

Bangladesh Education Sector Review

Report No. 2: The Status of Gender Equity



BEPS

Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity

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Report No. 2**

Overview of the Status of Gender Equity

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BRAC	(formerly) Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BCLG	Building Capacity for Local Governance
CAMPE	Campaign for Primary Education
CHT	Chittagong Hills Tracts
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention for the Rights of the Child
DFID	Department for International Development
DNFE	Directorate of Nonformal Education
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DWA	Directorate of Women's Affairs
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESTEEM	Effective Schools Through Enhanced Education Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEP	General Education Project
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
GSS	Gono Shahajjada Sangstha
HRD	Human Resources Development
IDEAL	Intensive District Approach to Education for All
IER	Institute for Education and Research
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NWDC	National Women's Development Council
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan for implementation of Beijing Platform of Action (PFA)
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NEP	National Education Policy
NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
NGO	Non-government organization
NORAD	Norwegian International Development Agency
NWDC	The National Women's Development Council
PEDP	Primary Education Development Project
PEDPQI	Primary Education Development Project Quality Improvement
PFA	Platform for Action for Advancement of Women (1998)
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PLAGE	Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equity
PMED	Primary and Mass Education Division
PSPMP	Primary School Performance Monitoring Project
PTI	Primary Teacher Training Institute
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WID	Women in Development

Executive Summary

Bangladesh is in the midst of one of the most profound social changes in its history: the gender integration of men and women throughout society. Bangladesh has undertaken systematic reforms across all sectors in the last decade, with an emphasis on initiatives to increase women's participation through laws, international conventions, and affirmative actions to meet quotas to ensure women's participation. The Bangladesh Platform for Action addresses violence against women, legal rights, health and education as the major gender issues.

Increasing girls access to schooling has been the goal of education reforms undertaken since 1992. Affirmative action measures more than doubled female teacher recruitment. School stipends for girls and Food-For-Education programs were introduced to reduce primary school dropout rates. New curriculum and textbooks were screened for gender bias. By the end of the decade the gender gap in access to education seemed to have disappeared and equity was declared.

But new data indicate that the gender gap has reemerged, with a 2 percentage point drop in girls' net enrollment rate and a 4 percentage point rise for boy. The largest enrollment increases are for boys entering private schools, signifying growing socioeconomic disparities. Other disadvantaged groups with lower rates of enrollment and completion in primary school are the poor, ethnic minorities, and street and working children and their needs must be better understood, particularly regarding gender disparity.

Many of the previous successes in girls enrollment have been directly attributed to the influence of the NGO sector. BRAC pioneered helping women to achieve empowerment through education and entrepreneurial activities that initiated their groundbreaking entrance into the market place. The BRAC model was adopted by a majority of the 400 NGOs now involved in basic education delivery. But the increased social awareness of the value of education for girls has created a new situation in Bangladesh that demands NGOs redefine their role in the education sector.

The main weaknesses for addressing equity issues in both government and NGO instructional systems are poorly trained teachers, learning environments that are not child friendly, static classroom practices, relevant curriculum, and the lack of an assessment system. Management practices maintain a status quo that limits women's ability to provide leadership in governance of primary education at every level.

As a result of current reforms, enrollment levels are higher, but attendance and efficiency levels are mediocre, and many children remain disenfranchised. Bangladesh needs to build a culture of equity -- especially as it relates to child rights -- that promotes inclusion, transparency, and accountability for an educational system that prepares all girls and boys for societal changes.

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I. Introduction

Bangladesh has made significant advances toward achieving gender parity. The decade of the 1990s was significant in the history of educational development in the country, with respect to primary and mass education, particularly for girls and women. In 1990 Bangladesh fully participated in the global Education for All (EFA) initiative launched in Jomtien and compulsory education legislation was instated that same year. It prepared the National Plan of Action for EFA, undertook the EFA assessment in preparation for the Dakar World Education Forum held in 2000, and is engaged in preparing national goals for 2015, as agreed in Dakar. Bangladesh has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the ILO Convention on Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

The WID National Action Plan for the Education Sector Implementation of the Beijing Platform adopted in 1998 specifies a broad range of actions to address girls' and women's education. GOB and NGO programs, with support from the donor community, have progressed toward meeting quotas to provide equal access to girls.

The purpose of this report is to inform the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) about the present status of gender equity pertaining to the education sector so that the agency can begin to determine how to invest effectively in basic education in Bangladesh. This is the second of six reports covering various aspects of basic education. The initial report presents a general overview of the education sector. Other reports in the series include NGOs in education, teachers and teacher training, working with the government, and alternative strategies for USAID investments, each of which could be analyzed from a gender perspective. For this report we have distilled that which is most germane to present with a gender lens, while also including other information and opinions on gender equity issues from each subsector area, collected through interviews with stakeholders in the education sector, as well as from school visits and classroom observations.

II. Gender Equity in Context

Bangladesh is in the midst of one of the most profound social changes in its history: the gender integration of men and women throughout society. This change is a survival response. Landlessness and poverty have forced men and women to find jobs outside their homesteads, requiring new ways of thinking about the rights and responsibilities of men and women in their society.

Bangladesh is a traditional, conservative, and largely Islamic society; a patriarchal and patrilineal society where socio cultural values, norms and traditions have sanctioned the segregation of the sexes and a strict gender-based division of labor. Gender roles have been highly regulated within public and private spheres of influence. Women have been taught to observe the Islamic custom of *purdah* (seclusion), confined to the home, and discouraged from public activity. Women have performed almost exclusively in the "informal" domestic sectors of society and their work has been invisible in the marketplace, while men have dominated the formal sectors and have open access to all

public spheres of society. It is important to note that the concept of a divided world is one that has prevailed throughout South Asia; it is not unique to a particular country or religious tradition, but rather is rooted in other deep cultural values. The private realm was a universe unto itself and contained particular breadth, richness, the complexities of which have never been understood. In that hidden universe, women had authentic power. However, as the equilibrium changed and certain socioeconomic and religious forces began to prevail, sex-bias became endemic within all sectors of society, adversely affecting women's participation in private life through regulations and practices in the legal system, civic participation at all levels, agriculture, commerce, health and education. Because of deeply held beliefs about women's place in society, promotion of women's and girl's rights in the education sector is influenced by, and also influences, all other sectors.

Barriers to Girls' and Women's Participation: A Broad Picture

Today the Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the rights of all citizens are equal before the law, equal protection by the law, and that "women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and public life." But in fact, the most important events in a woman's life, such as marriage, divorce, custody of children, inheritance, etc., are governed by Islamic "Shari'a Laws" which influences the enforcement of civil laws seen as nonconforming. At the same time the level of violence against women has increased. and social disparity is growing rapidly.

Legal Rights -- Despite constitutional guarantees, women have not attained legal equality, and face unequal access to property; protection from harm, decision-making powers surrounding their family life and outside activities, and the justice system itself. But even the 1961 Muslim Family Ordinances established important legal protections for women, but awareness of these protections is still limited among both men and women. Cultural traditions, ignorance of religious and State laws and, especially, a lack of will among enforcement agents and the judiciary, obstruct the enforcement of many protective and promotional laws.

Choice, Consent and Age at Marriage – Marriages are arranged by families and in many cases without prior consent of the girl. Muslim women can only marry a non-Muslim under the Special Marriages Act where both partners are required to renounce their religious beliefs. Forty percent of girls are under 14 years old upon marriage. Though the marriage law stipulates minimum age at 18 for females and 20 for males, it is rarely effectively enforced and child marriages remain common, particularly in the rural areas. Customary marriages solemnized outside the purview of personal law – including child marriages – are accepted as valid, and while the perpetrators are liable to simple fines and imprisonment, they are rarely punished. A lack of effective birth and marriage registration systems remains a major hindrance to the abolition of child and forced marriages.

Registration and the Marriage Contract – Registration is compulsory, but unregistered marriages are accepted as valid. A positive recent trend is that the registrars in some cases automatically fill in the portion of the contract that provides women the delegated right to divorce. Dowry (*mehr*) – is a common part of marriage negotiations, especially in the rural and lower income bracket. Dowry demands often persist long after the marriage

ceremony, and a majority of cases of domestic violence are due to dowry demands by husbands and in-laws.

Violence - Violence against women is one of the most pervasive problems affecting women's dignity, self-esteem, psychological and physical health. Yet many forms of violence are condoned, or justified by invoking religion, culture or traditional beliefs.

Domestic violence – Bangladesh has the second highest rate (47%) of domestic violence in the world (UNFPA) annual country report 2000) . A 1998 study of 1,961 rural women showed 72 percent were severely beaten by their husbands, but only 10.5 percent filed a case. Other prevalent forms of violence include female infanticide, kidnapping, public assault, and acid throwing. Sexual violence includes rape, incest, and harassment through language, trafficking and forced prostitution.

Trafficking - The number of children and women sold to sexual slavery and prostitution has reached an unprecedented numbers. An average of 4,500 women and children from Bangladesh are being smuggled to Pakistan per year. Every month 120 to 150 Bangladeshi women are trafficked to Pakistan and sold to brothels. In a National Daily (Bhorere Kagoj) it was stated that 300,000 children and women are still in India as victims of trafficking. Non-government appraisals indicate the number of prostitutes in the country is above 100,000, and almost half of the sex workers are children.¹

Poverty, the Economy, and Child Labor -- The human poverty index shows social disparity growing rapidly, with girls and women the biggest group of victims. Official statistics show women's economic activity rate is 56 percent (1995/97), comprising 38 percent of the formal labor force. The garment industry employs about 1.5 million workers, 85 percent of whom are women. Since the industry now accounts for 75 percent of Bangladesh's export income, women are more vulnerable to fluctuations in global trade. Out of 3,000 garment factories, fewer than 1% have active factory level trade unions with collective bargaining agreements. The enforcement of labor laws is weak.

However, most women participate in unpaid labor activity as contributing family workers -- 77 percent compared to 17 percent for males; 78 percent of women are involved in non-paid jobs in agriculture, compared with 54 percent men. Child labor is increasingly more prevalent as families require income for survival. An estimated 11 million children are involved in child labor activities; over 1 million domestic workers, predominantly girls, in Dhaka alone. These figures do not include much of the hidden work that is done by female children, over 80 percent of whom live in the rural areas. Eight laws related to child labor are on the books; however, to date, no child labor cases have been filed.

Health -- Some statistics report that of the 8,000 babies born every 24 hours in Bangladesh, half have low birth weight; malnutrition is 4 to 5 times more common among girls than boys. Malnourished mothers give birth to low weight babies, and if those babies are girls, they will be predisposed to poor pregnancy outcomes.

¹ www.focalpointngo.org/ngonews/bangldsh.htm

Consequently Bangladesh has one of the highest proportion of infants with low birth weight at 50 percent compared to 25 percent in Sri Lanka and Pakistan².

Summary

This review shows a significant number of initiatives to increase women's participation through laws, international conventions through affirmative actions.³ Quotas for women's positions were put in place to address the conspicuous absence of women from institutions in all sectors. Many challenges remain in enforcement to meet the quotas, and in addressing qualitative demands of a gender equity approach. There is a great need to focus on the social processes; on educational processes that focus on cultural changes necessary to achieve gender equity.

NGOs and the Influence of Globalization on Girls' and Women

The introduction and adoption of new technology and the emergence of new institutions in the industrial sector as well as in the reproductive health and NGO sectors brought new opportunities for women and girls.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

In the last 25 years the NGO community in Bangladesh revolutionized the self awareness and expectations of women by offering access to nonformal basic education and income-earning opportunities through crafts, chicken rearing, and fish pond cultivation, among others. Grameen Bank spurred the microfinance movement and provided loans to women to support these activities, while the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) pioneered nonformal education. BRAC and Proshika, are the largest NGOs in the provision of education. All have played a fundamental role in helping women to achieve empowerment through education and entrepreneurial activities that initiated their groundbreaking entrance into the market place. NGOs also served to make family planning more acceptable. In addition, they served to encourage the political empowerment of women. This was most prominently evident in the defeat of the strict Islamist parties in the elections of 1996. Despite having about 15 percent of the popular vote, these parties were able to get only one Member of Parliament out of 300 because of the strong political activism of women's organizations.

Garment Industry

The introduction of the garment industry in 1983 created employment for a large number of young women who, for the first time visibly entered male dominated public space. While traditional cultural norms still guided their lives, Purdah had to be renegotiated to allow young women to function in the factories. The garment industry grew from 47 factories in 1983 to 2,224 in 1995. Total employment estimated at 10,000 in 1984-85 is currently estimated at anywhere between 290,000 and 700,000 employees who are

² UNICEF 2000

³ Annex 1 presents a table of policy initiatives and remaining challenges and gaps.

overwhelmingly (85 percent) female, which accounts for 70 percent of all female employment in the formal manufacturing sector. Export values increased from US \$31 million in 1983-84 to US\$1600 million, making it the largest (63 percent) gross foreign exchange earner.⁴ Despite the lack of benefits other than wages, this has revolutionized the expectations of women, particularly in cities.

Contraceptives

By 1994 the use of contraceptives had brought the total fertility rate down to 3.67 (from 7 in the 1960s and 4.8 in 1988). By 2000 the rate had fallen to 3.1. The overall contraception prevalence rate (CPR) went up from 12.7 percent in 1979 to 44.6 percent in 1993. Modern methods, in particular the pill, predominated. This sensational decline in Bangladeshi fertility rates can be directly related to a change in consciousness acquired through new income-generating activities offered women by NGOs.

III. Gender Enrollment Trends

During the past decade enrollment trends have shown positive increases. In 1999, the net enrollment ratio (NER) was 77 percent for all children⁵ This means that 77 percent of all children of primary school age (6 to 10) were enrolled in primary school: 78.6 percent for girls and 75.5 for boys, which is a 3 percentage point gap in favor of girls. But initial findings of a new CAMPE study show NER increased by four percent for boys and decreased by 2 percent for girls, presenting a 6 percentage point gap in favor of boys. The largest enrolment gains for boys in urban private schools, reflect a growth in socioeconomic disparity. If the data are correct, they indicate a need for a reevaluation and redoubling of efforts to achieve gender equity.

Table 1: Girls' Enrollment and Teachers by Types of Schools 1999

Types of Schools	Number		Enrollment in Millions	
	Schools	Teachers	Girls	Total
Govt: Primary Schools	37,710	161,500	5.7	11.8
Registered Non-Govt: NFPE Primary Schools	19,700	78,700	1.8	3.9
Un-Registered Non-Govt: Schools	4,000	14,700	0.26	0.58
Other	16,590	96,100	.93	1.75
Total (Approximated)	78,000	351,000	8.69	18.03
6-10 Aged Population			9.53	19.54

Source: Sedere (2000)

⁴ Bhattacharya, D., 1996. "International Trade, Social Labeling and Developing Countries: The Case of Bangladesh's Garments Export and Use of Child Labor" in *Annuaire Suisse—Tiers Monde* No. 15, IUED, Geneva, pp. 225-6.

⁵ Unless otherwise stated, the comparative figures presented in this report on access, efficiency, and equity come from the CAMPE report, *Hope Not Complacency*, as well as initial findings of the third report, *State of Primary Education in Bangladesh*, currently in second draft.

The most useful data in terms of understanding equity issues in the education system come from the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).⁶ CAMPE has published two assessments of the primary system and a third assessment is currently in draft form. The first, *Hope Not Complacency*, published in 1999, focused on access, efficiency, and achievement. Using a rigorously selected sample of schools throughout the country, the researchers measured these dimensions using the following indicators: enrollment, attendance, achievement, physical facilities, teachers' training and qualifications, community/parental participation, mobility to higher levels, logistics, and supervision. It disaggregated data according to sex, socioeconomic status, ethnic composition, and geographic reach. A second study *Hope Not Complacency* provides a thorough report on the findings of this research. A third study, *State of Primary Education in Bangladesh*, now in final preparation, revisits the various indicators of internal efficiency presented in the first study, *Hope Not Complacency*, in order to monitor changes since 1999.

Initiatives in the education sector have addressed the barriers for girls and women's education with an emphasis on affirmative actions to increase access, with little attention to the qualitative processes of promoting true gender equity⁷. These initiatives are described below.

IV. Barriers and Affirmative Actions

Bangladesh achieved near gender parity in terms of access to basic education with formal and nonformal education programs that redress the limited enabling environment related to societal pressures due to (a) poverty, (b) cultural bias and beliefs about the appropriateness of education for girls considering perceived differences in ability and aptitudes, (c) security and sanitation.

Poverty

The effects of financial hardship have implications for both sexes, but almost invariably have greater impact on girls, since: families are reluctant to invest scarce resources in girls; girls are a major source of household assistance, and are also needed for "domestic services" outside the household, some legitimate and others not.

⁶Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) is an indigenous coalition of more than 400 NGOs involved in primary and nonformal education that has spearheaded the *Education Watch* Project. *Education Watch* is committed to creating more transparency in the primary education system so that an authentic and more credible assessment of progress can be made and the findings used for pragmatic interventions.

⁷ There is no equivalent term for 'gender' in Bangla, but the term is commonly used in English to refer to the *socially-constructed* differences between men and women, while *sex* is used to indicate *biological* differences. Roles associated with biological determinism have been rejected in the search for theories of gender difference that focus on gender relations. *Gender equity* entails paying attention to both girls and boys, women and men. This is a step beyond a WID approach that focuses on women's issues as isolated from men. A gender equity approach also addresses the need to change the understanding of power within relationships from power over something or someone (to dominate), or power to do something (enable), to power with (empowering to improve the common good). These are important distinctions underlining the fact that gender cannot be equated in any simplistic way with simply gathering disaggregated data. Disaggregating information by sex is the first necessary step to helping to analyze and bring biases to light.

The introduction of free (for girls up to grade 8) and compulsory primary education for all children, free textbooks for all primary school children, stipends for girls enrolled in rural secondary schools and the Food for Education Program (FFEP), are programs initiated to address financial hardships. The results of these initiatives are described below.

Free and Compulsory Education

Free and compulsory education officially opened the door for girls to gain access to education. But initial findings of the CAMPE study shows that “free” education still costs money – with parents paying almost as much as the annual public expenditure for primary schooling: 776 taka per student for stationery, textbooks and supplementary materials, private tutors, examinations, admission/readmission, and other fees. Parents pay less for girls than boys and there is great disparity between rural and urban areas. In rural areas the deficit households spend nearly equal amount of money for girls as boys (Average 385 taka for deficit households compared to 750 taka in surplus households). The gender gap is wide in urban surplus households where 4,274 taka are spent on boys (164 taka more than girls). Still, many parents at all socioeconomic levels pay more than the average according to their economic capacity.

The Food for Education Program

The Food for Education Program started in 1993 to provide a food ration to 20 percent of the poor primary school children in rural areas, distributed 15 kg wheat or 12 kg rice per month to 2.28 million children in over 17,000 schools. The rate of attendance reportedly increased sharply from 6.4 in 1993 to 17.7 in 1998 due to this program. But CAMPE (1999) found that there was little significant difference in enrolment between FFEP and non-FFEP schools. Others observed that girls were not given equal rations, that families received less food from the FFEP program than they were entitled to, and that ineligible families received food. In addition, below age children were registered and parents were motivated to admit a child to two or three neighboring schools, causing double counting and distortion of enrollment figures. GOB has subsequently decided to drop the food ration program in favor of monetary stipends.

The Secondary School Stipend Program

The current secondary school stipend program provides small cash amounts to girls in the poorer rural areas and, to further encourage schools to enroll girls, a tuition assistance payment is also provided to the participating schools. To qualify for the stipend, girls must be unmarried up to SSC, maintain 75 percent attendance rate and obtain 45 percent score on the final exam.

In project areas of the program, enrollment more than doubled from 462,000 in 1994 to slightly above one million in 2001. The overall proportion of females who married in project areas declined between 1992 and 1995, from 29 to 14 percent for ages 13-15, and from 72 to 64 percent for ages 16-19. Up to 1.45 million girls are expected to participate

in schools covered under the second project (FSSAP II). These results, however impressive as they are, might have been even higher with better management.⁸

V. Cultural Bias

Beliefs about differences in abilities and aptitudes, the mistakenly common belief that boys and girls differ significantly in mental abilities and aptitudes, that girls are inherently of less value, and that boys are a better educational investment.

Community mobilization and mass communication initiatives at national and school level; screening for gender bias and stereotypes in the new textbooks; and teacher training in gender sensitive classroom processes are programs to change beliefs about abilities and aptitudes. Results of these initiatives are described below.

Community Mobilization

Community mobilization and mass communication initiatives included national-level campaigns and school-level projects, including school management committees and parent-teacher associations. Within the Intensive District Approach to Education for All (IDEAL), the Meena Communication Initiative promoted the use of the Meena character and materials by teachers in order to (1) help teachers become aware of gender among children; (2) increase the completion rate for girls; and (3) enhance the self-esteem, self confidence and academic achievement of girls. Meena is the most popular character representing the rights of the girl child in Bangladesh. Every year Meena Day is observed on September 24th when different cultural and educational events take place at central and local levels of the country. A series of supplementary Meena print materials including story and interactive books have been produced and distributed in schools of IDEAL districts. Meena films have been shown through the district mobile film unit.

Gender Audit and Modules for Teachers and Students

A gender audit of the Grade I-V primary books was conducted by IDEAL. Based on the audit results, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board has revised textbook illustrations and text.

Modules were also developed for use in Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTIs). The PTI modules are not integrated in the training program, are treated theoretically and, once trained, the teachers do not put them into practice in the schools. Interactive learning practices also included in modules, are also not practiced by teachers in the classroom.

The core methodology of the IDEAL Project, “Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning,” (MWTL) shows at least eight ways in which a child learns and interacts with the world and is crucial to creating an atmosphere in which the child’s diverse faculties can be brought into play to learn in a more creative and participatory manner removed from rote learning. But male and female teachers are not gender aware which is reflected

⁸ It is reported that an independent audit of the program found irregularities in allocation of the stipend funds. Supported by NORAD, this audit was not available at the time of this review.

in the way they conduct the classes, interact with students outside the class, and when they take part in discussions on the subject. Except for the use of Meena materials and a training module, the project is gender-blind.⁹

Security and Sanitation – Girls’ vulnerability to physical and cultural dangers and parents’ concern about pregnancy outside marriage, eve teasing, etc.

The issues of school safety and sanitation have been addressed in several ways, including a quota initiated for 50 percent female teachers (new recruitment at 60 percent); improved school facilities, including separate toilets for girls and boys, and potable water; and community schools to bring schools closer to girls homes. Results of these initiatives are described below.

Fifty Percent Quota For Female Teachers

The number of female primary school teachers has more than doubled since 1990 -- from 16 percent to 40 percent. However, there are nearly twice as many female teachers (58 percent) in the urban schools as in rural schools (29 percent). Nearly 93 percent of the NGO school teachers are female, compared to 48 percent in government, 39 percent in private and 7.6 percent in madrassahs.

Improved Facilities

Facilities, though improved with separate toilets and potable water in some schools, remain an issue in many schools. Some schools still lack these facilities altogether. Others are unusable due to unsanitary conditions and each of these cases provide clear evidence that a School Management Committee (SMC), whose job it is to maintain facilities and create a healthy and pleasant school environment, is ineffective. Findings of PSPMP 2000 study showed inadequate toilets in as many as 38 percent of rural schools, and 57 percent of schools could not provide drinking water to their students. It has also been reported that teachers appropriate the use of the second (girls’) toilet for their own use, which prevents girls’ access and brings the true effect of better school facilities under question.

Community Schools

The initiative to support community schools run by NGOs as a way of bringing classrooms closer to girls’ homes has proven most effective in increasing girls’ access. This effort, reviewed below, is characterized by methods that enable greater participation between communities, schools, and teachers. In some cases, the curriculum is highly relevant to the communities that are served.

Lessons Learned and Issues for Consideration

⁹ As reported in Gender Audit Preparation on Intensive District Approach to Education for All (IDEAL) Project. Feb 1999. IDEAL has since created teaching modules to supplement the MWTL method, but as it is not integrated its importance is marginalized.

Affirmative action is a first step, but does not necessarily lead to gender equity. The term “gender equity” is often misunderstood as a simple exercise in counting numbers of girls and boys until they reach parity. “The education system is obsessed with numbers,” said one person, “but there is a great need for attention to the kinds of skills and competencies that are needed in order to achieve gender equity.”

Girls risk teasing and attacks on the way to and from school and, once in school, girls and boys witness and are subject to physical and verbal abuse, one of the major issues identified by children as discouraging learning and school participation.

Community participation can be effective in achieving safe walks to and from school in the rural areas, but the same is not true for the fractured communities in urban areas, where there is little cohesion. Communities can also be mobilized to stop the use of corporal punishment in schools and teachers need to be trained in interactive methods with respect for the rights of the child to a learner friendly classroom environment.

- Affirmative action initiatives such as the girls’ secondary school stipend project and food for education are costly, subject to misallocation, and are not sustainable. One of the reasons given for the stipends was to motivate primary school girls to continue on to secondary school. But we do not have evidence that enrollment numbers increased beyond the rises in other areas without the stipend. While these initiatives address the symptoms of poverty, the system is not addressing the need to educate in ways that will help girls and their families out of poverty.
- Changing stereotypical beliefs about the value of girls’ education through integrated approaches of community mobilization, mass communication initiatives at national and school level and teacher training require gender integrated methodologies in design and implementation.

Having reviewed these three areas, we turn now to a brief comparative review of the formal government model and nonformal schools run by NGOs.

VI. Delivery of Gender Equitable Basic Education

Education in Bangladesh is delivered through a complex system of secular and non-secular, formal and nonformal; public, public-private, private, and NGO schools and other centers of learning in eight¹⁰ types of schools. Access and achievement levels for girls is poorest in the private and the madrassah schools. Government primary schools account for the largest number of girls enrolled (5.7 million); nonformal primary education (NFPE) schools, run by NGOs, account for the largest gains in increasing girls’ access and achievement. This is striking because teachers recruited for NGO schools have lower education backgrounds and they are paid less than government schools, yet the children from these schools test higher on national exams. While no comparative research has been conducted on the teaching-learning environments of these schools, we can deduce the elements contributing to these results. A brief review of the schools and

¹⁰ See Report No. 1 for review of school types.

findings of classroom observations in government primary schools and in NFPE schools follows.

Comparison of Characteristics of Formal Government Schools and NFPE Schools Operated by NGOs

All schools have achieved increased access to education for girls, but there are striking differences between formal government schools and NFPE schools run by NGOs. There are also differences among NGO schools.

Government Formal Schools

In general, the government schools are characterized by poor facilities, teachers with poor classroom practices, a uniform curriculum based on rote memorization. The schools are inadequately maintained, blackboard and chalk is often missing, facilities are unsanitary with tube wells and toilets not cleaned regularly. In the classrooms children sit in rows facing the teacher. The teacher is often absent, or late to class, and arrives poorly prepared with inadequate knowledge of the curriculum and no textbooks. The teachers are predominantly male and earn a salary of 4,000 taka (\$70) a month, which is quite a good salary, especially in rural areas, but have low status within the government and a weak relationship with the community. School supervisors visit less than once a month and do not have practical experience to be able to mentor teachers.

NGO Schools

By contrast, the NGO schools are characterized by modest facilities that are much better kept. The teachers – mostly married females from the community -- are not as well educated, but they have monthly in-service training as a follow up to a period of about two weeks pre-service training. They are paid a much lower rate at 500 taka (\$9) per month honorarium but have stronger relationships with the community, and enjoy a higher status. Teacher attendance is regular, and lessons are prepared in advance. Like the government schools, achievement rates are low overall, but they are still 6 times higher than the government schools. The reasons for this difference seem to be directly attributable to the strength of the relationships between the teacher and the school supervisors and the community, and the motivation of the teachers who are predominantly female.

But are all NGO schools the same? Do they differ in their treatment of girls? Are they any more relevant to helping girls and boys deal with social development and practical needs?¹¹ NGO models of schooling as either formal, gap-fillers, or empowering. The gap-filler model does not have a strong commitment to provide education as a human right or as an empowerment intervention.

¹¹ See Report No. 3 of this series, “NGOs as Deliverers of Basic Education” for a complete overview of NGO-run schools.

The great majority of NGO schools follow the BRAC model, which is a gap-filler. However, there are several other NGO models that help children continue either in the government schools or for employable skills. They include Friends In Village Development Bangladesh (FIVBD), Underprivileged Children's Education Program (UCEP), and the Center for Mass Education in Science (CMES)¹².

BRAC (93 percent female teachers; 70 percent female students--1.2 million) provides a 4-year basic education program (5-year equivalent) in learning centers that are neatly kept one room village structures of local material such as bamboo. Though the approach was developed as part of a comprehensive rural development model, it is a gap-filler. It developed its own gender-sensitive curriculum that incorporates competencies set out by the government for formal schools, but it is a stand alone program that neither prepares students for continued learning in government schools, nor for practical employment.

The learning culture is weak; pedagogical style is primarily teacher centered in which children are "choreographed" to stand or sit on mats arranged in a large U shape, or in rows, but there is little interaction between the children. Observations made in some schools showed teachers favored girls and ignored boys, others showed the opposite – neither promotes gender equity. Teachers have 15 days residential training; supervisors visit schools twice every week and have practical experience to be able to mentor teachers.

FIVDB (50 percent female students and teachers) is a formal primary education 5-year program that is linked to government programs so children can continue on to secondary school. The school is a permanent structure with five classrooms painted and neatly kept with clean toilet facilities and potable water. It has a strong learning culture that is child-centered and interactive, includes child-to-child, group and individual learning. Observations showed gender integration within classroom processes that displayed a natural ease and friendliness. Teachers are locally hired and trained in a 3-phase process over 3 months, including 7 days residential training in theory as well as 70 days practice supervised by trainers.

UCEP (50 percent female students; 40 percent female teachers) is an empowerment model for urban working children. The classroom schools are in permanent structures that are well kept, with clean facilities for girls and boys. It developed its own gender-sensitive curriculum that offers livelihood skills training. The model schools provide basic education and employable skills through apprenticeship and job placement. It has a strong learning culture that is interactive and student centered.

CMES (70 percent female students) is an empowerment program that provides basic education in a 5-year program. It developed its own gender-sensitive materials with an emphasis in science and technology, and market-oriented livelihood skills training. At the

¹² Annex 2 presents a comparison of gender dimensions of NGO schools

end of the program students transfer to a Rural Technology center for training in marketable products.

This brief review points out some major differences with respect to gender and empowerment in these schools, but there have been no follow-on studies to monitor the graduates of these programs. What do these girls and women do after completing the programs? Are their lives improved? Are their family's lives improved? In addition to a comparative study of the curriculum, pedagogical style, and classroom management practices, it would be useful to understand more about the management practices of the NGOs themselves. BRAC has a strongly hierarchical, with a heavy management base. None of these programs are either run by women or attempt to reach gender parity in the management structure.

Summary

Community-based nonformal education (NFE) schools, with predominantly female teachers, show higher rates of participation and performance for girls compared to all other school types, although girls' do not keep up with boys on achievement in either government or nonformal schools. (Education Watch School Survey 2000).

The quality of education in government schools is severely compromised for girls and boys due to the overall dismal conditions that prevail, even with increased efforts to improve facilities and curriculum. This is due to lack of leadership¹³ and to the highly centralized top-down bureaucracy of the formal system that maintains a status quo, is dysfunctional and which supports corrupt management practices throughout all levels of the system.

NGO initiatives show the significance of beneficial changes that occur when smaller groups are empowered to make decisions at the local level, leading to higher accountability within communities and classrooms to provide educational opportunities. They also demonstrate the combined power of school variables such as teaching-learning processes, school learning climate, enabling conditions, and support inputs from outside the school.¹⁴ The recruitment of female teachers has been critical to the strategy to increase girls' participation. We turn now to a review of how the female teaching force is recruited and trained.

Female Teachers: Recruitment and Training

In 1991 the government revised the required qualifications to attract more female teachers¹⁵ to the profession. A male candidate must have a High School Certificate (HSC), which is obtained by successfully passing the HSC public examination at the end of 12 years of schooling. But a female candidate with a Senior School Certificate (SSC) can apply at the end of 10 years of schooling. All candidates take a recruitment test and,

¹³ PSPMP:2000 p.5-13

¹⁴ Craig-Heneveld Framework, PSPMP: 2000.

¹⁵ For a complete analysis of teachers and teacher training, see Report No. 4 of this series.

notwithstanding the difference in the qualifications for the female and male candidates, the same test is administered for both groups. This automatically discriminates against females with lower number of years of education. To meet the quota, those female candidates who pass the test, even with lower scores, are able to become primary school teachers.

In the last decade over 30,000 female teachers were recruited. In order to achieve gender parity in teachers of government primary schools 60,000 more females will need to be recruited. Several barriers to recruitment and deployment will prevent this from happening.

- A one-year long centralized recruitment process that lacks transparency and is subject to unethical practices in which positions are often bought. Government teaching positions provide access to money and power within the community. Teachers receive a salary of 4,000 taka (US \$70). Once selected, candidates may be appointed to schools that are removed from their household, and where there housing facilities are lacking for female teachers. The PSPMP study showed teaching was not the first choice as a profession for a significant number of teachers; they joined the profession because they had no alternative.
- Once selected, female teachers especially prefer appointments to a town school or a school with easy access by public transport because it is difficult for them to find accommodation in a village where they may be subject to greater discrimination as a single woman. This leads to distortions in staffing, with some schools overstaffed and others in remote areas understaffed.

Nonformal NGO schools avoid some of the problems posed above by recruiting married female teachers from the community with lower education qualifications – 8-9 years of schooling. These teachers are not salaried; they are paid an honorarium of 500 taka (about \$9) a month. They receive 14 days of pre-service training and one day of in-service training every month.

Although government primary school teachers have: (1) more years of education – 12 years compared to 10 years for NFE teachers; (2) teacher training – 10 months compared to 2/3 weeks for NGO teachers; and (3) teaching experience – 19.4 compared to 4 for NFE teachers), the students in NGO schools have somewhat higher achievement scores. This is attributed to the fact that in NGO schools teacher attendance is higher (2 percent absenteeism compared to 12 percent over all schools in the CAMPE surveyed schools); they start classes on time and are well prepared, guidance and supervision are provided regularly, and their ties to community are stronger.

Classroom Practices

Once girls enter schools, what are the classroom dynamics? Is discrimination further intensified by the fact that there are many more male teachers in schools than females.

These questions were tested in focus group interviews¹⁶ with mixed groups of boys and girls, as well as teachers revealed:

- Teachers themselves don't see their own daughters working after finishing their education. Majority of teachers (female and male) conceded that if they had 100 taka to spend their first priority would be to spend it on their son.
- Children said boys are more considerate and share their notes with other boys but girls don't. "A kind of jealousy stops girls from helping one another in the class."

These examples get at the complexity of the gender biases held by male and female teachers, and girls and boys¹⁷. Gender stereotyped and gender biased classroom communication are endemic within the system. Yet very little has been done to improve communication techniques in the classroom.

The IDEAL project, which has been otherwise very well thought out, missed a great opportunity when it selected the Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning methodology without considering gender dimensions.

The PSPMP: 2000 researchers looked closely at four school variables they devised. These are: teaching and learning processes, school learning climate, enabling conditions, and supporting inputs from outside the school. Their findings show, among others:

- Seventy-four percent of highest achieving schools had teachers who tried to get students involved in a discussion, kept students occupied in learning activities throughout the class period (59 percent), lessons explained carefully (65 percent), classroom setup ahead of time (64 percent)
- Achievement highest in schools where teachers used a pleasant tone of voice and courteous language (90 percent), arrived on time (90 percent); addressed students by name (80 percent); knew what they were supposed to teach (80 percent), good relationship with students (60 percent)

Gender dimensions are not analyzed in this study, though the data is now available for future analysis.

As an important alternative to prevailing classroom practices, the Equity in the Classroom Project (EIC)¹⁸ was piloted in Bangladesh last year to provide technical assistance and training in both the formal and nonformal sectors. A two-day workshop was provided to the ESTEEM Project and 5 day workshops in collaboration with BRAC and CARE. This initiative provides training participants with tools for active engagement using participatory learning and action (PLA) methodology to understand critical gender

¹⁶“ Shapner Shondhane: In Search of a Dream.” Findings of formative research on the Girls' Education Initiative in Bangladesh conducted by Asiatic Social for UNDP, UNICEF. November 2001

¹⁷ One person interviewed for this report told the story of her sister-in-law who was refused relief by her doctor during a very long difficult labor. Her (female) doctor told her that her long labor was a good sign because “to bare a boy you must suffer.” This was an example of how deeply ingrained this is in secular, progressive, Western educated members of society. On the other hand, women of some groups in the Chittagong Hill District are independent and empowered.

¹⁸ Through Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Women in Development.

dimensions to teaching and learning. This innovative project had good results and could form the core of a much more deeply encompassing initiative that practices the fundamentals of child rights, democracy, and human rights as practical empowerment strategy for everyday use in schools and classrooms.

Local Level Participation

The *Local Government Bill* (1997) provides for direct election to 1/3 women's reserved seats in all four tiers of local government; 46,000 women stood and 12,828 women were elected to Union Council seats, fostered by equal opportunity education campaigns for voters, and training for elected women. GOB introduced lateral entry to increase women's representation in senior decision-making positions in government.

However, only 0.45 percent of Union Councils have women chairpersons; only 130 women were elected to general seats, and male-dominated social structures hinder the work of elected representatives. There continues to be on-going debate on the fate of national-level reservations for women even as challenges remain to bring qualified women to the highest levels of bureaucracy (less than 3% women); competition rules need revision.

School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teacher Associations, Mother's Groups and Ward Committees were formed to involve community participation in management of primary education. SMCs consist of 11 members. Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), consisting of 27 members representing a cross-section of the village population also enlist support of local community. Planning and review meetings are held with these groups and local education officers to find ways to increase enrolment, reduce absences and dropout, agree to priorities for development in the school, and improve the allocation of resources.

Evidence shows mixed success of SMCs. The membership of SMCs are community elites who represent the more powerful groups in the school community and support the status quo, thereby limiting participation of female members and those of other traditionally marginalized groups. The participation of women in SMCs and PTAs is low overall at 14 percent, but strikingly higher in NFE schools--60 percent compared to less than 14 percent in government schools, 12 percent in private schools and 1.1 percent in madrassahs. SMCs meet every month, and three fourths of the total membership were present at the last meeting.

VII. INGO Programs

Early Childhood Development

Youth

Macro Issues

A brief on the findings from the research component on the situation of rural adolescent girls in Bangladesh, “Kishori Abhijan” – Empowerment of Adolescent Girls project of the MOWCA and UNICEF, found the main reasons for girls’ dropout are

- II. 31% cannot meet expenses
- III. 21% for marriage
- IV. 20% parents don’t want
- V. 16% not interested

Reasons for not enrolling at all:

- 45% parents don’t want
- 42% not interested
- 34% can’t meet the expense
- 15% for work
- 10% for social (purdah)
- But 31% parents dream for their daughters to obtain HSC and 41% up to SSC..

The study also showed the 52% of the girls in the study planned to migrate and 19% planned to marry. Actually 87% were migrating for marriage and 1% for study.

Among the respondents the dropout rate for marriage was:

22% of age 13-15

41% of age 16-18

51% of age 19-22

Young girls activities mainly included watching TV, listening to radio, visiting other para. Young boys go to tea stalls, wat TV, listen to radio, watch cinema, play outdoor games, and visit other para.

International NGOs provide innovative programs

CARE/Bangladesh has recently identified education as one of the important interventions for the future and in the last two years they have worked through selected national and local NGOs in the Chittagong Hill Tract districts with 25 formal schools in a pilot project. The CHT is seriously lagging behind in social sector achievements. CARE hopes to expand its project in the CHT and begin work in the Tista-Jamuna River Basin area in Northern Bangladesh.

Save the Children/USA includes primary education for children and a range of education and training for adolescents—including marketable skills training—in the services it provides to its targeted geographic areas (NashirNagar). It is also developing a program in pre-primary, or early childhood education. Bangladesh’s EFA Plan of Action has targeted early childhood education as one of the priority areas for the next 15-year period. While the PMED, with donor support, has experimented in early childhood programs, it is more likely that good experience will be gained from NGO programs, including Save the Children/USA’s program.

CARE

VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation

Although the primary education system is awash with information, very little of it is useful, validated data. There is a need for a cadre of professionals trained to conduct quantitative and qualitative research in general, and on girls and women in particular. CAMPE, the organization that publishes Education Watch, could only identify 40 people in the entire country of Bangladesh with the capacity to conduct Education Watch studies.

The availability and reliability of information concerning girls and women is either non-existent or very weak due to women's invisible roles, poor statistical methods, and pervasive attitudes about the value of women in society. The non-existence of birth registration, particularly in the rural sector, and the absence of any other reliable system of identification, reliability of reported information is very low. The actual 6-10 year primary school aged population is not known. The Government realizes the double reporting, double registration, and over reporting are reasons for inflated statistics.

PSPMP

PSPMP	ADB		Helped PMED survey primary schools to determine the effects of teaching processes and school governance and management on education quality. These data, should the PMED and DPE choose to use them, are essential for making sound policy decisions and investments.
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IX. International Donors

There are over a dozen donors and lenders currently supporting the education sector, including World Bank/IDA, Asia Development Bank (ADB), UNICEF, European Union (EU), Department for International Development (DFID), Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), Norad, SIDA, SDC, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), GTZ, AusAid, Danida, and Novib. These donors support reform activities in every sub-sector of the education sector. Because of its importance in addressing gender issues, Table 2 below presents a review of donors active in improving educational quality.

Program	Donor	Budget (millions)	Activity Area
PEDP	World Bank	\$200	School-cluster-based teacher training; curriculum, management training and informatin systems at central, district, upazila, and school levels
SPESP	ADB	\$143	School-cluster-based teacher training; curriculum, management training

CPEP	GTZ, KfW	\$24	Upazila Resource Centers (URCs), in-service teacher training, teacher learning aids, School Management Committees, link to cluster training and PTI training
ESTEEM	DFID	\$2.8	Management at the national, district, upazila, and school levels (financial, planning, M&E, academic supervision)
PSMP	ADB	\$1.7	Helped PMED survey primary schools to determine the effects of teaching processes and school governance and management on education quality. These data, should the PMED and DPE choose to use them, are essential for making sound policy decisions and investments.
PEDPQI	NORAD	\$43.5	HRD plan in DPE; strengthen URCS, PTI curriculum, NAPE, teaching materials
IDEAL	UNICEF, AusAid, et al	\$36.6	Train teachers in “multiple ways of teaching” and interactive methods, continuous assessment; mobilizes community support, strengthen school and district management
PROMOTE	EU	\$39.2	gender-sensitive teaching in secondary schools in rural areas; girl-friendly secondary schools.

Female Secondary School Assistance Project II (World Bank/Ida) \$120.9 million

Intensive District Approach to Education for All (IDEAL) UNICEF, AusAID, IDA, SIDA, ADB, WUSC/Canada – (\$36.6m)

Curriculum, Teachers, Policy and Management, Community Mobilization

The IDEAL project focuses on transferring management responsibilities from national and district levels to upazilas and schools. Planning facilities and educational programs begin at the village level with progressive integration and consolidation at the ward, union, upazila, and district levels, with emphasis on planning with community participation. Two major activities are school catchment area mapping and school planning. The main actors are children, parents, teachers, and community leaders. This holistic approach emphasises capacity-building, professional input and a focus on girls and other socially disadvantaged groups. It also supports mass communication to promote girls education through the Meena series and the Multiple Ways of Learning.

PROMOTE (EU): gender-sensitive teaching in secondary schools in rural areas; girl-friendly secondary schools. \$39.2

PROMOTE Gender Strategy Document

Participants felt that there were very good positive images of women, but there was more criticism of the illustrations than anything else. “As the whole society benefits from ‘gender’ programme such as PROMOTE, it was felt that there should be pictures of men and boys in the book – especially as most of the teachers and readers of the brochure are male. There was seen to be a danger of giving the wrong message: that PROMOTE is not interested in men and boys, or that PROMOTE is only of interest to women and girls. There should be both male and female images.”

X. Building Institutional Capacity on Gender Equity: Government, Donors and NGOs

Government

The GoB has stated support in women's affairs in every five-year plan since 1973¹⁹. A Women's Affairs Division was created in 1976. In 1984 the Women's Affairs Department (WAD) was established as an operational wing of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Women's Affairs. In 1994, the Ministry of Women's Affairs was created and later on it included also Children's Affairs. At present, the name of the Ministry is the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs (MOWCA). The MOWCA operates through the Department of Women's Affairs, Jatio Mohila Sangstha and Shishu Academy.

In 1990 the WID Focal Point mechanism was created for the appointment of one person in each ministry to ensure inclusion of WID concerns in policies, plans and programming. In 1997 the WID Focal Point position was upgraded to Joint Secretary/Joint Chief and the Deputy Secretary/Deputy Chief was nominated as the WID Focal Points. The National Women's Development Council (NWDC) was established with the Prime Minister as Chairperson.

But institutional progress has been very slow for reasons that include lack of coordination among different government organizations as well as between government and non-governmental organizations. Beside the fact that staff secretarial assistants often end up following developments and representing officers in meetings, there is a high rate of rotation of WID Focal Point officers which doubly confounds attempts to increase professional quality through training. The last group of WID Focal Point officers, who had completed training with CIDA TA support, has rotated out since the last election and a new group is ready for training.

Donors

The Local Consultative Group on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (LCG-WAGE), which consists of mainly donors and some government representatives, works in association with MOWCA. LCG-WAGE, which meets every month for seminars, discussions, and networking, works as an important lobby on gender equity issues. For example, a subgroup dealing with macro-processes (RNE, World Bank, DfID, and CIDA), is working with the IMF and World Bank on gender integration in the design of

¹⁹1973 was the same year that the Percy Amendment directed U.S. foreign assistance to focus on integrating women into the economies of developing countries. As a further historical note of comparison showing the parallels between donor assistance and GoB's strategies, the USAID/WID office was created in 1974. In 1985 USAID's Blueprint for Development mandated primary school enrollment to 90% of girls by the year 2000, but it was not until 1988 that USAID mandated explicit WID action items including the use of sex disaggregated data in PA and NPA modes, and projects designed so the percent of female participants would be "demonstrably" increased. In 1990 the "Gender Gap" in education was first defined as a determinant of social welfare and economic productivity (King, World Bank) and the power of the gender variable became widely accepted.

the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). GoB has commissioned the preparation of 14 analytical papers and the drafting of the Interim-PRSP to a number of consultants, mostly from the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). As the concept of the PRSP was little known in Bangladesh, the GoB and the IMF and WB representatives in Bangladesh organized a training seminar, targeting a cross-section of relevant stakeholders. Upon learning of the seminar, the LCG-WAGE sub-group approached the seminar organizers to suggest that the issue of gender and the PRSP should be on the agenda as well. Ultimately a presentation was given at the plenary session; gender experts were included on the list of invitees for the seminar and provided a range of materials on gender and development to the two lead consultants who were preparing the interim PRSP draft.

A similar situation occurred in the education sector. Upon learning of the PEDP-II planning, LCG-WAGE lobbied for the inclusion of an international gender equity specialist on the design team. On agreement with the GoB, a TOR was written for an international consultant to provide 4 months of technical to the PEDP-II joint planning mission. This will be funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

The LCG-WAGE distribution list includes the contact staff representative(s) for each donor. Expertise varies among the organizations. The Netherlands has an expert team headed by the First Secretary of Gender and Development, but this is unique. In addition to the formal contact representative, some organizations such as UNICEF have staff members located throughout the organization who are sensitive to the needs of girls and women. Other donor organizations do not have experienced capacity in the area. Oftentimes those who are gender experts within organizations are tasked with other projects that distract them from this focus. Consequently, programming often suffers from lack of attention at the design phase, as noted above, as well as during implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

As noted earlier, there are over a dozen donors and lenders currently supporting the education sector and relationships among them have been cordial but not collaborative.²⁰ In addition to the gender expertise issues identified above, there is also a lack of sectoral expertise among representatives who attend the education sector donor meetings. Therefore the group is also more highly influenced by two sector specialists who represent donors with long-term interests in Bangladesh and who no doubt believe that their organizations are fully experienced in gender equity issues. However, this is not necessarily the case as reflected in programming.

NGOs

The numbers of NGOs have flourished over the last 20 years; today there are 400 NGOs active in the education sector alone. BRAC is one of the best known and, as discussed above, most others have followed the BRAC model, which is top-down and hierarchical.

Some NGOs offer that opportunity; the work of CAMPE offers a good example.

but there are a number of women's NGOs that have been in existence for at least as long, if not longer and each of them is providing capacity building support to other NGOs.

²⁰ For more information see Report No. 5 of this series.

They include Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, established in 1970; and Naripokkho which, established in 1983. Mahila Parishad is a membership organization with 60 branches across the country. Naripokkho (“Pro Women”) is an umbrella organization for 450 local NGOs that are registered and headed by women.

Some people we interviewed for this report said that, while MOWCA is ghettoizing issues concerning women and children, those who are working in the Department of Women’s Studies at Dhaka University have intellectualized the feminist debate to such an extent that it is irrelevant. There is a need to work in between these somewhat opposing groups, and to bridge the gap.

XI. Summary

Examples of Successful Models in other Programming Using Cross-Sectoral Linkages

Successful models of good-quality education for girls and women have taken advantage of holistic approaches and forged “lateral links” between education and other sectors. Table 3 below presents illustrative examples of how cross-sectoral linkages have been used in successful models across the areas represented in USAID’s Four Pillars: Global Development Alliance; Global Health; Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade; Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance.

Table 3: Illustrative Examples of Linkages Across Sectors Represented in the USAID Pillars as Used in Four Successful Models of Good Quality Education

Sector / Education Model Approach	Global Development Alliance	Global Health	Economic Growth Agriculture, Env	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Women’s Empowerment Program (WEP)- Nepal <i>Nonformal literacy for female youths and adults</i>		-Improved health	-Economic literacy component of program -New Village Bank/MFI System -Small-scale, subsistence agriculture -Environmental management	-Women’s Rights Literacy Training and conflict resolu - Incidents of family abuse, prostitution, and trafficking reduced
Step-by-Step Indonesia, Central and Eastern Europe <i>Pre-school and primary education</i>	-Public-private partnership program supported by Soros Foundation	-Health ministries included in establishment of health education component of the program	-Dynamic curriculum related to local environment	-Democratic pedagogical processes taught in primary school classrooms, university faculty and pedagogical institutes -Local governance strengthened by establishment of NGOs, associations for parents, teachers, faculty
Morocco Education for Girls (MEG) and Girls’ Education Advocacy (GEA) <i>Primary school</i>	- Developed public-private partnerships -Advocacy and exchange at the national, provincial and local community levels	-Hygiene -Trachoma control -Access to clean water -School toilets	-Microenterprise development through PTAs & Women’s Assns -School gardens -Village wells -Theater for environmental education	-Strengthening of local governance w/village development associations & PTAs -Democratic process through participatory pedagogy -Team approach to classroom learning
Falconbridge – Dominican Republic <i>Primary education</i>	-Public-private partnership sponsored by Falconbridge Mining Company	-Basic health care in curriculum -Access to clean water -School toilets	-Adult education for income generation -School gardens, tree nurseries	-Conflict resolution taught in curriculum

Issue: In Bangladesh there is a need to foster democratic principles within school programs serving infants and toddlers in group care settings, preschools, early grades of primary schools, and institutions of higher education that train teachers and school administrators. There is also a need for training and technical assistance supports the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Step-by-Step Educational Reform Program

Step by Step is a five-year educational reform program whose purpose is to foster democratic principles in young children, their families, their teachers, school administrators, and teacher educators. Developed by Children's Resource International (CRI) in partnership with the Open Society Institute, the program supports change at all levels, including government, universities, schools, and local communities. It helps mentor women's groups to become NGOs responsible for coordinating the schools.

A 1999 USAID-funded evaluation concluded that democratic practices were pervasive in Step by Step's child-centered classrooms, in contrast with practices in traditional, teacher-directed classrooms. Children in Step by Step classrooms are decision makers, respect the rights of all, and express their individuality, initiative, creativity, and questioning. Their parents are highly involved in school activities.

The child-centered philosophy of the Step by Step Program is supported by written methodologies, courses, and training materials developed for teaching staff within programs serving infants and toddlers in group care settings, preschools, early grades of primary schools, and institutions of higher education that train teachers and school administrators.

- The Preschool initiative, which is designed for children ages 3 to 6 years, emphasizes family participation, individualized teaching, and how to create a classroom environment that supports children's choices.
- Primary School initiative for grades 1 through 8 introduces new teaching methods while working within existing curriculum standards to promote cooperative learning, integrated teaching based on themes, and the development of children's communication and critical-thinking skills.
- The Higher Education initiative supports faculty in colleges and universities in restructuring early childhood teacher preparation programs for child-centered teaching.
- The Inclusion of Children with Disabilities initiative brings schools and parents together to address the educational needs of young children with special needs.
- Minority and Refugee Children initiative promotes the right of all children to a quality education.

In addition, training and technical assistance supports the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). New NGOs in emerging democracies are provided with the critical skills and knowledge needed to ensure sustainability and to participate effectively in the public arena. These NGOs include new parent associations,

parent/teacher associations, teacher training organizations, and education foundations. CRI provides new NGOs in emerging democracies with the critical skills and knowledge needed to ensure sustainability and to participate effectively. These NGOs include new parent associations, parent/teacher associations, teacher training organizations, and education foundations that are predominantly run by women.

Issue: Bangladesh has expressed support for the development of hybrid models where public sector is supporting and advocating for change in the education sector; and the teaching-learning models are linked to community decisionmaking.

Morocco: Comprehensive Approach Improves Learning Environment

To improve the learning environment for rural girls and boys, the Morocco Education for Girls (MEG) program is developing the following interdependent set of activities that produces positive change:

- VI. Improved pedagogical practices in the classroom, namely child-centered, gender-sensitive teaching and learning, through training of MNE staff, teachers, school directors, inspectors, and teacher trainers.
- VII. Stronger community participation through more effective Parent-Teacher Associations and better communication among teachers, provincial educational authorities, and community members.
- VIII. Improved ability of the provincial delegations of the MNE to assess needs, evaluate results, and determine strategies for sound education.

Advocacy and Exchange through Public-Private Partnerships (GEA)

USAID/Morocco has developed public-private partnerships by working with representatives of the private sector in public education. Advocacy and exchange is being developed at the national, provincial and local community levels of the system.

GEA focuses on developing the private sector and the media as well as the training of NGOs. Large Moroccan private sector firms are represented in Al Jisr, an NGO which grew from the national conference on girls' education held in Marrakech in March 1999 entitled 'Enterprise and Education: A Development Imperative'. The objective of Al-Jisr, which means bridge, is to forge partnerships between private sector entities and individual schools. USAID also supported the establishment of the NGO Comite de Soutien de la Scolarisation des Filles which works to strengthen the network of local NGOs and community groups involved in education and to expand their capacity in management, communication and decision making.

Issue: The need for nonformal education to increase Bangladesh young women's participation in the labor market with an equivalent shift in control of financial resources and property.

Nepal Women's Empowerment Program (WEP)

In 1997, USAID/Nepal launched the Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) to assist over 120,000 rural women in existing economic groups in 22 districts along the southern plains bordering India. The major elements of the program are literacy, legal rights, awareness and advocacy; and economic participation. These three elements, when linked together, form the basis for a synergistic and integrated intervention for women's empowerment. The most innovative component has been the development of a village bank owned and managed by women's groups without an external loan fund that has successfully reached over one hundred thousand of the poorest of the poor to develop self employed jobs in a saturated and stagnant market. The WEP program in Nepal is an example of how nonformal education formed the base for the development of a microfinance institutional alternative to Grameen.

Issue: Bangladesh has expressed support for development of private-public hybrid models of child-centered education..

Falconbridge Foundation School Sponsorship in the Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic the school sponsorship program of the Falconbridge Foundation has produced impressive results, recognized and appreciated by the broad array of stakeholders within the local school community, the broader regional community, the teachers' union, and the Ministry of Education.

Falconbridge Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1989, to promote integrated and sustainable community development in the areas where the Canadian mining firm, Falconbridge LTD has been mining and refining nickel since the mid-1960s. The Foundation's largest program is the school sponsorship program, which began in June 1990, but the Foundation also carries out cultural, health and, environmental programs. The Foundation sponsors 100 public schools, affecting 73,000 students, and 1600 teachers, and plans to expand to 120 schools over the next four years.

The Falconbridge Foundation sponsorship program operates within the public education system. Rather than creating an alternative or parallel system, it reinforces the public system by investing in the structures and processes outlined in the new Education Law and the *Plan Decenal de Educacion*, the 1992 ten-year plan for educational reform.

At the core of the Falconbridge Foundation education program is the improvement of the quality of education that takes place in the schools and all interventions are geared to that end. Components of the program include: repair and maintenance of the school building; provision of equipment and furniture for the school; establishment of libraries; establishment of school gardens, and in some cases, tree nurseries; establishment of pre-schools; strengthening of the parents' associations of the schools; formation and support of student councils; training of the school directors and teachers; support for cultural and sports activities; school for parents.

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Annex 1: Overview of gender dimensions in GOB Five-Year Plans

Five Year Plan	Gender Dimensions
I 1973-1978	Support for women implicit in plan to protect and help war victims, but no sectoral allocations were made. The Women's Affairs Division was created in 1976, and was upgraded into the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1978.
II 1978-1980	Women's development a central focus; 310 million taka allocated for WID program strategy across sectors of population, health, education, and employment. Lack of understanding of women's new economic and social roles within an increasingly monetized economy.
III 1985-1990	<p>Emphasis on need for women's participation in mainstream socioeconomic activities; 500 million taka allocated for WID programs, additional Tk 500 for special women's development programs; a further Tk160 million was to be invested in women by NGOs. Emphasis still on subsistence, nonformal sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Family Court Ordinance</i> established family courts at district and sub-district levels to deal with cases related to marriage, restitution of conjugal rights, dowry and custody of children; provisions made for mediation and quick disposal of trials (1985) • Amendment of <i>The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance</i> of 1961 to regulate personal matters for Muslim Citizens only such as inheritance of property marriage, divorce, guardianship and custody of children. <p>IX. Dowry Prohibition Act of 1983 amended to make custom of dowry an offence, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Marriage Restriction Act amended to raise the marriage age of women from 16 to 18 years and men from 18 to 21 years; provision of punishment for marriage of girl child.
IV 1990-1995	<p>Integrated WID into the macro framework for multi-sectoral programming to bring women into the mainstream of economic development. Special attention to income generation, access to credit, participation in bottom-up planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Council for Women's Development</i> established (1995)
V 1997-2002	<p>Focus on absolute poverty and food security among women. MoWCA's development budget raised by over 400%, and outreach/scope of its implementing agencies increased significantly. Emphasis on people-centered equitably distributed and environmentally and socially sustainable development. Two restrictions dropped from CEDAW, initially ratified in 1984, two reservations remain: Article 2 (complete elimination of discrimination through all possible constitutional, legislative and legal provisions) and to Article 16 (equal rights in marriage and at its dissolution), considered to be in conflict with Islamic Shari'a law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Multi-sectoral Programme on Reduction of Violence against Women</i> awaiting approval <p>X. Approval of the <i>National Action Plan</i> and <i>National Policy for Women's Advancement</i> (1997)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps taken to "engender" the national budget through sex disaggregated data for: beneficiary assessments; public expenditure analysis; analysis of impact of budget statements; analysis of impact of budget; gender awareness medium term economic policy framework. • Compulsory birth and death registry campaigns (1997-98) • Education Policy prioritizes female education; NPA for Children emphasizes girls' interests • <i>Local Government Bill (1997)</i> provides for direct election to 1/3 women's reserved seats in all four tiers of local government; 46,000 women stood and 12,828 women were elected to Union Council seats, fostered by equal opportunity education campaigns for voters, and training for elected women. • <i>Prevention of Women and Child Repression Act (2000)</i> to deal more effectively with rape, acid attack, forced prostitution, trafficking.

Table 2: Record of Policy Initiatives and Remaining Challenges and Gaps

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Remaining Challenges & Gaps</i>
Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the <i>National Action Plan and National Policy for Women's Advancement</i> (1997); establishment of <i>National Council for Women's Development</i> (1995); MoWCA Parliamentary Standing Committee (1996); inter-ministerial bodies/district/thana level committees (1998); WID focal points in 46 ministries Repeal of law barring women from police service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender mainstreaming requires sensitizing policy-level personnel regarding their roles and responsibilities; sufficient allocation of resources; and adequate information flow Gender specific indicators, sex disaggregated data are required to strengthen policy analysis and monitoring mechanisms Women made up less than 1% of the police force in 1997
Women's rights, human rights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial withdrawal of reservations to CEDAW ('97) Compulsory birth & death registry campaigns ('97-'98) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two reservations to CEDAW remain in force, and many CEDAW provisions are yet to be included in domestic laws; weak enforcement of current laws
Women and violence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Multi-sectoral Program on Reduction of Violence against Women</i>, awaiting approval, included in 5th Plan ('97-02); Permanent Law Commission established to review all laws related to women especially those dealing with violence. <i>Prevention of Women and Child Repression Act</i> (2000) to deal with rape, acid attack, forced prostitution, trafficking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate implementation of special laws to address violence against women; police stations and legal procedures unfriendly to women and the poor Despite increasing presence of women's NGOs, lack of adequate support systems, shelters and special medical treatment for victims
Women, poverty and the economy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5th Plan focuses on absolute poverty and food security among women, thus, MoWCA's development budget raised by over 400%, and outreach/scope of its implementing agencies increased significantly GoB considering proposal to 'engender' national budget; initiatives by some ministries underway Vulnerable Group Development focus shifted from relief (food aid) to development (food aid plus capacity building) Increased provision of child care facilities for women working in government and garment industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public sector employment reservations of 10%-15% only met in government insurance companies 'Success' of microfinance programs in generating self employment for poor women needs further review, in terms of coverage, reaching the poorest of the poor, and the sustainability of self employed jobs in saturated and stagnant markets Women's increased participation in the labor market unmatched by equivalent shift in control of financial resources and property
Education and training of women, and the girl child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Policy prioritizes female education; NPA for Children (1997-2002) emphasizes girls' interests NGO/government programs and reservation of 60%/100% teaching posts in rural/satellite schools for women facilitated girls' primary/lower secondary enrolment; rates now equal boys' Marriage under the age of 18 for girls declared illegal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In many schools, basic facilities for girls are still unavailable, such that attendance rates of poor girls remain low and large gender gaps remain in higher and post-secondary enrolment Traditional norms including early marriage continue to hinder girl's education CAMPE Study (2000) shows major failings in ed. quality
Women in power and decision-making	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Local Government Bill</i> (1997) provides for direct election to 1/3 women's reserved seats in all four tiers of local government; 046,000 women stood and 12,828 women were elected to Union Council seats, fostered by equal opportunity education campaigns for voters, and training for elected women GoB introduced lateral entry to increase women's representation in senior decision-making positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 0.45% of Union Councils have women chairpersons; only 130 women elected to general seats (1997); male-dominated social structures hinder the work of elected representatives To bring qualified women to the highest levels of bureaucracy (less than 3% women in 1997), competition rules need revision On-going debate on the fate of national-level reservations
Women and health	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Health and Population Sector Strategy</i> includes all national and international commitments (including BPFA), special emphasis on vulnerable groups including poor women; <i>National Integrated Population and Health Program</i> a major collaborative undertaking by government, USAID and 7 partners. Initiative to improve emergency obstetric care, and to develop 'women-friendly' health services (UNICEF-assisted) Medical code of ethics in formulation, with potentially positive implications for women's access to health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake of maternal care services remains low, especially to rural areas, hindering reductions in the maternal mortality rate; only 14% of women are attended by a trained person during birth, less than 5% of those with life-threatening complications get emergency obstetric care.

Annex 4: Comparison of Gender Dimensions of NGO Schools

School Type Classification (% female students)	School and Classroom Facilities Length of School Program	Teachers & Teacher Qualifications (Teacher:Pupil Ratio)	Curriculum, Pedagogical Style	Notes on Outcomes And Overall learning culture for girls
BRAC <i>Gap Filler</i> 67% Female Students 1.3 million students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Centers (not permanent schools) XI. Colorful/stimulating hangings from rafters XII. 3 –4 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally hired w/ 9th grade formal schooling Training: 15 days residential +2 days/mo XIII. School supervisors visit schools twice every week and have practical experience to be able to mentor teachers. 1:33 Teacher-Pupil Ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops its own gender sensitive curriculum Free textbooks developed by BRAC Classroom/Individual Pedagogy Varied: large circle, standing, sitting, all facing teacher in rows; each student has writing and learning materials. 	XIV. Developed as comprehensive rural development, however not an empowering intervention XV. 8% dropout rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor learning culture Does not prepare students for continued learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand along program, not replicable
FIVDB <i>Formal</i> 50% Female Students 15,000 students	XVI. Five classroom schools in permanent structures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 year program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally hired and trained XVII. Three-phase training over 3 months: XVIII. 70 days residential, theoretical XIX. 70 days practice supervised by trainers XX. 7 days residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses 56 competencies with gov't textbooks supplemented with other materials developed by FIVDB and introduces learning processes that include child-to-child, team, group and individual learning. 	Child-centered; Interactive XXI. Group, child-to-child pairing, and individual XXII. Linked to gov't programs so children can continue on to secondary school XXIII. Strong learning culture
UCEP <i>Empowerment (Urban Working Children)</i> 50% Female Students	Classroom schools in permanent structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 year program (4 year equivalent) 	Additional 14 days training at end of each service cycle	Developed own curriculum XXIV. Livelihood skills training	Provides basic education and employable skills through apprenticeship; also offers job placement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong learning culture
CMES <i>Empowerment</i> 70% Female Students 20,000 rural students Strong learning culture	5 year program	Additional 14 days training at end of each service cycle	Science-based; gender sensitive XXV. Market-oriented XXVI. Livelihood skills training	Interactive XXVII. Provides basic education with emphasis on science & technology, then transfer to Rural Technology centers for training in marketable products XXVIII. Strong learning culture

BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Ad Committee

FIVDB: Friends In Village Development Bangladesh

UCEP: Underprivileged Children's Education Program

CMES: Center for Mass Education in Science