehabilitate buildings and equipment, to install water and sanitation, to manage the schools, to supply additional (private) teachers, and to undertake training for all teachers. CARE does not, however, have direct administrative control of government teachers who continue to be paid by the provincial government, and who have resisted the perceived challenge to their status, resulting in some tension with the non-state provider. Even so, the partnership is reported to have been successful in significantly increasing enrolment and reducing teacher absenteeism (Hossain and Batley, 2005). A concern arising from this is that, as government has passed over control it has also enabled it to relinquish responsibility. Since a national ban has been placed on recruitment of new teachers, government teachers working within the CARE schools are not replaced when they retire. As a result CARE has to hire new teachers for replacement on its own budget. This raises issues of sustainability of such partnerships.

Patrinos (2005) on typology of contracting of education services includes state subsidisation of NSPs through vouchers, scholarships etc. allowing choice between attending private or government schools, as well as subsidisation of private schools – such subsidisation may be explicit, or more indirect. These types of arrangements may involve more informal contractual arrangements. Examples of this form of support of NSP are more prevalent where states have both strong capacity and strong will within a neo-liberal perspective, so do not necessarily see the state as directly responsible for service delivery, even though they are responsible for ensuring all children have access to some form of schooling. Where such forms of government support are evident, it is likely that the private sector will play a greater role in service delivery. UNESCO's World Education Indicators Report notes that, in the (mainly middle-income) countries included in the survey, with the exception of Jordan, countries in which 20 percent or more of primary and secondary students were enrolled in private institutions, public authorities supported the cost of education of these students through education vouchers, tax exemptions, and other forms of subsidies, although the amount transferred was below what their share of enrolment might suggest (UNESCO, 2005b).

Given that non-state provision has largely been occurring by default in low-income countries, there are more limited examples of explicit facilitation by the state, although in all cases non-state schools receive indirect support from the government in terms of curriculum design, often training of teachers, and sometimes textbook provision. However, as the following examples from the NSP case studies indicate, these financing arrangements, resulting in the blurring of boundaries between government and NSPs, can create tensions with other aspects of their engagement with government which have the intention of supporting an enabling environment. Thus, while such facilitation can support access, it can be either inadequate or inappropriate to support pro-poor provision on a sustainable basis without paying simultaneous attention to this environment.

South Africa provides an example of a relatively strong state committed to its own provision with the ability and desire to control the private sector. Where the private sector does exist, the government does, however, provide support to ensure its commitment to pro-poor service delivery. Throughout legislation there are clauses which place responsibilities on the state to support non-profit service providers in particular through the provision of subsidies. However, particularly in low budget private schools which are most dependent on the subsidies, slow disbursement and sometimes inaccurate calculations can result in teachers not being paid (Motimele and Lewin, 2004). More generally, procedures designed to ensure accountability for public funds have been criticised as often cumbersome, having high transaction costs, and creating compliance difficulties for smaller organisations (Gardiner and Macanda, 2003). In addition, while the intention is that the subsidies are progressive (the lower their fees, the proportionally higher their subsidies), they are considered inadequate by low budget private primary schools. Furthermore, in order to access state subsidies, schools have to be registered as not-for-profit organisations. This prevents owners and shareholders benefiting from their investments in schools since they cannot draw profits, and can only reinvest gains. This arguably undermines incentives to be more efficient and effective. By contrast, schools previously serving relatively wealthy white communities which chose to remain in the state system after the end of apartheid also receive fee income which can be as high as those charged by independent schools, but have salaries paid by the government which is more beneficial than the subsidies received by independent schools (Motimele and Lewin, 2004). Overall, such facilitation offered creates little incentive for growth in non-state provision especially at the low cost end while, as noted below, has led to tensions with respect to policy dialogue.

In Bangladesh, after completing the process of registration, RNGPS receive government funding through both supply- and demand-side interventions including construction and maintenance of school buildings, training of teachers, payment of 90 percent of teacher salaries, provision of free textbooks, and inclusion of eligible students in the government's primary education stipend programme targeted at poor students. As such, once registered, there is a blurring of boundaries between government and non-state provision, although in practice RNGPS do not receive the same level of support as government schools. Facilitation of RNGPS is closely linked to regulation which, as noted below, has resulted in conflict. Alternatively, the lack of 'facilitation' of NGO providers in Bangladesh could help to explain the reported success of the programmes reaching the poor as, unlike RNGPS, they have been able to operate relatively free of government interference (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005).

As mentioned, the design of the Community Supported Rural Schools Programme (CSRSP) in Pakistan resembles BRAC schools in Bangladesh, the difference being that CSRSP schools receive financial support through loans from the National Education Foundation (NEF). While these were initially sufficient to enable schools to operate, a fall in interest rates and rising salaries resulted in the endowment becoming inadequate to cover their costs. In order to make the schools sustainable, NEF declared that each school should start a savings programme, implying that they would need to make a profit. At the end of an initial period, NEF would then give a grant equivalent to each school's savings. Not all schools are, however, able to achieve this self-sufficiency, particularly those in more deprived rural areas (Hossain and Batley, 2005).

Overall, examples of state purchase of NSP range from formal contracts in supporting 'public-private partnerships' with respect to sharing responsibilities in infrastructure, management etc., to less direct forms of facilitation through different forms of subsidisation (usually requiring registration of NSPs). The evidence indicates that these arrangements can support improved processes of schooling and/or increase access, although tensions underlying the relationship between governments and NSPs are evident. This may be particularly apparent where 'partnerships' also promote competition, for example in access to resources, qualified teachers etc.

5. Donors Working Directly with NSPs

In the majority of the DFID priority countries, international donors and INGOs have an important influence in the shaping of the education sector. In many cases, donors fund a significant portion of the education budgets - 54 percent of the Ugandan primary recurrent education budget is externally funded; and with 43 percent in Zambia (UNESCO, 2005a). In cases where donors are heavily involved in financing, it is also likely that they will have an influence over the shape and direction of education policy and plans, including with respect to support for NSPs (Samoff, 1993). In terms of donor direct support to NSPs, they most commonly work directly with international and national NGOs rather than with other providers in education service delivery. In some cases, such NGOs are created with the intention of acquiring such funding (Edwards and Hulme, 1995). However, in general, donors are more reticent about suggesting that governments can and should withdraw from direct provision of education services compared with other sectors (Wakefield, 2004). Reasons for this could be associated with recognition of the role education plays in national identity formation and social mobility, as well as the scale of the sector given that often as much as one-fifth of government budgets are allocated to recurrent education costs, an important part of which is teacher salaries. The feasibility of NSPs taking over this role on a large scale is likely to be constrained by the existence of a sizeable middle class able to run NGOs and/or private schools.

International donors commonly work in three modes with local NGOs. One, they provide funds directly to a local NGO (for example, BRAC). Two, they provide funds to an INGO who in turn works through local NGOs (for example, education projects implemented by Save the Children-US in Malawi). Three, donors finance projects through the government but make it compulsory to involve NGOs in the delivery of the project (see contracting above). Donors are most likely to support the first type where there is low political will and/or capacity of states to manage contracts as noted above, but civil society capacity exists; and the second form where there is low political will along with low civil society capacity (likely to be particularly evident in areas of conflict and fragile states). The approach used may also depend on the orientation of donors, with USAID generally favouring an approach of working directly with NGOs, while others, including those in the OECD DAC group supporting fragile states, taking a more cautious approach – with concern of the tension between supporting service delivery in the short term and longer term state building (OECD DAC, 2005). There are examples of donors working directly with NGOs in most DFID priority countries. However, no data exists to indicate the amount of donor funding channelled through this route, rather than through government – either to support government programmes, or NSPs.

A USAID study of education sector in four sub-Saharan African countries argues that international NGOs tend to define, more than national ones, the kind of NGO programmes that exist within a country—a result of the much larger resource base on which many international NGOs rely. The study also argues that international NGO programmes tend to influence one another across countries thus leading to similarity of programmes across the different countries (Miller-Grandvaux et al, 2002). The study further adds that in all these countries, international NGOs have been at the forefront of trying to influence national education policy or the national education policy process. NGOs such as Pact, Action Aid and Save the Children sit with the MOE on selected task forces to join in these discussions. However, as Colenso (2005) points out, it is not apparent why foreign-funded NGOs of these kinds have either the experience or legitimacy to be involved in government-led policy and

planning processes – which could be seen as an indirect way for donors to influence the agenda in a context where donors are supporting country-led processes.

BRAC's success is partly due to its size and influence which has enabled it to build a relationship with the government on its terms. As such, BRAC's capacity to perform its role is probably stronger than the state's ability to regulate it. However, this is not the case for most other, smaller, NGOs. BRAC's capacity is, however, heavily dependent on external donor funds. Given its size and influence, White (1999: 321) suggests 'the scale of some donor commitments to BRAC mean that a break down in the relationship would be as much a disaster for the donor as it would be for BRAC itself' suggesting that this is unlikely to change for the time being.

Direct donor support to international NGOs may be the preferred route for donor funds in fragile states particularly where there is concern that support to state capacity for service delivery could legitimise an unwilling regime, or where there is a need to act fast in the context of low state capacity and low levels of provision. However, there is also concern that support to non-state service delivery would de-legitimise or incapacitate the state. Where 'early recovery' is deemed to be underway preference is, therefore, given to strengthening state capacity for sustainable provision in the long term (Meagher, 2005). As experience of Sudan indicates, countries moving between different phases of fragility are likely to encounter different forms of support from donors – with, at points, concern for education service delivery while attempting to avoid being seen as supporting rebel movements, to working with government as peace treaties appear to have some effect – although continuing to channel most support through NGOs in order to ensure short-term results (Box 5).

Box 5 Donor support for NGO provision in a fragile state – experience from Sudan

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Due to poor record of the Sudanese government on safeguarding human rights, during the 1990s the majority of international and bi-lateral donors were unwilling to support education in southern Sudan. There were a few exceptions. The Norwegian Government, for example, provided support through UNICEF and through NGOs such as Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and the Africa Educational Trust (AET).

UNICEF was the agency which provided the largest amount of support throughout the nineties. It provided educational materials for primary schools and supported in-service training of primary teachers throughout the South. ACROSS [NGO] participated in in-service training and through its Sudan Literature Centre (SLC) produced primary school textbooks and teacher's guides. Other organizations tended to concentrate on in-service training and the provision of school materials and supplies within specific defined geographic areas. NCA, for example, supported teacher training and schools in Eastern Equatoria. International Aid Sweden (IAS) and NSCC did this in Western Equatoria. Similarly SCF (Sweden) worked in lower Bar El Ghazal and SCF(UK) in Central Upper Nile and Northern Bar El Ghazal. The zonal approach continued to be the pattern for the involvement of most international agencies throughout the 1990s. In 2002 UNICEF while continuing to provide across the south also decided to concentrate or give funding priority for work in two counties (Rumbek and Yambio). Since 1996 a few smaller organizations, such as AET have worked across the different regions but on limited and more specific areas of work such as baseline data collection and training of head teachers and parent teacher associations.

During the 1990s, often out of necessity, UNICEF and most other international agencies and NGOs worked on a day-to-day basis with representatives of the different southern movements such as SPLM/SRRA, RASS and FRRA. However, due to pressure from funders especially bi-lateral government agencies and the need for maintaining neutrality very little support was provided for the education departments or sections of these different movements. At times this has led to a concern about the possibility of incompatible programmes and systems being established within the areas which fell under the spheres of influence of different NGOs. For example, with schools following different curricula and textbooks from different countries such as Kenya and Uganda.

The talks leading to, and the signing of, the Machakos Protocol in 2003 have helped to bring about a major shift of policy by international donors and agencies. USAID has already committed US$20 million over a five year period for the "Sudan Basic Education Program". The main goal of this project, which is being managed by CARE is to increase equitable access to quality education. To achieve this the programme plans to support the establishment of four regional teacher training institutes, train 2,000 women teachers, rehabilitate 300 schools, provide non-formal education for 16,000 learners and increase the supply of school materials. *(USAID, 2002).*

In January 2003 the UK Department for International Development (DFID) made a grant of £2 million to UNICEF for the delivery of "quick impact" educational initiatives to the north and south of Sudan. These initiatives are seen as being part of a "peace dividend" which will encourage the Government in the north and the SPLM in the south to continue to work together for a lasting solution to the war. DFID has also indicated that the UK Government intends to provide substantial medium and long-term funding for education provided the peace process is sustained.

The European Union is taking a similar approach to the UK and is planning a "quick response" three year Sudan Post-conflict Recovery and Rehabilitation (SPRR) Programme with Fifty million Euro of funding. The purpose of this programme is to "enhance opportunities for the rapid recovery of rural livelihoods at community/ local level" *(EC, 2003).* The EU programme will concentrate on eleven geographic areas some in the north and some in the south (Upper Nile, Western and Northern Bar El Ghazal, Lakes, Unity, Warab and Jongli) and implementation will be through consortia of NGOs. The two main focal areas identified for what is referred to as a multi-track response strategy are food security and education.

(Source: Extracted from Brophy, 2003).

Direct donor support may also be preferred to support specific areas of a country which are neglected by government, including in cases of internal conflict. In such circumstances, democratic systems may fail to meet the needs of minority groups. In Sri Lanka, for example, international NGO support, in conjunction with UN bodies, was important in providing 'neutral inputs' amongst Tamil populations in the North and East of the country, in a context where the government education system more generally was considered robust and worthy of donor support for the rest of the country (Sibbons, 2005: 85).

Issues arise not only of in what contexts education service delivery might benefit from donors working directly with NSPs, but also the aid modality adopted in such contexts to ensure expanded access to underserved groups in the short-term, whilst not undermining state

capacity for longer term sustainability. The EFA Fast-Track Initiative could provide an opportunity for providing a bridge between these, as proposed in the case of Sudan, through promoting 'coherence and harmonisation between agencies; improve practical coordination mechanisms between actors; and help in the provision of long term support for education.' (FTI, 2005). Alternatively, donors may work with UN agencies in contexts of fragility, with the aim of supporting longer-term state capacity for education service delivery. For example, DFID is working together with UNESCO and UNICEF to develop a 3-5 year strategic partnership for education in Somalia, to improve coordination in the sector, and move beyond a humanitarian response (FTI, 2005).

In some cases, donor direct support to NGOs can create a tension with government. In Ethiopia, central government allocates a block grant to each region based on a formula. In an effort to promote equity in the region any funding brought into the region by an NGO (usually funded by donors) is supposed to be subtracted from the total amount sent to that region by the government. This can result in regional governments being reluctant to allow NGOs to operate in the region, as it means that the resources over which they have direct control is diminished (Miller-Grandvaux et al, 2002).

With respect to different donor perspectives, DFID's support for NSPs in education mainly focuses on NGO service delivery in fragile environments where the state is unable to provide adequate education opportunities in the short- to medium-term, and where conditions are such that there is concern that aid cannot be effectively absorbed through fragile state institutions. For DFID, the expectation continues to be, however, that provision will ultimately transfer to become the responsibility of the state and that its support will shift as the environment becomes less difficult. It is noted, for example, that, evidence suggests that aid absorption is four times higher in countries in the fourth year after the end of conflict compared with countries at peace. DFID has, therefore, shown a longer-term commitment to supporting governments in such situations – for example, a 10 year commitment to support Sierra Leone from 2002 (DFID, 2005). Sida works mainly with NSPs in conflict situations, and GTZ focuses on supporting NGOs in areas of countries under-served by the state (Wakefield, 2004).

In contrast, USAID has worked directly with NGOs as a means of bypassing government bureaucracies (Miller-Grandvaux et al, 2002). As the experience in Malawi illustrates, this raises important challenges for sustainability, and can potentially create some tension and conflict with government where it is felt to challenge or undermine its role (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005).[10]

Despite intentions, it is very rare that the government takes over the responsibility for sustaining donor-supported NGO projects when the donors withdraw. As the case of BRAC illustrates, a shift from donor support of NSPs to government provision can prove difficult, as capacity is built outside the government making transfer of support problematic. Despite the long experience of NGOs 'filling the gap' in provision in Bangladesh and agreement by NGOs and government that their role should not be permanent, there is no evidence of a planned exit strategy. Rather, it appears that NGOs will continue to play an important role for

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[10] It has not been possible to undertake a systematic review of approaches by different donors towards support for NSPs based on programmes they are supporting within the available time, although this would be of relevance in understanding the extent to which coordination in different contexts is possible, particularly where donors are driven by different agendas. It would also be of relevance to obtain information from NGOs with regard to their strategies for working with donors, while not intending to undermine state capacity.

the foreseeable future as they receive further support through the recently agreed World Bank 'Reaching out of School Children' programme. The recent development of BRAC acting as a sub-contractor of education services also suggests that, rather than having a planned strategy of withdrawal, there is seen to be a need for NGO provision for the foreseeable future. This provision appears to complement government provision through increased coverage in some areas of the country. A danger is, however, that a two-tier education system will become entrenched – with children in these areas dependent on the provision NGOs are able to offer which is more limited than the government's in terms of length of the cycle and narrower range of subjects offered. In addition, donor-funded NGO provision could let the government off the hook of extending provision to under-served areas, as is evident by a lack of planned strategy to do so (NGO provision is absent from the Primary Education Development Plan II).

In Pakistan, a survey of twenty of the most prominent NGOs in Pakistan shows that 14 were working on education mostly providing non-formal community-based schools (Bano, 2005). All the NGOs established these programmes with the intention of securing donor funds. None of these NGOs had plans to hand over schools to the government when donor support runs out. This could be indicative that no one expects the government to take on more responsibility, and also that those establishing NGOs would not want to relinquish control given they support their own livelihood as well as that of others in the community. In most cases the signs were that once the donor funding finished, the projects halted immediately and there was no follow-up.

NGOs in South Africa provide interesting experience of sustainability in a changing political and economic climate. Following the end of apartheid, NGO providers had to decide whether to become more integrated into programmes initiated and controlled by the state, or to continue to seek funding outside government. As direct external funding of NSPs diminished, NGOs which did not make the transition to more commercial operations drawing on corporate sources of funding, have diminished (Motimele and Lewin, 2004).

In other cases, the intended shift in fact occurs from donor support of NGOs towards a more private sector-oriented approach, with charging of fees from the parents when the donors withdraw. For example, Al-Fateh a small NGO in Bahawalpur, Southern Punjab Pakistan, is running a primary school with support of international donors. However, the school is supported for only three years. The plan is that during this time the parents will have to be encouraged to start paying fees. Neither the NGO nor the international donors are planning for the government to take over the school costs when the donors withdraw (Bano, 2005).

With respect to private provision, there is more limited direct donor involvement. While the World Bank channelling of resources through a range of modalities is not generally specifically designed to support NSPs (Wakefield, 2004), the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) arm of the World Bank[11] proposes that direct external support could be advantageous in helping to establish 'conditions which will help edupreneurs minimize risks and increase the probability of being profitable' (Karmokolias and van Lutsenburg Maas, 1997: 20). Even so, their support is mainly directed at the secondary level, where the role of the private sector is less controversial.

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[11] See EdInvest – 'Facilitating Investment in the Global Education Market' - http://www.ifc.org/edinvest/
[accessed 27/10/2005]

While there is more limited evidence of donors directly supporting private providers, there are examples of private school networks supported by international donors in many countries – for example, the Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM) is supported by the World Bank and British Council.

Donors are most visible in direct support to NSPs in situations where the challenges of scaling-up of education services are particularly evident (including in fragile states where access is constrained, and the state has limited capacity, or in areas of countries underserved by the government system). For this provision to be sustainable, there is a recognised need for longer-term predictable funding given that the bulk of costs are allocated to teacher salaries so requiring regular sources of funding. In this context, there is a preference amongst most donors to develop the capacity of the state at the same time as supporting NSPs in the short-term.

6. Creating an Enabling Environment

The section will be concerned with creating an enabling environment for NSPs intending to support access to underserved groups in particular and/or by the government aiming to ensure that NSPs provide support to these groups.

It considers relationships between governments and the different types of NSPs with respect to policy dialogue, and regulation/quality assurance. While in principle these forms of engagement can support an enabling environment, it is important to consider circumstances under which this can be achieved. It is also apparent that NSPs themselves often initiate engagement with governments, particularly through the common voice of umbrella associations.

6.1 Policy Dialogue

The extent to which NSPs are recognised by government is influenced both by involvement of NSPs in policy dialogue, as well as the extent to which their contribution to service delivery is evident in national education plans. In India, the 1986 National Policy of Education formalised the role of NGOs in reaching hard-to-reach children, that it was recognised the state alone would not be able to cater for. This involved partnership between the state and NGOs, with the state responsible for overall management and planning, while NSPs were responsible for service delivery. This relationship has become even more emphatic in the most recent Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan policy framework. As in other countries, the role of NGOs has been further boosted by financial support from external agencies. However, NGOs continue to play a relatively minor role in education service delivery, despite the policy attention and external financial support (Nair, 2004).

Policy recognition of the role of NGOs is also becoming evident in other countries. In Ethiopia, while the first Education Sector Development Plan (1995-2000) did not mention NGOs, the second Education Sector Development Plan (2000-2005) explicitly refers to NGOs with respect to their role in reaching marginalised groups (particularly in pastoralist areas of the country, supported by ActionAid and SCF-UK) with the aim of drawing on the international NGO resources they attract. This involves limited direct involvement of government in planning, management, design or running of the programmes (Rose, 2003b). Such formal recognition is not always the case, as is evident in the silence on NGO provision in Bangladesh's Primary Education Development Plan II, despite the important role that NGOs play (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005).

Even where NSPs are not explicitly recognised in education policy and plans, they may still engage with government in policy dialogue. The extent to which this is effective is likely to depend on the reason for dialogue – which is often related to NSPs wanting to influence government subsidisation and/or regulation of their provision, and/or advocacy to improve quality and accessibility of government provision. This dialogue may be constructive, but also often tokenistic or antagonistic. In many cases, high levels of distrust of NGOs among the government officials are reported. In all countries included in the USAID study, the government questions the motivation of NGOs. In Malawi, NGOs are frequently viewed as 'opportunistic'. In Ethiopia government officials often view them as 'crooks'. NGOs can in some cases attempt to influence these negative views by working closely with government officials to encourage a more supportive relationship (Box 6).

Box 6 Approaches to supporting an enabling environment for policy dialogue in Ethiopia

Almost all NGOs working in education in Ethiopia offer workshops and presentations, as well as organise field visits for government personnel to illustrate their activities and approaches. Most NGOs are expected to include local government staff members in any training conducted for their own facilitators or for community members (Miller-Grandvaux, 2002). In some regions, a forum has been established between NGOs and regional education bureaus and zonal education departments to review alternative basic education programmes. The government has carried out its own evaluation of NGO alternative education programmes which highlights the innovations that these programmes provide, and finds that they could play an important role in supporting the provision of basic education. However, it notes that most programmes are relatively small-scale operating on modest resources from their funders, with limited evidence of opportunities for scaling up. In addition, it also indicates that experience on the ground can sometimes differ from the success story that is often depicted by NGOs themselves (MOE 2000). Government direct involvement of this kind can help in learning of lessons directly from NGO innovations, while understanding the constraints they face.

(Source: Rose, 2003b).

Across the NSP project countries, formal policy dialogue between government and non-state providers appears to have improved over the last decade – partly in response to the Education for All agenda which has united different providers in a common purpose, and partly as a result of the development of sector-wide approaches which encourage involvement of different stakeholders in policy design. In most cases, dialogue has been initiated by coalition/umbrella organisations that have been established, often in the 1990s, with the aim of providing a voice to non-state providers by strengthening the influence of individual providers through collective action, to pressurise governments to recognise their role and contribution.

Where formal policy dialogue occurs, it is most often dominated by umbrella associations of registered, for-profit providers which are usually concerned with lobbying for government support to their provision (eg tax concessions and other forms of subsidy), rather than for pro-poor provision. Their membership mainly comprises better-resourced private schools which have initiated the establishment of the association to strengthen their voice. In Malawi, the Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM) was established in the mid-1990s with a particular concern of addressing the quality of education at secondary level in the context of the government's education plans. The Ministry of Education has allowed PRISAM to participate in policy meetings, partly because PRISAM has the force of some international agencies behind it, notably the British Council and World Bank (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005). Chawani (nd) suggests a number of areas in which PRISAM and the Ministry of Education (MOEST) each consider they could liaise, coordinate and consult. He indicates that PRISAM is more ambitious and precise in its expectations of a relationship with MOEST, although it views government's role primarily as supporting PRISAM through financial support. There is already experience of coordination in some areas, for example liaison over curriculum change and PRISAM's involvement in revising the out-dated 1962 Education Act to account for private providers. However, given that clear guidelines for the relationship have not been set, engagement has been relatively ad hoc and subject to change.

In Nigeria, the Association of Private Proprietors of Schools (APPS), established in 1977, is a membership organisation of approved private schools also mainly serving higher-fee charging schools. There is a network of associations across the country (operating at the local, state and national levels) which appears to be well-established. In recent years, the Association has acted against the interests of more informal low budget private schools serving poorer communities by lobbying government to close down unregistered schools. APPS cites the government's guideline that schools should not be established within one kilometre of another school, implying their main concern is to restrict competition (Adelabu and Rose, 2005).

The Association of Formidable Educational Development (AFED) was established in Lagos in 2000 in response to the threat to close down unapproved schools. The Association is registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission and so has a legal status, even though schools which are members do not. It aims to influence policy through lobbying for a change to the criteria for regulation to make them more relevant and affordable for small-scale entrepreneurs providing education to low-income groups. Given that the Ministry of Education in Lagos is dominant in the policy arena (if not in provision) it has continued to adhere to strict regulations, while not being able to enforce them. AFED has succeeded in preventing school closure in part due to the strength of its leadership, as well as its ability to organise local support. The threat of political insecurity due to grassroots mobilisation has enabled the Association to delay closure of schools which would otherwise result in large numbers of children not having any school to attend (Adelabu and Rose, 2005).

Dominance by associations serving the interests of higher-fee schools is also reflected in South Africa, where a coalition of umbrella associations has been formed under the National Alliance of Independent School Associations of Southern Africa (NAISA). The Alliance is weakened by divisions between the constituent associations which represent different group interests with different motivations. Overall, NAISA appears to be dominated by the Independent Schools Association of South Africa, mainly serving the elite end of private providers, who are mostly concerned with maintaining their autonomy. Inevitably, those representing the disadvantaged are less organised and, therefore, have less of a force in the dialogue (Motimele and Lewin, 2004).

Dialogue of umbrella associations with government can sometimes be at best tokenistic or at worst antagonistic, with a tension evident between the desire of non-state providers to influence the government agenda at the same time as wanting to operate without interference. In Bangladesh, an umbrella organisation for NGOs, the Campaign for Popular Education, reports that while NGOs were involved in dialogue related to the development of the second Primary Education Development Programme, their proposals for including NGO provision within the plan were not taken into account (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005). The Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy, an NGO established with assistance from the Aga Khan Foundation, previously canvassed for the promulgation of a new law for the regulation of non-profit organisations to provide quality assurance both to the funders of such organisations and to their clients. More recently, the Centre for Philanthropy has withdrawn from this campaign, fearing that any regulation of NGOs could be distorted into becoming a political instrument to constrain them (Hossain and Batley, 2005).

In some cases attempts by private providers to put pressure on the government have been counterproductive. In South Africa, the Alliance of Black Independent Schools, an association representing low budget private schools in inner city areas and informal settlements in

Gauteng Province, and the Muslim Schools' Association, representing the vast majority of Muslim schools in South Africa, felt that because they had been challenging the state on a number of policy and implementation issues (notably on the subsidy norm – see facilitation below), their members had been harassed by state officials. The harassment allegedly could include frequent visits to schools considered trouble-some, and deliberate delays and under-payment of subsidies without which the schools could not function. As a result, both organisations have largely abandoned their advocacy role (Motimele and Lewin, 2004).

Unresolved differences between non-state providers and government can sometimes lead to more extreme action. In both Nigeria and South Africa, tensions referred to above between umbrella associations and government have led to court action with mixed success for the private providers. Demands by the Non-Government Primary Teachers' Association in Bangladesh for their schools and jobs to be nationalised, so that teachers in these schools receive the same conditions of service as those in government schools, have led to political pressure being exerted through strike action. Nationalisation is being resisted by the government, no doubt partly due to the financial implications, and the action is also discouraging the government from registering additional non-government schools for fear of giving them even greater influence (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005).

Overall, there is limited evidence to indicate that the government's engagement with the non-state sector actually results in the government accommodating their views. Elaborating on experience in Pakistan, Khan (2004) writes 'Despite much access, we were able to achieve little in terms of policy change, and the commitment to reform on the part of the military government seemed no more than skin-deep' (Khan, 2004). He further adds: 'The educational bureaucracy is large, unwieldy, and resistant to change. Despite, having an NGO background, the military government's Federal Minister of Education made little headway in having true community participation adopted as a model for rural primary schooling.'

Experience in the education sector highlights that, while NSPs are involved in formal policy dialogue primarily through umbrella associations, there is limited evidence of 'real' dialogue, and therefore of influence, in practice. Tokenistic dialogue may be beneficial to the government, particularly where this attracts donor support to sector development plans. However, the current approach to dialogue may have at best little benefit for non-state providers, and can actually threaten their ability to operate free of interference.

6.2 Registration and Regulation

Given that, in the education sector, much NSP provision has been growing by default, it has occurred without planned intervention or support by the government in many cases. As such, the main form of interaction between governments and NSPs tends to be through regulation, although this is most concerned with regulation of entry into the sector through stipulations on inputs.

Where the de facto growth in private provision is being tolerated, it is likely that tighter regulation would be advocated. Regulation can be costly in terms of time and financial resources, if it is to be effective (Levin, 1999, cited in World Bank 2002c). The costs of regulation are largely unknown, although what indications there are suggest that in low enrolment countries regulation is widely underfunded.

On the other hand, where private education is being promoted on the grounds of providing competition and choice through the market (in particular by the International Finance Corporation and WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services), a light touch to regulation is advocated on the grounds that this will enable the market to operate without interference, allowing people to vote with their feet. For this to be successful, 'clients' require information about different providers and their services. Such information is often not readily available, and requires time and effort in its collection.

6.2.1 Government regulation of private schools

In all the DFID priority countries, legislation exists with respect to regulation of for-profit private schools. Regulation most often relates to stipulations regarding inputs to gain entry into the education market through registration, with limited concern for quality of provision and little, if any, guidelines on access for the poor or other excluded groups. In Pakistan, for example, registration involves recording complex information on school facilities and equipment – including number of maps, blackboards, cupboards etc. - with no measures for assessing standards of teaching (Hossain and Batley, 2005). Registration of schools often aims explicitly to restrict competition with government schools. In South Africa, government regulations discourage competition between public and independent schools by refusing subsidisation of new independent schools near existing public schools which are not full (Motimele and Lewin, 2004). In other NSP countries, regulations stipulate that private schools should not be established within a stated radius of an existing government school.

In Lagos, schools are required to have proof of ownership of a plot of land, which is particularly unattainable for many small providers due to the high cost of land in the city. In addition, schools are expected to be purpose-built (rather than conversion of property initially built for other purposes including family housing, as is often the case), and have at least a 12 classroom structure, the cost of which is likely to be prohibitive for small scale providers serving low income groups. These regulations were set in the 1970s when land was in relative abundance and so less expensive, and are central to the dispute between AFED and the government discussed above (Adelabu and Rose, 2005).

In South Africa and Pakistan, accessibility is in principle assessed through government ruling on the level of fees that schools can charge (Motimele and Lewin, 2004; Hossain and Batley, 2005). The regulatory framework, including requirements for quality assurance, is probably most developed in South Africa in the context of relatively strong state capacity. A myriad of new laws developed post-Apartheid have affected non-state provision. Key features include requirements of adherence to minimum standards and to the national curriculum, conditions for pro-poor subsidy of schools, establishment of taxation status, and identification of possible channels of financial support. The multiple layers of legislation, on the one hand, raise concern of excessive regulatory requirements which take up time and resources from school management but, on the other hand, offer incentives to facilitate their operation with particular concern for pro-poor provision (see facilitation below) (Motimele and Lewin, 2004). In other countries, quality of provision is most often addressed with respect to requirements for trained teachers. In low budget private schools, under-qualified teachers are often recruited on temporary contracts which means that they can be paid a lower wage and easily fired, allowing the schools to operate at relatively low cost. However, this means that the schools do not meet the formal standards of the Ministries of Education.

Private schools are often subject to greater regulation than their government school counterparts. The cases of Nigeria and South Africa highlight problems of multiple layers of accountability, where private providers are subject to regulations beyond the education sector. For example, independent schools in South Africa are also governed by legislation in relation to taxation and labour (Dieltens, 2002). In Nigeria, schools have to register with the Environmental Agency, Ministry of Health, Fire Brigade, Water Corporation etc, each of which demand registration fees. Similarly in Pakistan, Kardar's (2001) survey of schools in Pakistan shows that the procedure for registration has an intrusive intent although enforcement mechanisms were weak. The complexity of the legislation in these countries can result in considerable time and cost to ensure that regulations are complied with.

A one-off or annual fee is often payable, which can be a deterrent to registration. In Lagos, while total official costs of registration appear relatively modest (approximately the amount received from annual fees obtained from seven students in a middle-range unapproved school, compared with around one student in an approved school), low budget private schools claim that they are already stretched to cover essential running costs. Moreover, in addition to official registration fees, AFED members complained that there are often additional 'unofficial' costs which have to be paid, which can be considerably higher than the official fees (Adelabu and Rose, 2005). Even though the education system in Lagos is heavily dependent on the private sector, it appears that the process of gaining approval is both cumbersome and costly, acting as a disincentive for schools to seek approval.

By contrast, registration fees are not charged in Malawi. Even so, schools often remain unregistered. In practice, the government does not have the capacity to deal with the proliferation of private schools that have emerged. For example, there is just one person in the Ministry of Education responsible for registration of all primary schools (private and public). Confusion also arises as a result of a lack of standardised licensing procedures which means that different standards are often adopted in practice (Chimombo et al., 2004). A lack of understanding by private providers of the processes for registration can be an additional reason for their unregistered status (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005).

The first step for enforcement of registration of private providers is recognition that they exist. Where the capacity of governments to support their own provision is limited, there is a tendency to turn a blind eye – particularly where human and financial resources are limited. Enforcement of registration is difficult in countries where government schools themselves often do not meet the criteria set. Unregistered schools have, therefore, been allowed to operate 'illegally' although attempts to clamp down on this are evident in Lagos, as mentioned above, even though government has the right to fine and/or imprison proprietors who are operating illegally, as stipulated in the Education Law. Unregistered schools are, therefore, flourishing in the context of dominant but ineffective ministries. In other cases, schools are able to register even though they do not meet the criteria. In Enugu, the Ministry of Education estimates that only 20 percent of registered schools have met the requirement of owning of a plot of land. In addition, some do not have sufficient numbers of qualified teachers, even though there is a sufficient number of unemployed qualified teachers available (Adelabu and Rose, 2005).

Alternatively, government recognition of its inability to regulate has resulted in the Government of Madhya Pradesh in India lifting restrictions on opening of private schools and obtaining recognition, which is reported to have led to a sharp increase in the number of private schools. Reasons given for government lifting of restrictions is that they were

ineffective in any case, and so being bypassed, at the same time as an ideological shift towards seeing private schools as a means of reducing the burden on limited public resources – with, in principle, public resources focusing on those unable to attend private schools (Leclercq, 2002, cited in Nair, 2004).

Registration is most likely to occur where it is related to incentives, for example in the form of subsidies in South Africa, and payment of teacher salaries etc. in RNGPS in Bangladesh (see below). Another motivation evident across the countries is that schools need to be registered in order to enter children for examinations. However, some schools get around this by forming alliances with government schools or registered private schools (sometimes through payment of a 'fee'). Alternatively, parents move their children to a government school in the final year in order to take government examinations.

Even where schools are registered, in all the NSP project countries there is limited evidence of on-going monitoring and supervision, as government supervisors struggle to support their own schools. This can be further complicated by lack of clarity with regard to responsibilities for supervision, and opportunities for rent-seeking. Within Lagos State, there are two types of inspection of private schools – one based in the Directorate of Private Education, and the other in the Inspectorate arm of the Ministry of Education. Some proprietors in the State claimed that inspectors prefer to visit private schools (including unapproved ones), as they expect them to pay money to ensure they receive favourable reports (Adelabu and Rose, 2005). Constraints to inspection suggests that even though the government is not particularly successful at regulating entry of schools into the education market, it is even less effective at on-going monitoring of the quality of registered schools, with extremely limited effort at monitoring accessibility of different groups (including the poor) to the services provided.

6.2.2 Government regulation of NGO and other forms of provision

Arrangements for regulation of NGOs often differ from those of private providers. It can occur independently of ministries of education, and NGOs are often not assessed on the basis of education-related criteria. Regulation of NGOs is more frequently related to government's desire to maintain control of financial resources particularly where donors are funding NGOs directly. In Bangladesh, NGOs such as BRAC receiving funds from external sources have to register with the NGO Affairs Bureau. The Bureau is supposed to liaise with appropriate focal points in sectoral ministries. In practice, the NGO Affairs Bureau reported that approximately half of applications do not receive comments from the Ministry of Education, and only a few are turned down (usually on the grounds of duplication with activities already being undertaken by the government, but also implying that competition between government and NGO activities is not encouraged). The NGO Affairs Bureau is also responsible for receiving and checking audit and performance reports, while sectoral ministries are not involved in supervision of education provision by NGOs. The capacity of the bureau is weak, with only two auditors for all NGOs registered (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005). Similarly, in India, regulation of NGOs appears to focus more on checking for fraud and corruption, rather than on service delivery (Nair, 2004).

Similarly, Kadzamira and Kunje (2002) report that in Malawi, every NGO interviewed expressed how difficult it was to register. The relatively new Non-Governmental Organizations Act has created an NGO Registration Board, with members selected from the government to oversee NGO activities. A precondition for NGO registration is that the NGO must be a member of a government-sponsored umbrella organisation and have letters of

permission from the appropriate ministry indicating the sectors in which the NGO will be allowed to operate.

Alternatively, where NGO provision is subject to the same regulations as formal schools, experience from the Village-based Schools programme in Malawi indicates that this can result in imposition of rigid criteria on systems that are intended to be flexible. Most of the innovations of the programme were a departure from the Ministry of Education's norms and standards. There was a fear on the part of government that if NGOs were given a free reign, it would lose control over the education system (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005). Recruitment of teachers was a particular area of contention. In contrast to the centralised recruitment and deployment of teachers in government schools, teachers were recruited locally by community members with particular attention to the recruitment of female teachers to serve as role models for girls. There were, however, insufficient applicants available locally with minimum levels of qualification to meet government requirements. Government insistence on standards, particularly related to teacher qualifications, led to the abandonment of the programme which did not extend beyond a pilot. Thus, despite the positive outcomes of the VBS programme and the success of its interventions in teacher training and supervision and, to some extent, community participation, government was more concerned with enforcing standards and adhering to current policy prescriptions even though these have not been entirely successful to ensure quality education in government schools, and contradict the intended flexibility of this form of provision aimed at those excluded from the formal system (Kadzamira and Rose, 2005).

Religious schools might also face different forms of registration procedures. Post September 11, the Government of Pakistan has been forced to check the rise of madrasahs in Pakistan due to international pressure. In 2003, a US $ 225 million package, to be spent over three years, was committed to madrasah reform.[12] As part of the reform plan a Madrasah Ordinance Board has been promulgated under which all Madrasahs are required to be registered. However, only 11,000 Madrasahs of up to 40,000 in existence had submitted registration papers by March 2002. Others were being given incentives to submit to the requirements of this new law, including training for madrasah teachers plus financial incentives to the madrasahs' management in the form of money for teachers' salaries, textbooks, stationary, computers, and furniture. However, the majority of the madrasahs have refused to register to date.

6.2.3 Self-regulation

Self-regulation in the education sector has often evolved through the initiative of umbrella associations of private providers. In South Africa, ISASA, as the largest and most established association, has initiated its own quality assurance and accreditation system. This appears partly to be an attempt to pre-empt the imposition of a government system. It seems a constructive approach to partnership with government, and could contribute to growth in state capacity. However, the initiative has occurred independently of associations representing other private providers with the danger that it could reflect the interests of the more elite end of non-state provision (Motimele and Lewin, 2004). In Pakistan, an embryonic system of self-regulation in Karachi has developed with the Aga Khan Foundation working with the Association of Private Schools to develop an accreditation scheme to ensure quality and

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[12] *Madrasa Reforms (Teaching of Formal Subjects in Deeni Madaris),* fact sheet hosted on website of the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Washington D.C.: http://www.embassyofpakistan.org/

financial standards (Hossain and Batley, 2005). Similarly, in Malawi, there is a proposal for PRISAM to take responsibility for accreditation of private schools and provide a PRISAM 'kitemark', awarded on the basis of criteria agreed with the Ministry of Education (Chawani, nd). However, it is not clear to whom PRISAM, or other self-regulatory bodies, would be accountable, with concern that low budget schools serving the poor could be adversely affected.

In Bangladesh, BRAC is reported to be unique in the country in having a good monitoring process which includes following up on NGOs to which they sub-contract, although NGOs outside its sphere of influence are not supported by this (Chowdhury and Rose, 2005). In addition, the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy has developed a certification regime for non-profit organisations. This endeavours to set sector-wide standards of good internal governance, transparent financial management and effective programme delivery. Certification is voluntary - an NGO may either wish to register in order to enhance its credibility and/or to obtain tax benefits from the Central Board of Revenue. However, there is some concern that the hurdles for approval may be set too high which could exclude those providing services to poorer communities, with more limited access to resources (Hossain and Batley, 2005).

These examples indicate that self-regulation is being developed in contexts where government regulation is either absent or dysfunctional, usually in contexts where state capacity is low. Experience with self-regulation suggests that lessons can be learnt from innovations particularly with regard to quality assurance. However, given that it tends to be controlled by more established and better resourced providers, there is a continued need for the government to play a role in supervising standards across all types of providers both in relation to quality and accessibility.

Overall, evidence indicates that governments show a greater tendency to attempt to control entry of NSPs into the education sector based on criteria which government schools themselves are unlikely to be able to meet. However, in practice, governments are likely to turn a blind eye to illegal private providers given that they are aware of the contribution that these schools are making in filling the gap in provision due to their inability to provide. Less attention is often paid to monitoring quality and accessibility to non-government schools, due to demands on resources beyond their capacity.

7. Conclusion

In many low-income countries, government remains the principal provider of primary education. Most stakeholders (including NGOs and the government itself) continue to view this as its responsibility with non-state provision seen as complementary to this. In general, evidence indicates that, where innovations are occurring with respect to non-state provision, there has been limited deliberate intent on the part of the government to support provision to those underserved by the state system.

There are a number of inter-related conditions influencing the strength of the relationship between governments and NSPs that can be drawn from examples presented in the paper (Table 6). First, in general, this can depend on the extent to which they are dependent on each other (in the case of NSPs, this may be dependency on government resources, and for governments could refer to dependency on the service delivery provided by NSPs to achieve their stated goals). Second, the characteristics of the state will clearly play a role in determining the extent to which NSPs are encouraged and/or supported. Such characteristics include its own capacity and political will, the extent of democracy which influences accountability to the electorate, and its political and economic ideology. Third, the characteristics of civil society will influence the extent to which NSPs can develop to deliver services to underserved groups, and have the motivation to do so. This might depend on the extent of a middle-class/elite motivated to improve the livelihoods of the less wealthy.[13] In addition, relationships will be influenced by the extent to which government provision is falling short of achieving EFA and national goals – whether this is widespread, limited to particular groups of the population, or mainly related to filling gaps in quality of government provision. This will have implications for the types of providers involved in service delivery, which in turn will influence the type of support governments give to NSPs, and their relations with respect to policy dialogue and regulation. Each of these factors is likely to affect forms of donor support – whether directly to NSPs or through government.

Service delivery to under-served groups through NGO provision has been found to be most effective in circumstances such as Bangladesh where there is a relatively weak state and strong civil society, permitting NGOs to operate relatively free of interference, but with some level of common understanding between government and the NGOs. Alternatively, in countries such as Malawi, characterised by relatively weak civil society, international NGO efforts to support provision to hard-to-reach children has proved unsustainable in the context of a dominant, centralised ministry keen to ensure control over the sector. Experience in these countries and elsewhere highlight on-going mutual mistrust between non-state providers and government which hinders constructive collaboration.

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[13] Sector-specific Drivers of Change research currently under preparation should be able to provide further insights into the characteristics of the state and civil society for education service delivery.

Table 6 Typology of relationship between state and NSPs

Strength of relationship	Factors influencing relationship	No relationship	Weak relationship	Moderate relationship	Strong relationship
		←			→
Level of dependency		Independent	NSP dependent on state or vice versa	Mutually dependent	Mutually beneficial
Characteristics of state	State capacity Political will Extent of democracy/ accountability to public Government ideology (socialist/neo-liberal)	Weak capacity (or strong capacity undermined by conflict etc) Weak will Authoritarian rule	Weak capacity – moving into state of fragility Strong will Transition to democracy with commitment to achieve UPE	Weak capacity – moving out of state of fragility Strong will Democracy with political commitment to achieve UPE within rights-based ideology	Strong capacity Strong will Democracy with political commitment to achieve UPE neo-liberal ideology
Characteristics of civil society	Strength of civil society – extent of cohesion; size of middle class/elite; religious identity	Weak capacity/ fragmented/conflict	Strong capacity while supported by INGOs/donors	Strong capacity supported by sizeable elite/middle class Strong religious identity related to philanthropy	Strong capacity supported by sizeable elite/middle class Strong religious identity related to philanthropy
Characteristics of education sector	Level of accessibility; types of exclusion addressed; quality of provision	Very low enrolment	Low enrolment	Close to achieving UPE, some marginalised groups excluded	Achieved/close to achieving UPE

Strength of relationship	Factors influencing relationship	No relationship	Weak relationship	Moderate relationship	Strong relationship
		←			→
Types of NSP	Private Faith-based NGO Spontaneous community-based Philanthropy	Unrecognised private providers establishing and running private schools filling gap in government provision Unrecognised spontaneous community-based	Spontaneous community-based schools facilitated by government to increase access International NGOs serving excluded	Recognised private schools addressing quality of state provision in urban/peri-urban areas National NGOs serving excluded Philanthropic organisations supporting provision for the poor (including own delivery, and supporting management and running of government schools)	Private sector/NGO support to government service delivery Recognised private schools providing choice as an alternative to state provision Religious schools meeting differentiated demand
State purchase	Forms of government subsidisation	None	Government payment of teacher salaries, provision of infrastructure etc	Formal arrangements for government subsidisation	Vouchers etc.
Forms of donor support	Through government/ direct to NSPs	Donors unwilling to support	Donor involvement directly supporting NSPs via INGOs	Donor involvement to NSPs channelled through government, or direct to national NGOs	Sufficient state capacity - not necessary

Strength of relationship	Factors influencing relationship	No relationship	Weak relationship	Moderate relationship	Strong relationship
		←			→
Enabling environment:					
Policy dialogue	Inclusion in policy Forms of dialogue	None – or antagonistic	Often not included in policy and plans Tokenistic in formal dialogue with limited influence	May be referred to in policy and plans Involved in formal policy dialogue with some influence, but can be tension	Integrated into policy and plans Constructive on-going relationship
Regulation	Inputs/ process/ accessibility/ outputs	None	Superficial regulation of inputs enforced	Regulation of inputs and process enforced	On-going quality assurance (two-way)
Examples		Unapproved schools in Nigeria	RNGPS in Bangladesh SCF-US village-based schools in Malawi Leasing of government school buildings to NSPs in Pakistan Management and running of government schools by CARE, Pakistan	Independent schools in South Africa BRAC schools in Bangladesh	Not as evident in DFID priority low-income countries

Note: these are indicative categories and indicators – there are more possibilities of breaking down relationships along the continuum, but is intended to be illustrative of areas to consider within different forms of relationship. There is not necessarily a link between the different categories (eg the form of donor involvement does not necessarily imply they are supporting all the types providers indicated in this way).

Coalition and umbrella organisations have been playing an important role in recent years, providing a voice for private providers, some of whom consider that the role of government needs to shift from principal provider to facilitator. The associations' involvement with government has often arisen with respect to specific concerns, rather than through sustained, on-going collaboration. As experience from Nigeria and South Africa indicates, collusion between elite, established providers with respect to quality assurance through such organisations can be at the expense of those potentially providing services to the poor. In general, evidence suggests that their role needs to be seen as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, government roles and responsibilities. AFED in Nigeria is an interesting exception, providing an example of an umbrella association supporting informal, unregistered schools in response to pressures to close them down from registered schools and the government.

Experience also highlights mutual dependence of different forms of collaboration between non-state providers and government, which can create tension both amongst different non-state providers, as well as between them and governments. A high level of engagement in terms of clearly defined state purchase of NSP to support pro-poor provision in South Africa and Bangladesh, for example, often requires a high level of engagement with government with

respect to meeting regulatory requirements. On the one hand, this may encourage dialogue where the requirements are considered inappropriate or inaccessible. On the other hand, this dialogue often becomes antagonistic, either putting providers at risk of losing government incentives, or resulting in non-state providers withdrawing from dialogue to avoid this risk. Moving towards 'real', on-going dialogue is required to ensure collaboration between non-state providers and the government benefits the underserved, and so assists in moving towards the achievement of Education for All.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Selected education indicators

DFID priority countries	Primary Net[14] Enrolment Ratio % (2001)	Primary Gross Enrolment Ratio % (2001)	Primary completion rate % (2001)	Expenditure on primary as % of GDP (2000)	Private enrolment as % of total primary enrolment (2001)	Legal guarantee of free education	Primary pupil teacher ratio (2002/03)
Africa							
Congo	--	85.5	40		19.0	Yes	26
Ethiopia	46.2	63.9	24		6.0	No	55
Ghana	60.2	81.4	64		18.3	Yes	31
Kenya	69.9	96.0	63	0.4	5.6	No	34
Lesotho	84.4	124.3	68	27.0	0.0	No	47
Malawi	81.0	145.8	64		--	Yes	70
Nigeria		95.6	67		--	Yes	42
Rwanda	84.0	117.0	28	6.9	1[15]	Yes	60
Sierra Leone	--	78.9	32		--	--	--
S Africa	89.5	105.1		14.0	2.0	No	34
Sudan	--	58.7			4.7	Yes	29
Tanzania	54.4	69.4	60		0.2	Yes	53
Uganda	--	136.4	65		4.9	No	53
Zambia	66.0	78.8	73		--	No	43
Zimbabwe	82.7	99.0		13.2	87.3	No	39
Asia							
Afghanistan	--	22.6			--	--	61
Bangladesh	86.6	97.5	70	7.3	38.7	Yes	56
Cambodia	86.2	123.4	70	3.2	0.9	Yes	56
China	94.6	116.2		6.1	--	Yes	21
India	82.3	98.1	76	7.2	15.5	Yes	41
Indonesia	92.1	110.9	91	3.2	16.0	No	20
Nepal	70.5	121.6	65	14.2	7.0	Yes	36
Pakistan	59.1	73.2	59		--	No	40
Vietnam	94.0	103.4	101		0.3	Yes	28

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[14] Data in columns 2, 3, 6, & 7 is drawn from USESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005.
Data in columns 4, 5, & 8 is drawn from The World Bank, World Development Report 2004.

[15] Latham and Ndaruthese 2004.

Consortium for Research on
Educational Access, Transitions & Equity
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Report summary:
The paper reviews evidence on non-state providers (NSPs) involved in providing education to the underserved in the context of the drive towards achieving Education for All goals. It considers the comparative advantages that NSPs are commonly understood to possess in education service delivery. It also reviews the forms and implications of engagement between NSPs and the state that occur in the process of such service delivery. The paper argues that there is a need for greater, and more constructive, engagement between NSPs and the state to ensure collaboration benefits the underserved, and so assists in moving towards the achievement of Education for All.

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