

Support to Basic and Primary Education

**His Majesty's Government
Ministry of Education & Sports**

NEPAL

**BI-ANNUAL REPORT NO. 17
for BPEP II¹
by the Chief Advisor
1 January 2002 – 1 July 2002**

TO ROYAL DANISH EMBASSY

Danida
104.Nep.39

Karsten Jensen, Chief Advisor
BPEP II

¹ The Biannual Report also refers to the preparations for Danida assistance to Secondary Education in Nepal, the Secondary Education Support Programme, prepared jointly between HMG, ADB and Danida.

KEY DATA

Country: Nepal

Project Title: Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP II)
(EDUSAP: Education Sector Assistance Programme)

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Danida grant:	DKK	300,000,000²
Contribution US\$ mill:	Budget 2002	Replenishment from Special Account January 02-June 02
8 Danida	6.80	0.78
• Basket Funds	5.20	0.50
• Direct Funds	1.60	0.28
HMG	0.83	0.08
Others: CIP Donors		
IDA	3.70	0.89
EU	2.70	0.26
NORAD	3.10	0.30
FINNIDA	1.00	0.09

Source: Budget: HMG/N budget for BPEP II 2001/2002
DANIDA TA (Long Term Advisers) is over and above DANIDA Grant to BPEP II

Government agreement signed: 29th May 1998

Project period: 1998– 2003 (has been extended to 2004, following the technical negotiations Nov. 2001)

Implementing agency: Department of Education under Ministry of Education and Sports, Kathmandu, Nepal and other central line agencies within MOES.

² As per the “Styrelsesoplæg” of 12th. November 1997

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

BPEP II is a HMG reform program for basic and primary education. The programme is pursuing to consolidate the achievements of 1st development phase (1993-1998) i.e. provide access to quality primary education in a sustainable manner to all children of Nepal. It is in line with the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) and government's poverty reduction strategy as stated in the Ninth Development Plan and reiterated in the development of the Tenth Plan. Beginning the third year of implementation i.e. FY 2001/02, program is covering 75 districts.

Aide memoire of the Joint Mid-Term Review (MTR) 3-14 December 2001 of BPEP II considered the recent seventh amendment of education act as positive step forward towards community participation in school management and financing. Development of the Tenth Plan and the concept paper for the Poverty Reduction Strategy is also taking into account the national commitment on Education for All. The MTR noted the multifaceted contribution of technical assistance in development of capacity in MOES/DOE to develop ASIP and AWPB in a comprehensive and consistent manner. Role of technical assistance has been foreseen to play key role in development of long term HRD Plan and to meet the demands for capacity building arising due to initiation of decentralizations processes at all levels.

The second leg of the MTR process, conducted in April 2002 confirmed the intentions from the MTR in December 2001.

In line with the World Declaration on Education for All, the focus of BPEP II is to improve the quality of primary education, increase access to basic and primary education and strengthen management efficiency of education in Nepal. The Mid Term Review has strengthened the conditions for the programme to impact here.

The program has national coverage. In the first year of BPEP II (99/2000), programme expansion took place from 40 to presently 48 districts. In 2001, the program became nationwide

The assistance for Secondary Education in the form of the Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) is seen as an extension of the support to the Basic and Primary Education Programme.

As such the programme builds on the achievements and experiences of current and previous projects in the education sector and is intended to be fully complimentary to the Government's decentralisation programme.

OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS OF THE PROGRAMS

The overall program objective of BPEP II is to alleviate poverty by increasing economic productivity, health and sanitation practices and community awareness on development issues. The MTR of March 2002 (second leg) resulted in a restructuring of the program, that now holds 5 components³:

³ Consequently, the bi-annual report no longer refers to 17 components.

- Physical facilities
- Access and retention
- Quality education
- Institutional strengthening
- School improvement plan based local development

Earlier, the program held 17 components. This was widely seen a main reason for the compartmentalisation and fragmentation of educational development activities, which eventually has resulted in underachieving programme objectives.

One of the findings was a need to redefine institutional roles at central, district and sub-district levels in the education system in a way that supports the new focus on the school and the community envisaged in the Education (Seventh Amendment) Act. It is generally understood that it is necessary to attract more resources to primary education. This eventually leads to capacity building initiatives at both central and district levels.

More attention has to be given to mobilize civil society this year.

A decisive piece of the educational reform is the design of a Secondary Education Sector Programme (SESP). Danida support to the SESP is designed to facilitate poverty reduction through the improvement of access to secondary education for the population as a whole and for females, the poor and disadvantaged groups in particular.

Danida assistance will pursue two complementary strategies within the overall programme design of SESP.

The first strategy is a series of interventions with national coverage. These are in all four areas of the learning environment, curriculum development and assessment, teacher education and development, institutional management and capacity building. Programme activities undertaken in these areas will be implemented with a view to achieving improvements at the national and school levels across all 75 districts before the conclusion of the first five years.

The second strategy to be pursued with Danida support is a more intensive set of activities to be undertaken in 10 districts during the first five-year phase. The purpose of these more focused activities is:

- To target poor districts and poor schools within these districts for poverty education;
- To promote institutional and financial sustainability through the provision of more intensive systemic capacity. Here the emphasis will be upon the institutional modalities of planning and programme implementation at district, VDC, and community school levels;
- To promote a feasible programme in logistical terms;
- To revise the implementation of the programme on the basis of first phase experiences.

The intensified assistance to 10 districts will be chosen among the 20 most poverty stricken districts (primarily in Far-West Nepal) and be funded through DANIDA direct funding.

The outcomes at school levels of the national strategy will however be quite dependant upon the schools' capacities to utilise the new techniques of school improvement plan (SIP) to secure resources through the education system and to mobilise local resources through

community associations, local NGOs, local government organisations amongst others. As many schools currently receive support from such sources, the combination of improved resource provision and improved school management by SMC's and head teachers should provide a basis for further improvements in secondary education amongst a significant section of secondary schools in many districts. However, these are not likely to be the poorer schools in poorer communities in resource poor districts.

Since the introduction of the basket modality, PAT provides technical assistance to all areas of Department of Education and thus, the bi-annual report of the CTA to RDE covers all components of BPEP II.

1. School Physical Facilities.

Building more classrooms and carrying out extensive rehabilitation at schools have increased access significantly. MOES is and has been investing huge amounts in physical infrastructure at school level. Protection of these investments by regular maintenance at schools should receive more adequate attention. Most primary schools buildings and compounds in Nepal are in a poor condition, lack of hygienic environment and the absent of regular maintenance is prominent. This leads to fast depreciation of building and deterioration of the learning environments. Further, a good physical environment is one of the preconditions for improving the quality of teaching-learning environment and therefore, there is a tremendous need to improve the existing situation by:

- Assessing the need of the individual school for physical environment improvements
- To introduce and ensure that regular maintenance is done
- To rehabilitate existing physical buildings and external environment
- To replace temporary and or add new classrooms on need based criteria's included furniture.

Little or no public information to communities/schools about budgets and activities for schools physical improvements program is available. Transparency of budgets at schools and community level is essential for involving local stakeholders. Poor and/or lack of supervision and monitoring at school level by DEO staff is prominent.

The rehabilitation of the approximately, 250 disaster stricken school damaged by earthquake and excessive flooding in 2001 is an important short-term activity, funded through direct funding. The rehabilitation is in progress although some schools in a few districts has not submitted the estimates and will therefore not be included in the programme. Strengthening the general capacity of the physical section is considered decisive to the success of the implementation of the program. This is not the least the capacity to monitor program progress and report it to management. Lessons learned from the school rehabilitations as to prevent/reduce future damages will be drafted and publicised.

It is acknowledged that the poorest and most remote districts in Nepal have received less support for educational development compared to others. It is therefore felt that, there is a need to do an extra effort to support these districts.

In some districts, the progress of physical activities is facing problems, among others due to the insurgency situation as well as lack of qualified staff or staff at all,. Therefore, the 2001/02 programme targets of physical activities (establishing School Physical Improvement

Programme, rehabilitation of 2600 classrooms, external environment improvement, maintenance training etc.) will not be achieved. The actual implementation data will first be available after some months.

A recently concluded field visits to Rupendhi district indicated, that some of the 500 new classrooms to be constructed in 3 districts might not be completed due to slow and late delivery of structural and roofing components. These materials were purchased through International Competitive Bidding.

2. Access

Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education: As a result of the BPEP II mid-term review the Special Education Section was renamed as Special Needs Education Section. This new name signal an extended perspective from narrowing targeting children with different kinds of disabilities to a much broader understanding of the target groups. Beside children with disabilities the target groups encompass learners who face all sorts of barriers for learning, be it geographical remoteness and isolation; traumatisation caused by misuse or exposure to violence or conflicts and even social and cultural dissimilarities and oppression.

The latest development of Special Needs Education in relation to children with disabilities has beside implementation of the annual work plan 2001 –2002 been focussed: - at establishing of a one-line system in special education by merging Special Education Council and Special Needs Education Section –at development of more flexible and decentralized strategies for implementation of Special Needs Education arrangements –at develop Special Needs Education training capacities within Department of Education by initiating preparation of a 10 months training package in Special Needs Education / Inclusive Education and by establishing linkage to Indian Special Needs Education training institutions –and at developing secondary Special Needs Education provision for children with disabilities. The process of implementing new more integrative strategies, (such as education in home schools, development of assessment centre and disability education centre, instead of the traditional implementation strategy establishing quite expensive resource classes with hostel targeting 10 children with same kind of disability), is slowly proceeding and will be continued.

The efforts to increase the enrolment and retention of girls and children from disadvantaged groups are continued based on provision of various types of incentives, feeder hostel programmes and community mobilisation. A need to review and combine current strategies and activities in relation to development of inclusiveness and quality of education is acknowledged. A pilot project regarding more effective use of incentives and scholarship is discussed to be launched in such way that different models for using and deliver scholarships and incentives are tried out in a few districts.

The extension of target groups of the Special Needs Education Section from children with disabilities to children who face barriers for learning is a challenge and should have consequences like close co-operation between DOE sections and line agencies in order to develop overall and cross-cutting strategies towards education for all and as establishing co-operation and partnership for mutual capacity building with relevant NGO's beside disability NGO's. At present the Special Needs Education program is engaged in establishment of better educational opportunities for former Kamaiya children and Child Labours as well as supports a study of improvement of educational opportunities for DALIT's

through BPEP II. This study is being conducted in collaboration between the DANIDA programs HUGOU, NARMSAP, DASU AND BPEP II. MS-Nepal is also contributing to the study.

A close collaboration between Special Needs Education Section, The Danish University of Education and Copenhagen County has been launched in order to develop Special Needs/ Inclusive Education in Nepal. The activities under the Institutional Linkage Programme are:

- piloting development of Inclusive Education at 4 schools in Banke district, 4 schools in Udayapur district, 2 schools in Kavre Palanchowk district and 2 schools in Sindhupalchowk district. The inclusive education pilots is aiming development of schools that are welcoming all children and teaching/learning processes that are able to meet the different learning needs and learning strategies of the children. – A formative research program has been launched in order to gather experiences, record examples on good practice and deliver useful feedback to the pilot schools during the development process. Dissemination of experiences from the Inclusive Education pilot in Banke district is planned to start in the nearest future. – Moreover an assessment-training course has been launched aiming capacity building in relation to established district assessment centres. – Finally initiatives will be taken in order to build up capacities regarding Special Needs/Inclusive Education activities at Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University.

Re-designed literacy programs:

The government of Nepal has made endless effort to achieve the goal set by Jomtien Conference (1990), aimed at achieving universal primary education, and reduce adult literacy by half at the end of this century.

In the entire developmental planning as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, literacy is reflected as a major priority area of HMG Nepal. The major objectives related to non-formal education in Tenth Five year developmental plan is to utilize education as a powerful medium in order to eliminate poverty by developing human resources, and to achieve economic as well as social development. Similarly another objective is to improve the living standard of illiterate people, especially women, by conducting functional literacy program (NPC draft doc. 2002). In order to fulfil this ambitious goal and commitment, HMG has increased public expenditure in primary education. However, it is evident that non-formal education is given little priority in HMG's program and policies as only 2% of the education budget is set aside for non-formal education. Recent studies indicate that gaps between regions, castes, gender and urban and rural are widening.

Non-formal education programme is continuing the quota based planning system from the very beginning in the country. The exact numbers of quotas are sent to the districts, and the district literacy committees distribute them to different VDCs and communities. On the basis of the guideline provided by the NFEC, quotas are implemented through other agencies including NGOs and CBO's like Red Cross Society. This kind of centralized quota based system is one of the major problems in NFE sector. Community ownership is completely lacking in this centralized model. Therefore, need based Village Creation programme would be one of the good starting in this direction.

Theoretically, multi-layer supervision and monitoring system has been applied for the monitoring of Non-formal classes. Local supervisor, ward level literacy committee, VDC level literacy committee are expected to monitor the NFE classes regularly. In reality such mechanisms to monitor the programs are yet to be strengthened. There are very few

examples of evaluation of the performance of service providers at the implementation level. Similarly, data gathered at central level are not utilized effectively for future programme development. Reliability of the collected data is a complicated issue in this sector. Assessments of which programs have been carried out in which year and given the maximum service are not made and it is not possible to find the results.

After one year piloting of monitoring tools a database was established at the central level and will gradually be transferred to the decentralized level. Facilitating the strengthening the monitoring system is one of the important issues in this sector.

No extra effort is made to involve educationally disadvantaged communities. This far, the program has not been able to target the 24 educationally backward disadvantaged communities and/or relate literacy programs with income generation and enrolment of children in schools. Likewise relationships between what the participants learn in classes with the problems they have to face in their daily life have to be enhanced.

The literacy classes have no provision for lanterns and kerosene oil although they are conducted in the evening. Teaching materials like textbooks, training manuals etc. do not reach districts in time. There is compulsion to conduct training even without the use of training manuals. Improvements in the consistency between planning cycles and class cycles are imperative, through guidelines, rules and norms as well as checklists.

Most of the research studies and experience undertaken on no-formal education tell that dropouts, irregular class, lack of quality supervision and late arrival of materials (Training and WEP) are the main problems in this field. Similarly, centralized curriculum and textbooks, structured training program, quota base system; less interactive classroom and less contextual learning materials are the main weakness of this program. In the present context, quota system should be replaced by decentralized, locally designed literacy program, which can address the local needs of the specific group. Therefore, literacy program (WEP and OSP) will be re-designed according to the needs of local people and implemented in disadvantage community.

A comprehensive functional literacy and continuing education program oriented to the basic needs of the disadvantaged group/community will help to reduce the gap between poor and the more well-offs. Different studies done at national and international level show that there is a high relevancy between the education level and productive income, health, and poverty of population. The poor population usually concentrates in areas with very low adult literacy rate. A great vicious circle of illiteracy, poverty and ideological backwardness is always being with disadvantage area. The only way out for this is education. The basic approaches to the eradication of poverty, therefore, are to consciously impart the disadvantaged population with various surviving skills through functional literacy programme.

Alternative modalities of literacy programme owned by the local community, inclusion of functional knowledge and integrating with other activities like income generation activities, early childhood development (ECD), Women empowerment, scholarship program, girl's enrollment and other relevant activities under BPEP II will be developed and piloted in 2/3 poorest and accessible district. In this way literacy programme will help to develop quality of life of the family from disadvantage/dalit community. Community Learning Centre (CLC), Women's group, NGOs/CBO's and Village Development Committee are the basic mechanisms for the implementation of newly designed literacy programme

Strong monitoring system, effective localised supervision programme and collaborative working model with NGOs/CBO's will also be piloted in same area. Likewise, this programme will be linked with research Group/Company for the finalisation of the pilot programme.

In order to envision above mentioned programme development international experience is needed for some of the activities to be developed and piloted under this project. Illiteracy mapping, re-design the need base literacy programme, participatory curriculum and training materials development and action research are the main activities where international input is needed.

Gender/ girls' education

The Gender Audit Report has been finalised and presently being disseminated. It is unclear at the time of writing whether or not the MOES has approved the audit. Translation to Nepali is yet to be undertaken. Discussions and decisions on ways forward according to recommendations are expected shortly. The DOE/ MOES has just finished a gender awareness workshop for senior officials as part of the sensitisation strategy.

3. Learning and Achievements.

Many studies have shown that textbooks are one of the most important teaching tools in quality improvements of teaching/learning. The present production and distribution of textbooks are central/district based and creates many problems at school level. Many schools/RC's receive textbook late, if at all, not in right quantities etc. The present textbook distribution is not based on the receiver/user – the schools/pupils - system.

It is imperative to qualitative development of schooling that textbooks are delivered on time and in correct quantities. The present ongoing textbook distribution experiment (Re-usable, Bulk, LPO and Coupon) is to determine the modality most suitable for Nepal. The evaluation report on the various distribution modalities is near completion and MOES is expecting in August/September to make decisions on the new distribution modalities. TOR for supporting MOES in formulating a policy paper is ready. A consultant firm, funded by Danida, will submit their findings and recommendation in August 2002 for the best modality/s.

MOES needs a policy on free textbooks distribution for primary education. It is of greatest importance that schools and pupils receive books in time and in right quantities. To fulfil this, MOES need to establish a distribution policy, which will insure the best modality/s for distribution. Further, the distribution modalities chosen has to be made operational with manuals and other related documents. However, recent budget cuts indicate severe restrictions for the policy of free textbooks, virtually reducing the policy to – a policy.

A well equipped and function library system with access for all MOES staff is essential in supporting researchers, textbook writers and other educational staff with good possibilities for collecting up-to date background materials and information. At present there are several libraries, however their function and equipment is in great need of an overhaul. As it is imperative that MOES can provide such facilities there is a need to reengineer the existing library systems into an effective and efficient system/s which will be based on accessibility for users, cost effective in establishing and maintaining and secure lending policy and modalities. ATOR for an international consultancy is ready for the comprehensive library study.

A programme for improving the teaching-learning environment has been developed and is to be funded through Danida direct funding. This programme is aiming at improving primary schools learning environment in several of these districts through involvement of communities. The programme will initiate various classroom improvement activities, which also will be labour intensive. A research team will follow the experiences of the programme that is going to be launched in Kanchanpur, Doti and Humla. An estimated hundred and fifty schools in these poor districts will have their classroom environment improved, through the teaching-learning package developed. The packages include "hard- and soft wares" from which the school can choose between within a limited amount. As it is poor districts and school communities, little cost sharing will be expected, if any at all.

The criteria for selection of districts has been based among others on the Human resource development Index and the 2001 EMIS, as well as the revised criteria (MTR, April 2002) for listing of schools has been applied. Together, this forms an important learning experience with respect to the selection of districts that has to be undertaken in SESP.

4. Institutional Strengthening.

To improve the overall quality of primary education the understanding is that decentralization to district and sub-district is imperative. A need is found to provide local decisions makers with reliable information and data of a school catchment areas in relation to pupils and their age, underserved and disadvantages groups etc. in order to ensure schools are established and or expanded on need based criteria's. A lot of data are collected at school and communities but not used for the right purpose. Data from local levels should be used for planning purpose. This does not happen in many districts. Many schools tend to in- or decrease figures in data as to obtain financial and other support from HMG. An improved and more reliable EMIS data collection system and a better capacity in analysing the data will provide a tool for decisions makers at all level in improving the quality of education. However, provision and procedures must be made for internal use of data as well as for publication/dissemination of the very same data. In order to do that a development of a school mapping and micro planning and EMIS system is being undertaken at central, district and sub-district level. At present, no reliable system is found.

The overall objectives are to establish at central level of proper monitoring system for all DOE activities within the basic and primary and secondary sub sectors. The purpose is to ensure that all sections have the right tools to monitoring the implementing progress at district and sub-district level. To strengthen monitoring by the Department and in particularly in the Physical Service Section, a international consultant/s, funded by Danida will assess the present situation and draw up plans for assisting the Department monitoring section.

The monitoring must special focus on the programme impact of reducing the poverty through out Nepal.

Good monitoring – for both primary and secondary education - will enable stakeholders to make informed decisions leading to efficient and effective use of resources. In a sector programme with basket funding it is not possible to differentiate between Government and donor-funded activities. It is therefore imperative that MOES/DOE has a good and well function monitoring system so as to ensure the best utilization and transparency of funds.

It is here important that activities within the improvements of schools physical environment receive high priority as this component is by far consuming the largest amount of funds of all components.

To support MOES in achieving this, IIEP (UNESCO, Paris) has been contracted to start a support-training program in mid of 2002. The training will be conducted with all relevant stakeholders and will be coordinated closely with the support from NIEPA towards decentralisation as well as all communication initiatives.

Further, it is planned to establish an institutional linkage to develop a comprehensive restructuring DOE monitoring abilities at central, district and sub-district levels as well as physical planning instruments for the same.

Training activities are planned for the next year and the training programme has started.

Human Resource Development (HRD)

A draft HRD Plan was prepared in March 2002. The objective of HRD is to develop capacity at all levels—central, regional, district, local and school—of both institutions and individuals in the education sector in order to improve the quality of education and its management. It represented a comprehensive approach to HRD by conceptualising HRD in a broad framework that included capacity building of individuals, strengthening of institutions, and betterment of the system as a whole. The MTR report commented that this HRD draft plan did not contain a prioritised and sequenced implementation plan and it was gender neutral. Hence, it was suggested that this draft plan be revised to address the above-mentioned two shortcomings. To this end, consultants were hired and the revision of the HRD draft plan was started in June 2002.

In the process of revising the draft HRD, MOES and DOE personnel have been consulted extensively in order to get their input specifically in identifying the missing elements in the draft plan, in prioritising their HRD needs, and in discussing the necessary institutional arrangement to implement the HRD Plan. Discussions have generated a lot of constructive criticisms and suggestions that will be very useful for the revised plan.

The HRD team is planning on presenting the draft of the implementation plan in two different workshops in mid-July 2002 so that there will be ample opportunity for those at the centre as well as the district and village level to give their feedback on the proposed HRD plan before it is finalized. The final HRD Plan is expected to be ready by August 1, 2002.

One principal aim of Nepal's Seventh Amendment to the Education Act 2001 is to promote a more genuine form of decentralization in the education sector, directing resources to the school and empowering local stakeholders. Among the changes contained in the legislation are a number of institutional changes designed to secure greater participation and engagement on the part of local communities in school policy and operation. It is envisaged that the work of District Development Committees (DDC's) and Village Development Committees (VDC's) will be more closely integrated with that of the District Education Committees (DEC's), Village Education Committees (VEC's) and School Management Committees (SMC's).

These changes represent a strategic shift from a centralized education system to a community and a school-based educational planning and management system. They render

it imperative to clarify lines of responsibility, authority and the relationships between the different administrative levels and their institutions: the DDC's and DEC's, the VDC's and VEC's, schools and their SMC's. Furthermore the role of other partners including NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBO's) needs to be considered and discussed.

These perspectives are to be reflected more soundly and consistently in activities, including the HRD, in the time to come.

Resource Centre

Presently, 1297 RCs are scattered throughout the country covering all districts. It is planned to reach the target of 1331 established RCs by the end of BPEP II. Since the introduction of the RC concept during PEP, 1985-90, a change in modality and structure has not been found.

RCs are generally perceived not to function as envisaged and planned. They function to some degree as small administrative DEOs and do not provide professional support in the real sense, although they provide training to teachers. Their main focus is on recurrent teacher training, head teachers meetings as well as subject teachers' meetings, termed "Friday meetings".

The RCs have been referred to as the backbone of the programme. The December Mission 2001 expressed: "Support for local school development is to a large degree dependent upon the RC structure. The effectiveness of the RC is reported to vary considerably across the districts in which they have been established. The function of the RC structure in remote areas, where it has not yet been introduced, continues to be an unresolved issue".

The DoE would like to try out models for adapting the RC system under different circumstances. In the Mid Term Review Report it says: "The Mission agrees that alternative models should be tried and would welcome a proposal to that effect for the next mission".

The RCs are presumed and expected to set the pedagogical pulse in respect to in-service teacher training on sub-district level. The teaching-learning processes in the RCs are based on teachers needs in regard to their professional up grading as well as their local needs, which varies around the country. In order to be true service providers of educational development, users and providers alike must address visions and ways to reach.

Reasons for the often-mentioned inefficient RCs are manifold, but the actual problems are still to be analysed thoroughly, diagnosed accordingly, after which appropriate strategies can be laid out.

It may be a long-term and resource demanding matter to enrich and strengthen the RCs quality-wise, in particular in regard to further investment in HRD along with possible untraditional ways of improving local participation in RC affairs, improving communication and strengthening educational networks.

In doing so, exposure to educational environments similar to the RCs may create eye-opener effects, as well as unite the existing RCs by sharing difficulties and particularly success stories. To a high degree this should be sought in country, though experiences from other countries regarding RCs could bring valuable contributions to what has already been established in Nepal. Building on the long RC institutional memory, the existing capacity and the present state of affairs within the RCs, various initiatives may be looked into.

The present and still to come RCs could be assisted to turn into actual pedagogical units strengthening the teaching-learning processes on sub-district level. Changing the role and function of these should be seen in the decentralised approach to education, initially to be piloted in five "bottom-up districts". An important tool for this is developing qualitative strong School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Seen in this perspective, RCs may be effective focal points to bring about tangible educational changes benefiting the child in the classroom through professional support to teachers.

Piloting activities should be considered in the broader perspective of Education For All (EFA), keeping a holistic view to education also in regard to the approach to secondary education. Questions in this regard arise as to which degree and in which way PTTC and SEDU relate to the RCs of BPEP II. This refers to linkages with Faculty of Education (FoE) as well.

Technical Assistance has been requested to assist MOES/DOE in strengthening the RCs as sub district institutional service providers to enhance the quality of education through the teaching-learning processes in the classroom.

5. School improvement plan – local development

Decentralising policies and involving civil society

A number of experiments concerning mass communication have been planned and are being implemented. This is intended to raise awareness on the importance of primary education/literacy and in particular to create transparency. The communication activities are to some extent incorporated in the ASIP and AWP&B for the coming fiscal year.

A media consultant is presently assisting and supporting communication strategies and media coordination activities in DOE, funded by Danida. This seems to prove beneficial both in terms of quality output, assistance in communicating with various media (radio, television, newspapers) as well as an increased trust in disseminating information and receiving feedback from the public regarding educational affairs.

Priority is given to strengthen institutional implementation of mass communication initiatives at all levels, aiming to build institutional governance, capacities, rules and procedures especially targeting internal channels for systematic dissemination of policy initiatives and experiences at local levels. The concept of Quality Education Program and municipal ownership are expanded through exposures and information campaigns. Lately, a workshop for the representatives of the people was carried out targeting DDC chairpersons and Mayors of municipalities. A report is under preparation and one follow-up activity seems to be the development of instructional kits for both local media and local politicians.

The 7th Amendment of the Education Act was given the Royal Seal in February 2002 and it is expected that the Amendment will have far reaching implications for educational management and administration. The Amendment proposes a number of new initiatives such as formation of Village Education Committees, teacher licensing, community ownership of schools and teacher unions. It encompasses decentralisation, improved access and delivery, streamlining the teacher management system and promotion of education in rural areas. Existing provisions have been amended as well. It is in this regard of utmost importance that decision makers, intelligentsia, officials and the general public is aware of the changes taking place and involved in providing feed back.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the Amendment, Danida supported the development of regulations and facilitated the launch of a professional media campaign. The objectives of the media campaign is to disseminate information of the 7th Amendment and educational reforms, collect feed back from stakeholders, generate public interest and develop capacity for a changed context. The expected outputs are a stable support for the smooth implementation of the 7th Amendment with respect to improving the delivery of educational services as well as transparency, accountability and participation of stakeholders. The one-year nationwide information campaign has been initiated and is ongoing. The campaign is based on the development of bylaws and regulations for the 7th Amendment. It also aims at building human resources capacity within communication of particularly the 15 MOES people assigned as Regional Education Communication Coordinators.

Similarly, a radio campaign has been launched in order pilot this penetration of this media with respect to educational subjects.

The media initiatives have decisively brought change to the media picture with respect to BPEP II.

Although initiatives have been in the field of involving civil society, a further need to supplement HMG resources is still found. This includes establishing an overview of rules and norms for involvement of CBO's and NGO's as well as developing a favourable environment for the involvement of CBO's and NGO's. This should not only be a question of extension of government resources but also acknowledging that CBO's and NGO's are capable of providing something different. It is intended to map and analyse the educational NGO/CBO environment and activities – districts wise – and develop information materials and training packages, through institutional linkages. How the program reach marginalized groups to ensure effective participation of disadvantaged groups will also be mapped and analysed.

A MOU and a formal contract between MOES & NIEPA, New Delhi, funded by Danida, is expected signed late August as to initiate bottom-up planning in the 5 pilot districts. The decentralization training programs are to be conducted in the selected districts and experiences incorporated into the ASIP 2003/2004. Coordination between NIEPA, India on decentralization and IIEP Paris on EMIS is on-going.

The importance and quality of the SIP (School Improvement Plans) in this context cannot be underestimated. The SIP's and DEP's (District Educational Plans) will be crucial instruments in improving educational planning, coordination and participation of stakeholders with the overall aim of decentralization and devolution of authority. Some quality improvement of the SIP process is presently being carried out with assistance from the EC. Coordination with other Ministries and Danida supported sector programs on overall decentralization policies and strategies is being undertaken.

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES 2002:

HIV AIDS

HIV/AIDS has caught concern in the education sector. The MOES has established a Working Group on HIV/ AIDS and education. to address it appropriately in a collaborative and comprehensive manner,

An HIV/ AIDS impact study on the education sector is considered an immediate priority and to go ahead in this regard has been agreed to. An assessment of the actual situation in the education sector will provide MOES with necessary and relevant information, which will lay the foundation for long-term strategies and various possible interventions and initiatives in this regard. The study is therefore expected to lead the way on how to proceed in terms of preventing and combating the spread of the disease in the education system.

A TOR on HIV/ AIDS impact study has been developed. It is proposed and anticipated that EC, Unicef and Denmark, providing technical assistance in terms of international and national consultants to perform the task, will jointly undertake the study. In this respect it is worth mentioning that the same collaboration was positive and fruitful in regard to undertaking the BPEP Gender Audit. Based on the findings of the impact study, strategies will be developed on how to most effectively address the present HIV/ AIDS situation in the education sector

Meanwhile, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed all program countries to prepare a report on country specific HIV/ AIDS Assessment. This initiative and the outcome of the report will assist the education sector in terms of joining efforts and learning from experiences gained in other Danida supported sector programs in Nepal.

Recently a two days awareness and sensitisation workshop on HIV/ AIDS in the education sector was run with participants from DOE and MOES, funded by Danida. The workshop also aimed at sharing experiences gained by other agencies involved with respect to HIV/ AIDS activities.

Direct funding –BPEP II

Following Danida guidelines, a budgeted annual work plan has been made for PAT office activities and approved by MOES. The plan covers the period from July 2002 to July 2004. The plan involves the utilisation of Danida direct funding and the utilisation of the professional resources of the advisory team.

Some 110 activities and TOR's for 15 international consultancies have been developed in close collaboration with respective HMG counterparts. The work plan will be revised three times annually in order to be evolving, facilitating the inclusion of activities that could not be foreseen at the time of ASIP and AWP&B planning processes.

The work plan has been submitted to the RDE as well as is under translation and dissemination to all districts.

Assistance to HMG reform of secondary education

The SESP is designed to support the HMG in achieving its larger development goal of poverty reduction through human development. The SESP will promote human development by expanding access to and improving the quality and efficiency of secondary education in Nepal.

Although the provision of public secondary education has expanded in the past decade, there is substantial evidence that the quality of secondary education is low, and that where possible parents are opting to have their children educated in the private sector. Given the

likely increased demands resulting from the much higher enrolment and completions rates in primary education, and the need to provide much greater opportunities for the poor as part of a pro-poor strategy, it is clear that secondary education in Nepal needs a major overhaul.

It is the first 5 year phase of a development programme that subject to the achievement of a satisfactory outcome, may be extended for a further 10 years.

The principal policy goal of SESP is to strengthen the involvement of local communities in the running and funding of their own schools, with assistance from and under the supervision of the national government. The main vehicle here is the design and implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

The Danida support to the programme will be in the four components that constitute the SESP:

- Increased Access to an Improved Learning Environment;
- Improved and Relevant Curriculum, Improved Assessment and Accessible Instructional Materials;
- Improved and Sustainable System for the Education, Development and Management of Teachers;
- Improved Institutional Capacity and Management.

SESP is a national programme, aimed at improving as many schools as possible over as many districts as possible. Due to limited resources and logistical concerns, SESP will need to target some of its interventions on only 10 districts to maximise the impact of the programme.

An Interim Programme has been initiated, intended to bridge between the present situation and up-start of the SESP in 2003 and to prepare the programme itself. The Interim Programme is funded through Danida direct funding and the programme has been developed in collaboration and agreed between Danida and MOES. The Interim Programme draws upon experiences from BPEP II, constituting an approach with a point of departure in the educational sector as such.

Assumptions and Risks

Immediate risks:

The state of emergency poses a number of difficult situations. Facts are hard to come by concerning the impact of the emergency rule. Many activities are conducted as usual, but how school life is actually impacted or to what degree activities can take place outside districts HQ's in a number of districts are hard to come by.

The political situation seems quite confusing and overwhelming. The decision not to set a date for local elections puts a serious question mark to the efforts to devolve authority and activities to local levels. However, a number of devolution activities in BPEP II such as the decentralisation in 5 districts can be undertaken. Low levels of activities must be anticipated for October and November due to festivals and the conduct of the elections, as things are now. This, of course, will severely impact the implementation of the programme at all levels.

HMG has reduced budgets for the coming fiscal year. The office is still to receive detailed information on the budget, but it seems that the educational and primary education share of national budget will be maintained. However, at a lower level all together. The free textbook policy, as mentioned earlier, and non-formal education has been reduction drastically. Specific analysis will be made upon receiving relevant information.

Long-term risks:

The assessment of long-term risks, important for, programme implementation, is relatively unchanged and given below:

- General uncertainties in the Nepalese society such as the continued insurgency and far-reaching policy changes effect the program implementation. The lack of political stability is of overall importance to all components. It is not possible to assess the impact of the political instability in the educational sector at this moment. The Supreme Courts ruling on August 6th. to the legality of recent political moves may shed more light.
- Situation in districts are deteriorating due the political-armed conflict. Starvation is reported in a number of districts. Accessibility to districts and beyond district HQ's are still questionable, making it difficult – but not necessarily impossible – to monitor district developments through field visits.
- Stability and implementation capacities of involved central and districts institutions, NGO's and disability NGO's are still questionable.

The SESP is a high-risk programme with particular high risks emanating from the lack of capacity on the part of the Government, a weak fiscal base and the deteriorating security situation.

Considering especially the first issue, well-functioning teams need to be built at all levels of the service in order for SESP interventions to be successful. This requires training in particular to be organised on institution rather than seniority lines, and for issues of caste and ethnicity to be faced up to and handled within SESP interventions (both in terms of clients and the deliverers).

Without a clear commitment by the Government to retain people within their posts, there is no prospect a building a critical level of institutional capacity and memory, necessary to sustain and build on the achievements of the programme.

This also concerns the anchoring of the SESP. It should be seen, as a clear condition that the SESP is located within the existing DOE structure in order to establish and profit from the synergies with basic and primary education apart from the fact that it is does not make sense to have two physical sections etc.

Recommended actions

The educational system is in crises, plunging deeper into problems generated by the political and armed conflicts. Support for education in the districts, in the schools, for the communities is of immense importance.

The work plan of the PAT office points to increased support for the poorest districts and all support for these activities should be mobilised.

PAT advisors and programme officer's hold a valuable amount of knowledge on the progress of the programme, development of new programmes and issues that have to be dealt with. At present, only involvement is seen here, as donors tend to focus more on recruiting technical experts from outside Nepal. Valuable resources are wasted in this manner. In this context, continued participation in the Local Donor Group of PAT is of the utmost importance.

Review and Evaluation

At present, the Local Donor Group is considering a Formulation Team and a Technical Review mission to produce materials that can facilitate a possible BPEP III concept paper. Deliberations are still undergoing in the LDG to finalise the TOR for a number of technical experts.

Indications are that no donor mission will take place in the second part of 2002.