

Support to Basic and Primary Education

His Majesty's Government
Ministry of Education & Sports

NEPAL

BI-ANNUAL REPORT NO. 20

for BPEP II¹
By the Chief Technical Advisor
1 July 2003 – 1 January 2004

TO THE ROYAL DANISH EMBASSY

Danida
104.Nep.39

Chief Technical Advisor
BPEP II

¹ The Biannual Report also refers to Danida Direct funded assistance for Secondary Education Support Programme, until the trimesterly progress report, agreed to jointly between HMG/N, ADB and Danida is submitted.

KEY DATA

Country: Nepal
Project Title: Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP II)
ESAT: Education Sector Advisory Team
Report No: 14 Danida ref: 104. Nep.39
Account No: 505-3391-8
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Prepared by: Karsten Jensen, Chief Technical Advisor
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BPEP II		
Danida grant: DKK 300,000,000²		
Contribution US \$ mill:	Budget: 2002/2003	Replen. From Special Account: July-December, 2003
Danida	10.3	6.3
Basket funds	8.0	5.2
Direct funds	2.3	1.1
HMG	1.0	0.6
Others: CIP Donors		
IDA	5.7	3.7
EU	4.1	2.7
NORAD	4.9	3.1
FINNIDA	1.5	0.9

SESP		
Danida grant: DKK 265,600,000		
Contribution US \$ mill:	Budget: 2003/2004	Replen. From Special Account: Jan-June, 2004
Danida	1.3	3.0
Basket funds	0.9	2.5
Direct funds	0.4	0.5
HMG	0.4	0.3
ADB	0.7	1.5

Source: Budget: HMG/N budget for BPEP II 2001/2002
DANIDA TA (Long term Advisers) is over and above the 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, pursuing to consolidate and continue the achievements of its 1st developmental phase (1993-1998). It is in line with the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) and the government's poverty reduction strategy as stated in the ninth plan and reiterated in the tenth plan. The program had national coverage from 2001 and completes its program tenure by 15 July 2004. In line with the World Declaration on Education for All, the focus of BPEP II was to increase access to and completion of basic and primary education, improve the quality of primary education and strengthen management efficiency. The Mid Term Review in December 2001 and March 2002 respectively, strengthened conditions for the programme with more emphasis on decentralisation and for Secondary Education in the form of the Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) 2003-2007 devolution of authority.

Assistance to SESP is seen as an extension of support to the Basic and Primary Education Programme. This program entered into its second year of implementation by July 16, 2004. The programme builds on achievements and experiences of current and previous programmes in the education sector and adopts decentralization as the strategy for bringing communities into the nucleus of decision-making. This is in line with the Government's Local Self Governance Act on decentralisation.

The intermediate objectives of SESP are to (i) improve the quality and relevance of secondary education, (ii) improve access to secondary education with focus on girls, children with special learning needs, poor and marginalized groups, and (iii) to develop the institutional capacity and management of educational institutions at all levels.

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 resulted in a restructuring of the program, which since holds the following 5 BPEP II components instead of 17:

1. School Physical Facilities
2. Access and Retention
3. Learning and Achievement
4. Management and Capacity Building
5. SIP Based Development Program

One of the MTR findings was a need to redefine institutional roles at central, district and sub-district levels focusing on increased role of schools and communities as envisaged in the Seventh Amendment to the Education Act. This eventually leads to capacity building initiatives at both central and district levels.

The SESP is designed to facilitate poverty reduction through the improvement of access to and completion of secondary education for the population as a whole in general and females, poor and disadvantaged groups in particular. Two complementary strategies within the overall programme design are implementation of a series of program interventions covering the four program components aiming at achieving improvements at the national and school levels across all 75 districts before the conclusion of the first five years. The four SESP components cover:

1. The Learning Environment
2. Curriculum Development, Assessment and Instructional Materials
3. Teacher Education and Development
4. Institutional Management and Capacity Building

The second strategy 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 reduction through education; To promote institutional and financial sustainability through the provision of increased capacity within the system. Emphasis will be upon the institutional modalities of planning and programme implementation at district, VDC, and community school lev-

els; To promote a feasible programme in logistical terms and to revise programme implementation on the basis of first phase experiences.

Intensified assistance is provided for 10 poverty stricken districts primarily in Far-West Nepal, where Humla and Doti are the two program intensive districts under the SESP implementation during its first year.

OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS IN PROGRAM COMPONENTS

1. School Physical Facilities

MOES is and has been investing in physical infrastructure at school level. It is acknowledged that a good physical learning environment is one of the major factors for improving the quality of the teaching-learning environment and therefore there is a need to improve the existing situation by:

- Assessing the need of the individual school for physical environment improvement.
- To introduce and ensure regular maintenance is done with community participation.
- To rehabilitate existing physical buildings and external environment including hygienically installations.
- To replace temporary and/ or add new classrooms on need based criteria including furniture.
- To provide supporting facilities for cluster training and district administration.

For BPEP II, activities 2003/04 are planned for 42 districts, however, the level of activities varies from district to district. The biannual achievements for BPEP II are the following: The target for classroom rehabilitation was 2,431. Schools have been identified for receiving rehabilitation funds, and the activity is on schedule. In regard to the external environment, then the target was 1,510. Schools have been selected and the activity is on schedule. The target for new classroom construction was 2,819. So far, 1,288 steel structures have been supplied to schools. The remaining structures are in order and the programme is on schedule. As for furniture for new classrooms, the total numbers are 3,510 sets and school selection has been completed. Construction of 33 resource centres will be undertaken, whereas the furniture target for those are 30. Quotation documents is in progress. The target for new district education buildings is 11 and 7 are completed. Construction started in 2002 and 4 are in progress. The furniture target for new district education buildings is 9 and 5 are completed. With reference to maintenance training of clusters, the target was 157, and the clusters were identified. The construction of the new DOE building in Sanothimi is 95% completed and expected finalised by February 2004. The project is one month delayed which is acceptable.

2. Access and Retention

As stated in the last Bi-Annual Report, the Special Needs Education Section's mandated area of operation has been extended from solely developing services for students with disabilities to all student groups who are facing barriers to learning and/ or participation. In practice this means a necessary reorientation and capacity building of SNES personnel. Therefore, over the last months, efforts have been made to trace future operational paths for the section.

Further, as inclusive education has been named as one of the main strategies of EFA, it implies that the segregated services developed for children with disabilities over the past ten years will be in contradiction with the ideals of EFA. This predicament has been examined, and a process of documenting alternatives to segregated services found within the country which are in line with EFA principles, has been initiated. This documentation will be used as a resource in the reorientation of services for students with disabilities.

Inclusive education is concerned with providing appropriate response to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational setting. Rather than being a marginal theme on how some learners can be integrated in the mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to respond to the diversity of all learners. It aims to enable both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a positive challenge and enrichment in the learning environment, rather than a problem.

Within the MOE/DOE, the concept of inclusive education as a broad approach addressing barriers encountered by all children who experience them is not comprehended. Great confusion with regard to inclusive education exists. The approach is seen as exclusively addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities. Apparent is the resistance within the system to an authentic reform of structures to accommodate an inclusive educational approach. For example, although the Special Education Section has been renamed and now shares responsibility with the Woman's Section for the development of services for marginalized students, no visible collaboration between the two sections can be observed. The segregation of service delivery is in practice more favoured. Efforts directed towards creating a more holistic educational approach are at present absent.

The three-year institutional linkage program with the County of Copenhagen and the Danish University of Education with the objective of developing comprehensive modalities to enhance access and retention has continued. Twelve piloted schools were selected within four districts for the project, however, due to the present security situation, four schools have not been able to participate during the period. Further, the second planned collective workshop has been postponed. The making of nine instructional videos relating to practices developed during the pilot period has continued. At present four videos are completed. The dissemination of the positive activities of the program documented at district level cannot be traced at central level. This area should be of high priority in the institutional linkage program in the future.

The training of assessment teams working at district level has continued. An evaluation of the status of these teams has been initiated by SNES so as to secure and adjust the team's role in the upcoming EFA. The initial impression is that only few Assessment Centres are in function.

In view of preparation for the EFA plan, Danida/ESAT responded positively to a request from MoE to fund a Social Assessment, necessary for the World Bank project appraisal, through direct funding. A team of international and local consultants were engaged and has started developing a "Village Development Plan", including an assessment of the indigenous people and minority groups.

Activities initiated by diverse NGOs, as described in the earlier biannual report, continue. Additionally, collaboration between MOES/DOE and the NGO, BASE, working for former Kamaiyas is established. BASE will initiate innovative programs within formal and non-formal education.

Re-designed literacy programs

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP = the 10th Plan) has placed high accord on literacy. The major objective of expanding literacy programs is to improve the livelihoods of deprived groups, especially girls, Dalits, and disadvantaged children. Despite the expansion of educational opportunities over the past, the level of literacy remained considerably low characterised by a wide gender gap. The variation differs across various ecological and development regions and ethno-cultural groups. The rich and diversified cultural heritage and the ecological variation of the country have been seen as impediment to the enhancement of literacy in the country. Single and uniform modalities or approaches are found ineffective to respond to the diversified needs of the varied clientele groups. This calls for target group specific and tailor made programs specially focussed to the linguistic needs of minority groups.

The Non-formal Education Centre (NFEC) continues the traditional quota-based planning approach and implementing programs through its own structure. Women education and Alternative schooling classes were distributed to all 75 districts in scattered manner. Where as the Adult Education classes were consolidated in eight low literacy districts.

In the fiscal year 2003-004 NFEC prepared 350 master trainers, who in turn, trained 9,426 facilitators to run all kinds of planned literacy programs. During this period 43,625 women were benefited from basic literacy and 37,575 from functional literacy classes. Similarly, 68,950 children attended alternative schooling classes, most of whom were girls. 85,000 adults received literacy skills during the same period. Furthermore, 1,416 deprived women organised themselves in 177 income generating groups. The income generation

scheme is seen as a viable strategy for poverty reduction as it increases access of the deprived groups to resources and provides an opportunity to be involved in economic activities. Together with this, the awareness raising programmes, social mobilisation, training on saving and credit scheme and marketing techniques for the participating groups are worth mentioning.

In order to implement the planned programs NFEC delivered textbooks, training manuals and other materials as per the schedule. However, the out of school children programme was hampered due to the late delivery of materials by two months. Improvements in the consistency between planning cycles and class cycles are imperative. Appropriate guidelines, rules and norms as well as checklists are required for the improvement of the efficiency of the program.

The NFEC has developed its capacity by installing computerised EMIS, which emerged out of intensive piloting over the years. Despite NFEC requests through media, it was extremely difficult to receive accurate data from programs run by others agencies (I/NGOs) and line ministries. Few NGOs provide accurate information about their programmes. This is an indication that a strong mechanism for co-ordination and linkages between efforts made by different agencies is deemed necessary.

Monitoring and supervision is probably one of the weakest aspects of the present implementation practice. Despite the provisions of committees from central to the village levels, the supervision, monitoring and co-ordination of NFE initiatives have remained weak. Involvement of stakeholders at decentralised levels can be one of the effective ways for improving program efficiencies at all levels. Therefore, the intensification of quantitative and qualitative monitoring requires reasonable increase in the resource allocation for NFE programs.

Available information regarding the allocation of resources does not match the magnitude of the target population. The 10th plan target of achieving the gender parity index of 0.8 seems most unlikely to realise with such a dismal allocation. The achievement of the ambitious targets of the 10th Plan requires substantial transformation both in terms of methodology and allocation of resources. The traditional and arbitrary planning will no longer serve achieving the enlarged goals. A need-based, decentralised and integrated programme that encourages community involvement in the strategic decisions is the requirement of the present time.

A pilot program on an integrated approach (literacy with ECD, IG, girl's enrolment and scholarship/incentives) is under way in 10 VDCs of three districts (Doti, Rupandehi and Rasua). The piloting intends to identify different implementation mechanisms and modalities in order to draw lessons for EFA implementation. A draft of policies for effective implementation of NFE under decentralised context has been produced and is under way for wider consultation and further improvement. Mapping of indigenous people/ Dalit and Janajati for planning purposes is in process.

With a view to local ownership to NFE programs and securing local participation, a social mobilisation process is being implemented which involves village level institutions and local people in the diagnostic process and prioritising activities. Through this process a comprehensive Village Education Plan is expected developed and funded. 25 trainers from central and district level will be trained for social mobilisation and prioritising programs as per the ground needs of the concerned VDCs.

An action research study has been designed in three different cycles and implemented in the 3 districts. Completion of the first cycle will pave the way to further research with identification of questions and design for the research. Findings are expected to consolidate policies and facilitate developing viable modalities. A draft report has already been prepared and circulated for comments.

In order to respond to the need of a condensed curriculum and primers for the FSP children, learning and training materials for level II and III have been developed and revision of Level I- materials are in progress.

The effectiveness and performance quality of the non-formal education depend highly on an increased capacity of policy makers and the implementing machinery. Hence, NFEC commissioned short-term overseas training programme for 10 officers each from the alternative schooling programme and women education programme. The training program intended to draw on the current NFE approaches and strategies being implemented in Bangladesh and India. The interaction and exchange of ideas are envisioned to facilitate the EFA initiatives.

3. LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Primary Publishing Cell (PPC)

Minor support has been provided to the PPC for the day to operation and security staff. The support is scheduled to end BPEP II July 2004. During the IP for SESP a plan was developed for merging the two publishing cells in Sanothimi. The plan was forwarded and approved by MOES by October 2003. As a major curriculum revision has just started, plans are being developed for further direct funding support to the merging, upgrading of old equipment and some new equipment for the new publishing unit under CDC. The implementation is to start early 2004.

Textbooks

As many studies have indicated, textbooks are one of the major important tools in achieving quality improvements in schools. It is therefore imperative if quality of the teaching learning is to take place, that textbook is delivered on time and in correct quantities. The Government allocation for the free textbook programme to all primary schools is app. 50% of the required amount. Danida has therefore through direct funding started the process of supporting MOES's free textbook policy by purchasing durable textbooks for app. 3,5 million DK. However, some of the funds will be allocated for international TA for specification and tender writing, monitoring, training in handling durable textbooks at local level and distribution to RCs. 700-750,000 textbooks will be distributed among the 13 districts, which MOES has selected as durable textbook districts.

Teaching/ Learning Packages

Through direct funding and except for the final approval of the last monitoring report, a project for improving the teaching/learning process at schools has been successfully completed. The project was covering 148 schools in three districts. Two schools in Humla did not come for the introduction meeting and were excluded. The project consists of 9 packages, five *hardware* and four *software*. Each school, SMC, community chose among those packages, where no less than two software packages were obligatory. The hardware package was bought locally, and each school signed an agreement with the DEO regarding utilisation of funds. The final approval of the last monitoring report is still awaited. DOE forwarded funds for hardware packages and local transport to the districts, and two districts received funds early 2003, while Humla only received by late March 2003 due to internal DoE disbursement problems. The first two districts were slow in disbursing funds to schools and a deadline of 15 July, 2003 was given to the three districts. The late releases of funds will delay the completion monitoring in the three districts to 3rd quarter of 2003. The final monitoring report is under discussion with the consultant, as Danida/ESAT and DoE has requested a comprehensive final report. Despite some delays, the project has received much praise from schools, teachers, parents, SMC and communities.

4. Management and Capacity Building

Preparation of the Core Document for EFA 2004-09

A draft of the Core Document for Education for All 2004-09 was presented to the donors during the June pre-appraisal/preparatory mission as reported in the previous biannual report. The aide memoir of this mission made a number of recommendations to the MOES. Some recommendations were tasks to be undertaken before the November appraisal missions.

The Core Document (CD) was therefore revised according to the Aid Memoire recommendations of the June mission. Danida/ESAT facilitated the revision process by providing not only financial resources for consultations, workshops, and dissemination of the CD, but also technical assistance in writing and finalizing it through in-house expertise. It was presented to the donors during the Appraisal Mission in November-December 2003 and donors agreed that it was a strong guiding document for EFA 2004-09. The EFA Core document, which was developed exclusively by MOES/DOE professionals is somehow an evidence of an increased capacity of the system in general and of the personnel in particular.

Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP)

A national workshop for reviewing the progress of the previous year's ASIP and orientation to the ASIP/AWPB for current fiscal year was undertaken during August 2003. The Directors and Planning Officers of the five REDs, DEOs and Planning Officers of 75 districts, 9 PTTC chiefs and 25 SEDU chiefs attended the workshop. The importance of this workshop increased in the sense that it provided a common forum to the implementers, planners and decision-makers at all levels for sharing the strengths and weakness over the past and the opportunities and threats ahead. The intention was to draw lessons from the past with a view to expediting better performance and efficient achievement of the program objectives in the current fiscal year.

When assessing the process of planning for ASIP, and ASIP reflected within a decentralized management context, then this year's achievements or successes should therefore be stressed as process and outcome of the ASIP/ AWPB 2003/4. The correlation, complexity and whole synchronization of lessons learned, new directions and modalities incorporated and timeliness of planned actions was gathered into this task. The ASIP provided a basis for good governance and taught lessons on the complexity and practical implications of decentralized management and administration modality, the necessary time allocation, manpower and coordination. Contributions from partners in the sub-sector (government, local bodies, communities, individuals, private sector and donor agencies) were brought together for a holistic approach and common ownership. The strategies taken in the ASIP are key devices for structuring the participatory bottom-up planning processes and for inputs to the AWPB.

The preparations for ASIP 2003/4 were crucially different from previous practices in terms of consultation and involvement. It was the output of work from hundreds of education managers and stakeholders from central to grass root level and vice versa. The series of workshops and consultations had three intentions: to capture stakeholders in the ASIP, to familiarize stakeholders with the upcoming SESP and to enrich the EFA concept paper 2004-9 with stakeholder expectations and concerns. The importance of ASIP 2003/4 was increased due to the fact that BPEP II ends with the closing of this ASIP, and therefore was twofolded: To plan for the completion of BPEP II and for a smooth take off for EFA 2004/9 and SESP 2003/8.

Institutional Linkage between NIEPA and MOES/ DOE on Decentralised Educational Planning

The linkage program on capacity building in decentralized planning and management of education between HMG/N and NIEPA (the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration) stipulates 15 programmes covering a total of 19 weeks. Actual programme activities have been running from May 2003 and the contractual agreement comes to an end by June 2004 when BPEP II closes. The institutional arrangement focuses on the five BPEP II bottom-up districts, namely Chitwan, Syangja, Jhapa, Bardia and Dadeldhura and their District Education Plans (DEPs). With reference to the Biannual Report, no. 19 (January - July 2003), and for a summary of the content covered so far, a break down is given below:

The first activity *Strategic framework for implementation of decentralized planning for DOE/ MOE*, covered the legal and administrative basis for bottom up approach to educational planning in Nepal and decentralized planning in India. The venue was the NIEPA institution in Delhi and also included a field visit to some District Primary Education Project districts/ states. The target group was 5 senior policy planners from DOE/ MOES and the visit was undertaken from May 24-30. *Approaches to decentralized educational planning and management* was the second activity, which dealt with concept of district planning, role and functions of DEOs, District Planning Committees (DPCs) and Village Education Committees (VECs), data requirements, unit

of planning, planning methodologies, processes and stage of district planning, use of computers in planning and monitoring of education development programmes. The target was the Working Group on Decentralized Planning and comprised of 28 people. It was carried out in NIEPA, Delhi and included a field visit in India during the period from July 28 - August 09. The third activity was *Methodologies of district planning in education*, where the main focus was on concepts of district planning, methodologies, bottom up approach, school development plans, unit costing, population projections and use of computers in educational planning. This target group was DEOs of five bottom up districts, DPC members and regional directorate staff, in total 36. It took place in KTM from September 08-19. *The Mid-Term follow-up workshop for development of DEPs in the pilot districts* was the fourth activity which focussed on assessing the current DEP status in pilot districts, examine draft DEPs, suggestions on finalization of DEPs for final review and appraisal including field visits. The 46 participants were members of the planning teams from pilot districts and selected officials from DOE/ MOES. It was undertaken in KTM from November 28 - December 07.

The immediate impact of the collaboration between HMG and NIEPA on policy changes and policy development has been comparatively rapid in terms of the short time covered and in decisions made and implemented. In some aspects, these interrelate with the HMG and IIEP collaboration. The tangible outcomes and main implications cover the following:

- 1) A new level of planning and data analysis has been established at the Resource Center (RC) level. The sub district level of planning is in line with the policy of decentralization for data collection, analysis, and for utilization in planning for the districts and sub district levels. Data available at the district level has been thoroughly analyzed and disaggregated data on various educational indicators is now available at the RC and VDC (Village Development Committee) level. This helps pinpointing the problems at habitation level to initiate interventions according to needs.
- 2) An EMIS day (Jestha 7 = May 20) has been declared the date for starting data collection at school level. Before this decision, it was the second week of the second month of the academic session, which was non-consistent. Previously, the DOE was responsible for the publication of school level educational information. However, the districts have now been empowered or authorized, within the first 3 months of the academic year, to make their own publications. This means that the districts themselves will collect, verify, validate, do timely corrections, process and interpret their data. This change impacts on ownership of data and should ensure timely data availability. All districts have been informed to follow this process from now onwards. Accordingly, formats are intended revised and distributed to all.
- 3) The School Improvement Plans (SIPs) were earlier based on per child NER (Net Enrolment Rate) allocation. This modality or policy created highly inflated data. It was realized, that allocation should be based on per class for grade one, and per child GER (Gross Enrolment Rate) for grade 2-5. The SIP funding process according to per class for grade one, and as per GER for grade 2-5 per child is expected to secure actual information. The reliability of data would be enhanced for the respective school, the RC and the district, as eventually for the central level.
- 4) The VEP (Village Education Plan) was previously supported under a partnership with VEC/ VDC through a lump sum grant of NRS 20,000. The partnership modality has now been changed to enable the VDC to obtain a grant of NRS 10,000 based on performance criteria for educational achievements within the VDC catchment area. This relates to the aim of achieving NIR (Net Intake Rate), NER and survival rate to grade 5 in line with the EFA Core Document. The arrangement may, in some VDCs, ensure achievement of EFA universalisation of primary education before the stipulated time, also due to a healthy competition.
- 5) The groups for data collection and analysis have been rearranged into the following age categories: 3-4, 5-9, 10-12, 13-14. The reason for the rearrangement is that in the previous age group of e.g. 6-10, 6 was perceived as the beginning of 6 year for entering grade one. The change implies that children can now be admitted to primary schools when they are 5 years old or more. The main prob-

lem with the previous age groups was, that grade one had children within the age group of 5-6 years and this inflated enrolment data. The 6th Education Act/ Regulation and the previous ones stipulated 6 years old as 5 year completers, which was regulated in the 7th amendment, but not implemented. This change has made up for this.

- 6) From these experiences, the districts should be able to design their own research for constant improvement and better implementation of the SIPs by interpreting the impacts of innovations. As an example, Syangja district prepared 529 SIPs. The resource persons made a summary of the SIPs and incorporated the elements of SIPs into the present DEP, which can be seen as an innovative and positive step.
- 7) In HRD capacity building terms, districts have been able to prioritise and set targets and the planning teams have learned the technical process, which can be applied to secondary education planning within a holistic approach to education. The skills, which have been developed within the planning teams, cover areas of diagnosis, projection, situation analysis, time-bound target settings according to EFA, and costing accordingly. The districts have mainly justified their costing according to their needs, based on the data provided. The level of discussion between the participants during and after the workshop clearly reveals the increased capacity in planning. In addition, most participants were not used to work on a computer. The planning teams' intense work and focus on electronic data processing has provided a spill off effect by creating a new understanding, interest and demand to learn more in this area. A change in attitude towards the experts has also emerged over time. Participants have become reflective, interactive, requesting suggestions and arguing on issues relevant to them.

However, limitations prevail. It seems that the district planners have been unable to interact with local stakeholders to the degree anticipated and reasons vary. One is concern for security matters. In general, linkages between SIPs, VEPs and DEPs has not been reflected, which may be a cause and effect symptom from lack of accountability measures or provisions and a strained or unclear relationship with local stakeholders.

The collaboration yields results through the process of qualitative support and assistance from the NIEPA experts over time. Repeated interaction with the planning teams and others in the districts, in KTM and in India expands relationships and increases know-how. A focus is kept on a measurable outcome in terms of five appraised and funded DEPs. Continuous revision and adjustment of plans and their quality within the given framework has been a process of laying stone on stone. There has only been slight deviation from the initial programme, and this related to a postponement, and to revision of programme content to adhere to context.

The SIP funding was previous decreased by 50%. However, the effect of the latest joint government-donor mission's Aide Memoir has been reflected in the timely release of this year's budget for implementation of SIP based development activities. By September 2003, the 75 districts were provided their budgets for funding SIPs. The timely release indicates the system's acknowledgement of improving financial management, which relates to predictability of performance at the district level.

Following this, a new feature of the budget this year is that 859 VDCs of 75 districts have formed a partnership fund of NRS. 20,000 from government's side with a similar matching fund from VDCs. This funding mechanism should enable the VDCs to identify and assist all school children to attend schools with a suitable amount of funding support. This can be seen as a modality and a shared interest in securing access to, and education for all.

With the closing of BPEP II, it would be relevant and important with an assessment of the five bottoms up pilot districts prior to replications. This is planned by DOE to be undertaken in action research modality with the 5 districts in the driving seat. The assessment should direct the up scaling from five to twelve bot-

toms up districts. The restructured SIP/ DEP Guideline developed under SESP IP for the education sector perceived holistically, is ready after thorough consultations within the system.

Institutional Linkage between MOES/ DOE and IIEP on EMIS

To improve the overall quality of primary education, devolution to district and sub-district is imperative. An improved and more reliable Educational Management Information System (EMIS) data collection system and a better capacity in analysing the data will provide a tool for decision makers at all level in improving the quality of education. In order to do so, school mapping and micro planning including Geographical Information System (GIS) and EMIS is being undertaken at central, district and sub-district level. The support programme, planned for three years, will be conducted with all relevant stakeholders and will be co-ordinated closely with the support from other programmes, such as NIEPA, towards decentralisation as well as all communication initiatives.

To support MOES/DoE in this, IIEP Paris has, supported by direct funding, towards the end of 2003 completed the first phase, which was scheduled for one year. An internal evaluation was made and some corrections and adjustment has been done to the new contract for the second phase (1 year). Due to local problems in purchasing relevant geographical maps and the demise of one of the IIEP international consultants, the IIEP programme was 6 months delayed. Activities in connection with IIEP training and workshops, purchase of equipment and geographical maps has been supported by direct funding. DOE has decided that EMIS data entry and dissemination will be undertaken at district level. In future, districts will only be required to forward district summary sheets to central level. Direct funding is supporting such changes with software at central level and entering of district summary data. The huge need to improve the quality of EMIS data brought about plans to enable districts to handle and disseminate their own data.

With a view to provide feed backs to planners, decision-makers and implementers and also assess program effectiveness, data entry, analysis and interpretation of EMIS, the publishing of the EMIS report is in progress. A cumulative status report of BPEP II covering up to the previous year has been produced, distributed and disseminated. An international technical assistance contract was signed for strengthening central, regional and district capacity in the area of physical planning and monitoring. The outcome will be plans for establishing institutional linkages within the two areas. The consultancy will start by February 2004.

Institutional linkage between DUE and MOES, M. Phil. graduates

Six MOES personnel (three male and three female) have been supported to attend the Kathmandu University's MPhil program in education. They are expected to complete their second semester in January 2004, and will continue with their last semester focusing on their thesis research and writing. In addition to covering the tuition at Kathmandu University, direct funding has been providing each MPhil student with a stipend of Rs. 100,000 on instalment basis as well as English language and a computer training course.

MOES officials who have been supported in the past for MPhil or Ph.D. at the Kathmandu University remain to complete their degrees as they have yet to submit their thesis. The reason for incompleteness has been that they do not finish their thesis during the last semester, and once they go back to their job, it becomes very difficult for them to continue to engage in the academic work as they will not get the necessary academic guidance and support for their research and writing. Danida/ESAT has requested the MoES to settle the issue with the Kathmandu University and the MOES.

The second batch of students (15 MOES personnel and 3 FOE faculty members) enrolled in the MPhil program in education at DUE are close to completing their studies as scheduled. They will have their final exams during the first week of January 2004, and a graduation ceremony in KTM is scheduled for January 9, 2004 when they will be awarded certificates.

Financial Management

A 3-day training to accountants of 75 districts was undertaken under direct funding in order to improve the financial management with better and timely reporting

5. SIP Based Development Program

The final report on SIP/ DEP from the SESP IP was received and comments were incorporated into the SIP Guideline and SIP Format, which was then translated into Nepali.

With SIPs as the bottom-up approach for community involvement and ownership in management of schools, then the COPE program as well as the World Bank project on transfer of school management to communities (LIL project), it is necessary on a regular basis to assess, monitor and determine how, when and to which degree those pilots, strategies and activities prove beneficial and sustainable, or interrelate and draw best experiences from each other. The risk of fragmentation is seen, often despite the same overall aim.

In a decentralised management, the SIP constitutes the lowest level of planning, through which the child in the classroom should be influenced directly. Over time, SIPs are assumed compiled and feed into the VEP and VEP to DEP, which are again supposed to be incorporated into the national level ASIP/ AWPB (ASIP = After SIP). It appears obvious that synthesizing the SIPs and VEPs into a DEP, and the DEPs into the national ASIP are important elements, requiring strong managerial overview, monitoring and resources along with appropriate manpower. Early and proper sequencing of activities and timelines allow for a correlation between plans into a holistic national plan. Without SIP no VEP, and without VEP no DEP. Without DEPs, a national ASIP cannot capture the ground reality of the nation. In order to realize this, appraisal of plans at all levels is most crucial, requiring adequate consideration as to determining the institution or plan approving body. The qualitative outcome of such planning structures is anticipated to have a large impact on all stakeholders and is therefore an object for public scrutiny. Harmonizing functions, plans, timely approvals etc. among local level bodies, such as the DDCs, VDCs, DEC and VECs, SMCs is the great challenge. Synchronization of central and local plans and drawing on lessons learned needs to be addressed.

Communication and Social Mobilisation

Social mobilization and communication activities strive at creating awareness to the public at large and particularly to the weakest sections of society. The focus on educational communication, mainly through radio, has expanded in the sense that some activities carried out and developed from direct funding assistance last year, was brought into the system's regular activities through ASIP and has contributed to production of and circulation of educational information to a wider forum.

With radio recognized as a cost-effective communication channel to reach communities, the BPE Section is in the process of initiating an agreement under their regular programs to cater for expansion of radio broadcastings. This relates to two Kathmandu based radio stations, Radio Sagarmatha and Kantipur FM. Radio Sagarmatha intends to disseminate to 7 local FMs (community radio stations) and to Kantipur FM (covering the Eastern and Central regions) In addition, 16 other local FMs in different places of the country will receive educational materials for broadcasting. These intentions build on programs developed earlier and on a shared and consolidated interest with the media on broadcasting relevant educational information. It is assumed that the linguistic minorities will also be addressed.

The monitoring part of the section requires some improvement in the sense that the effect intended from activities undertaken is yet to be recorded through activities accomplished. However, the increased NER of primary education may be assumed an indication of the impact of such activities.

Securing, nurturing and strengthening people's voices through respective channels of local bodies nevertheless remains a concern. Due to the difficult circumstances in the country, some of these units are heavily constrained, others dysfunctional or destroyed, and the remaining representing the extended administrative arm of the non-elected government. It goes without saying, that such conditions are obstacles, which cannot be overcome unless the foundation is re-established, a peace treaty is in place and local elections held. Unless and until this is done, the ideological background and pillars of society has shifted. This again means

that the anticipated educational planning instruments such as VDC plans, VEC plans, SIPs and DEPs with the adjacent administration and finance have to some extent been weak, lacking and timely delayed. The seriousness and implications of these conditions are evident.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

The HIV/ AIDS Impact Study on the Education Sector has finally been submitted and later than anticipated. Follow up meetings are expected to take the recommendations forward.

ASSISTANCE TO HMG REFORM OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

1. The Learning Environment

School physical facilities

The target for rehabilitation of classrooms in Humla and Doti was 50. A rapid assessment survey is in progress for all schools in the districts. The selection of schools (15 in each district) for physical intensive support has not been done due to delay in final selection criteria. The target for new classroom construction in Humla and Doti was 60 and procurement of materials is in progress. Again, the selection of schools (15 in each district) for physical intensive support has not been done because selection criteria are missing. With regard to maintenance training, the target was 106 schools, however, no progress was recorded. The maintenance training is part of the SIP training programme and therefore has to wait until this training is taking place. Funds for maintenance in Humla and Doti targeted 76 schools, but no progress is seen since maintenance training must be undertaken before fund release; this also goes for the signing of a maintenance agreement. In addition, the schools in each district can not be known before the 15 schools for intensive physical support have been selected, as these 15 schools will not receive maintenance funds. Three activities relate to physical activities at the Regional Education Directorate. No progress was recorded in these activities. The reason is that the DOE has to draw up an overall plan for consultancy service needs for physical activities to ADB. This is to be forwarded to ADB early 2004. Further, OCE has not forwarded their requirements for extension, as the new building primarily will be for regional examinations. 5 activities relate to SEDU's and RC's and no progress is seen. As mentioned, the DOE has to include the needed consultancy services in an overall plan for consultancy activities to ADB. Moreover, the location of new SEDU's and RCs is awaiting a mapping exercise on where to construct and reviews on teacher management and support systems, which will recommend future plans for the teacher management and support system infrastructure.

Danida/ESAT through direct funding has provided the following support:

- 1) For the Physical Services Section (PSS), Danida/ESAT assisted in developing complete sets of architecture drawings, bill of quantities for various types of new classrooms, toilets, and rehabilitation modalities to be constructed in the mountain districts. The DOE standard classroom design of galvanized steel structures is only possible to use in mountain districts, if they are accessible by road, which only a few are. All materials have been handed over and received by PSS. The project was delayed with 1 ½ months due to problems in arranging a field visit to Humla and some changes were made to drawings and bill of quantities at the final stage.
- 2) Many lower and secondary schools are doing new construction and rehabilitation with local support from VDC, DDC and communities. However, the quality of such construction is often very poor, the sizes of classrooms too small, light and ventilation often inadequate. Therefore, under the IP for SESP, it was agreed that Danida/ESAT should support development, printing and distributing a construction guideline with norms and standards for construction of new classrooms, ratio of toilets for girls/boys and teachers, with emphasis on the need for maintenance.
- 3) 14,500 pamphlets were printed and 13,500 distributed to all DEOs with instruction to distribute them to all lower and secondary school, RCs, VDC's and DDC in the districts. The project was two month delayed

in Government approval of norms and standards, and the distributing arrangement to the 75 districts was more complicated than anticipated.

4) A feasibility study of existing and future hostels in mountains and PID districts did not take place. The reason is that the Government has not made up its mind about future hostel policies for remote mountain hostels for lower and secondary students, conversion of SLC feeder hostel to female teacher training hostels etc. No budget has yet been fixed. It is the plan that the study on criteria for scholarships will also cover the scholarships for hostel students including criteria.

Preparation for Institutional Linkage for Legal Coherence

Similarly, an institutional linkage for legal coherence, especially with respect to provisions for decentralisation, between primary and secondary education, was prepared. The coherence is addressed in the SESP documentation as a performance indicator. As linking institution, the Seameo Innotech of the Philippines has been identified because of its outstanding training records and because of its nature as an institution supported by Governments of Asia-Pacific. A term of reference was drafted and an exploratory trip to the Philippines has been planned for early 2004.

2. Curriculum Development, Assessment and Instruction Materials

Preparation for Institutional Linkage for Curriculum Development and Assessment

For the curriculum development, assessment and instructional materials under SESP, efforts were made to develop an institutional linkage with a regional institution. The Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE) in Seoul, South Korea, an autonomous government funded institution that specializes in curriculum development and evaluation, was identified as an appropriate institution. KICE is well known in the region for its technical expertise in the specialized areas of curriculum development, evaluation, and development of instructional materials. Contact with KICE has been established, A terms of reference has been drafted in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Centre, and a trip to KICE has been planned for early February 2004 to explore the possibilities for the development of the institutional linkage program, the modalities for the linkage and areas in which collaboration work can be done.

Curriculum Development, Assessment and Instruction Materials

Most of the activities under this component of SESP are being carried out by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), which is mandated to develop the curriculum framework for grades 1 to 10, develop textbooks and teachers' guides, revise the curriculum periodically, and develop other teaching materials.

Preparatory work for the development of the curriculum framework for grades 1-12 has been underway. As CDC does not have the mandate to develop the curriculum framework for grades 11 and 12, CDC has been engaging in dialogue with the Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) that is responsible for grades 11 and 12. The head of the curriculum department of HSEB has been consulted for modalities to collaborate with CDC in the development of the curriculum framework for grades 1 to 12 as per SESP.

Preparatory work for the analysis of the existing curriculum has been carried out as information from this study will be useful for the development of the curriculum framework for grades 1 to 12.

The establishment of a School Assessment Unit has been proposed to the MOES as per the SESP Core Document and the necessary process has started. As there is no clear policy on school level assessment, a national policy is being developed by CDC and expected completed by July 2004.

3. Teacher Education and Development

SEDU etc.

The ADB inception mission in August raised a number of concerns especially with respect to the teacher education component of the SESP. The ownership of land for SEDU facilities needs to be resolved in its

totality as well as it was agreed during the mission to examine management and support systems for teacher education and development.

Scholarships

As part of the ADB loan covenants for the SESP, Danida/ESAT consented a MoES/DoE request to facilitate a review of the scholarships schemes in secondary education. However, for reasons of synergy and upon the request of the entire donor group, funding primary and secondary education, the review was expanded to primary education also. A group of local consultants were recruited to carry out the commission. The group presented a very first draft during the December mission.

4. Institutional Management and Capacity Building

Preparation of an Overview of Secondary Education

Preparation of a book that presents an overview of the secondary education was initiated in July 2003 through direct funding. It is planned that this book will have 8 chapters including an introductory chapter. A draft of the book is complete. A workshop is planned in January 2004 to get feedback on this draft from MOES, DOE, and other central level agencies. The final version is expected to be ready by May 2004.

The SESP as Priority 1 instead of Priority 2

The ADB inception mission in August had participation from Danida/ESAT and during the mission significant concerns with respect to the launch of SESP were tabled. Through contacts with the National Planning Commission SESP was re-termed a “Priority 1” activity instead of the “Priority 2” assigned to it through the preparations for the Bill of Appropriation. However, the formal status was not changed – despite persistent efforts from both Danida and ADB - until late November, which resulted in no program activities.

ADB/ Danida Joint Financing

The DoE perception of the ADB Project Administration Manual (PAM) especially concerning the joint financing arrangement and Danida direct funding meant that activities were not launched, despite joint efforts from ADB and Danida to clarify the concepts. Eventually, the matter found its solution during the joint December mission and is reflected in the Aide Memoire of the mission.

ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

Immediate Risks

The political situation continues to be quite confusing and overwhelming. The decision not to hold elections but rather to install a “care-taker” government puts a serious question mark to the efforts to devolve authority and activities to local levels as well as questions the political stability. However, a number of devolution activities in BPEP II such as the decentralisation in 5 districts have continued unabated. Low levels of activities were witnessed in October and November due to festivals and the instability of the political situation. This, of course, will impact the implementation of the programme at all levels.

The deteriorating security situation, the insurgency and the unpredictable political situation have been the main impediment to the success and effectiveness of the decentralized planning and harvesting its results. However, the DANIDA support in terms of resources and technical assistance has created an impact on the institutional capacity of the MOES/DOE system.

HMG has reduced budgets for the coming fiscal year. The office is still to receive detailed information on the budget. Yet it seems that the educational and primary education share of the national budget will be maintained, however, at a lower level all together. The free textbook provision has been reduced drastically.

The reduction of the Danida budget poses a risk as Danida has been – and still is – seen as a leading as well as flexible contributor to the development of basic and primary education in Nepal. The drastic reduction – DKK 50 million of the initial contribution of DKK 300 million - of the allocations for the BPEP II will no doubt impact on the standing of and confidence towards Danida in the education sector in Nepal.

Year	Earlier country frame BPEP II + SESP	proposed country frame BPEP II + SESP	Now country frame BPEP II + SESP
2003	DKK 54		DKK 35
2004	DKK 79		DKK 48

During the annual negotiations in 2002, it was agreed that with the initiation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP = The Tenth Plan), the education allocations of the country frame would occupy 40%. The PRSP has been launched in 2003, yet, the education allocation occupies only 23%. Had the programme been allowed to fulfil its basket commitment, only DKK 10 million of the initial allocation of DKK 300 million would have remained unspent at the end of the programme by 2004.

Finally, the reduction will reduce the ability of the education programme to reach out to those presently out of school and hard to reach. The areas of especially the Mid-West and Far-Western with high poverty density will be impacted. Costs of operating in the remote areas which experience severe poverty and the effects of the insurgency are higher than normal, as more experimental operations and initiatives are necessary. One example could be the lack of opportunity to print durable textbooks for 16 remote districts; another could be that 11 TORs for international linkages and assistance concerning issues like decentralised planning and decentralised financial management has been idle in Copenhagen for more than 8 months.

Long-term Risks

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

- General uncertainty in Nepal because of the continued insurgency and far-reaching policy changes effect the program implementation. The lack of political stability is of overall importance to all components. However, it seems that some understanding of a political joint direction is slowly emerging according to rumours in the capital.
- The situation in the districts is deteriorating due the political-armed conflict. Situations of starvation are 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).

As the parties have still not signed the Government-to-Government agreement concerning the SESP, no specific planning of activities has taken place.

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 does not make sense to have two physical sections etc. However, no formal progress on formalising the proposed structure has been recorded yet.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A number of recommended actions, covering support for both primary and secondary education are proposed:

- To continue the build-up for an ASIP and AWP&B for secondary education, if possible, combined with the one for primary
- To continue dissemination of the SESP Core Document
- To focus more on devolution of authority and social mobilisation
- To focus and internally clarify, how Danida/ESAT is going to relate to post-conflict education, in order to advise best possibly the DOE, among others design a possible Task Force
- To develop a plan for direct funding of the SESP and integrate it with the direct funding plan BPEPII
- To strengthen ties to Danida programmes in Nepal for decentralisation and human rights with respect to improving coordination and collaboration.

It is also recommended that the job descriptions of the Danida advisors be formally adopted and forwarded as soon as possible, as they were discussed during the bilateral review in March 2002 and later approved by the Prime Minister of Nepal in June 2002. Finally, it is recommended that the successor of the current Special Needs Education Advisor be appointed as soon as possible in order to avoid gaps in assistance in the light of the upcoming EFA.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The following reviews and evaluations seem to be in the pipeline for the calendar year 2003:

July	Annual negotiation
Nov-Dec.	Evaluation of BPEP II (Danida)
	Appraisal of the concept paper
	Mission on SESP
	Mission on BPEP II
	Mission by the Danish Auditor General