

Nepal Basic and Primary Education Programme II

Textbook Provision Experiments

Status of Final Comparative Evaluation

4-20 September 2002

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Terms Of Reference: Summariser And Presenter At The Workshop Of 22 October 2002 (Dr Tirtha Raj Parajuli)

1 INTRODUCTION

The visit to Nepal for the textbook provision experiments took place from 5 to 19 September 2002. The objective of the consultancy was to:

- (i) work with EastConsult, the Nepalese company contracted to evaluate the four experiments, on reviewing the comparative evaluation report so that the final reporting stage could be reached, and
- (ii) prepare for and participate in the one-day workshop planned to publicise the evaluation recommendations and assist the MOES in making its choice of textbook provision system to adopt before November, when a donor joint review mission had been expected.

The consultant had already worked in the UK on earlier versions of the comparative evaluation report.

The consultant worked closely with the PAT Danida Office, with the General Manager of the Experimental Distribution Management Group, who was relatively new in her job, with EastConsult and with the author of the report on the field study of the “Reformed reimbursement” textbook provision system. At the end of the consultancy, the consultant attended a meeting of the Advisory and Monitoring Committee on 19 September to report on progress. Annex I reproduces the report submitted to the Committee.

In addition to the work on the textbook provision experiments, the consultant reviewed the report on the Reformed Reimbursement field study, had discussions with the Primary Publishing Cell, established with Danida support, and discussed the forthcoming study tour to Singapore of senior management in JEMC.

Abbreviations

BPEP II	Basic and Primary Education Programme II
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
DoE	Department of Education
DEO	District Education Office/Officer
EDMG	Experimental Distribution Management Group
JEMC	Janak Education Materials Centre
PAT	Programme Advisory Team, Danida
RC	Resource Centre
RP	Resource Person

2 REVIEW OF THE COMPARATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

Before the visit to Nepal, the consultant reviewed the comparative evaluation report prepared by EastConsult on the two-year experiments on four textbook provision experiments – Local Purchase Order, Re-use of Durable Textbooks, Bulk Distribution, JEMC Coupon. Since the report was not complete in some respects, several subsequent stages of reporting for the comparative evaluation were necessary, although some of these were reviewed by the consultant alone. To clarify the work done, the submission timetable of the comparative evaluation reporting was as follows:

11 July	Draft comparative evaluation report*
28 August	Draft comparative evaluation report (part)
5 September	Draft comparative evaluation report (complete)
18-19 September	Draft comparative evaluation report
27 September	Final comparative evaluation report*

* reviewed by all

In addition to the consultant's review, the 11 July report was reviewed by the Advisory and Monitoring Committee for the Textbook Provision Experiments (CDC and DoE), as well as by some Nepali educationalists. The PAT Office reviewed the financial parts of later drafts and of the final report.

With regard to the costs of the Re-use and Bulk systems, the report will not be able to give the real costs of distribution via the RCs because the true costs are not available. All that is available is the cost paid by the PAT Office to JEMC to enter into a special agreement with Sajha to distribute via the RCs. However, it is clear that too much money was in fact paid. This can be deduced from the following:

- Sajha receives 18.25% of the textbook's price.
- Normally, out of the 18.25%, Sajha pays its retailers' commissions, which range between 8% (lowest) and 81% (highest).
- The retailers' commissions are made up of two parts – the preliminary commission (8%) and the transportation commission (from 0% to 73%).
- For the special work of taking the books to the RCs for the Re-use and the Bulk experiments, Sajha reduced the preliminary commissions to 4%.
- Therefore the other 4% would be saved, if distribution were regularly done through the RCs in the Re-use and Bulk systems.
- For the retailers to attend at the RC to distribute the books to schools which came to collect, there was an additional lump sum payment (Kavre Rps 5000/RC; Jhapa Rps 3000/RC; Darchula Rps 5500/RC; Chitwan Rps 4000/RC, etc). However, it seems that attendance was discontinued in Year 2 at the DoE's request and that the RPs did the work.
- A distribution cost from the Sajha offices to the RCs based on weight, for each of the six districts using the Re-use and the Bulk systems, was made (ranging from Rps 1.25/kg for Chitwan and Jhapa to Rps 7/kg for Darchula and Mustang). But this was paid to JEMC for Sajha in

addition to the 18.25% Sajha cost which itself already contains the “transportation commission”.

- Sajha has pointed out that its costs of taking books to the RCs were greater than the above weight rates because in Year 1 they were obliged to take the books during the rainy season when some RCs are not accessible to vehicles.
- Nevertheless, the real cost of distribution via the RCs, which is so beneficial to schools and parents, is over-represented in the implementation of the experiments.

From the above, it is clear that if either the Re-use or the Bulk systems are adopted by the MOES, it will be necessary for JEMC and Sajha to work out new rates of payment and that these should be calculated in association with the Government accountant.

The final report, revised in line with the comments received, is expected on 10 October and is the end of the reporting process.

The recommendation of the report is that the most advantageous system, from the comparative indicators agreed, for Nepal is the Re-use of durable textbooks. However, there is a problem at present in this becoming the national system in that the manufacturing cannot be done in Nepal. JEMC, responsible for manufacturing the durable books, does not have enough of the necessary binding equipment to cover the needs of the whole country, and the paper made in Nepal is of too poor a quality to stand several years of use. Both of these problems can be corrected given the political will (the MOES decision), instructions to the national paper manufacturers and some financial support to JEMC so that it can acquire the necessary binding equipment.

The interim recommendation of the report is that the Re-use system is applied in the mountainous districts – JEMC has enough capacity to bind that number of textbooks – while the rest of the country follows the Bulk distribution system through the RCs until the manufacturing problems are resolved.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORKSHOP ON TEXTBOOK PROVISION

Unfortunately, the workshop itself could not take place during the consultant's visit because the MOES was unwilling to invite the DEOs to come from the districts – some of which are far distant from Kathmandu and can take up to a week in travel time – when they had only just returned to them after a national meeting. The PAT Office therefore proposed to hold the workshop on 22 October, immediately after the Dasein holiday and before the Tihar holiday. This was proposed to the Advisory and Monitoring Committee and was accepted.

The consultant discussed the workshop agenda with the Committee which made several interesting changes and also amplified its objectives. The proposal to the Committee is reproduced in Annex I and the amended version is in Annex II. The Secretary to the Committee, the Deputy Director of the Educational Material Development Section, DoE, is making a list of those to be invited to the workshop, which will be around 40. She will be responsible for sending out the invitations in enough time for representatives from, eg, Darchula, to arrive after the Dasein holiday.

The Committee agreed to the input for the workshop of an academic from the Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University. His role would be to summarise the findings and recommendations of the comparative evaluation report into the four experimented systems and to present these to the workshop participants, and also to do the same thing for the report on the field study of the “Reformed reimbursement” system.

The membership of the “Textbook Taskforce” was discussed at the Committee meeting and it was decided that the three immediate past and present Deputy Directors of the Educational Material Development Section, DoE, together with the Deputy Director for Planning in the MOES would make an ideal team, not only in terms of relevant experience but also because they represent CDC, DoE, Research and Evaluation and MOES. They will be assisted in the period immediately before and after the workshop by an IBD specialist in book distribution (who worked on the textbook provision experiments in Year 1). Their task is to present a clear recommendation to the MOES on the textbook provision system together with “next steps” and a timetable. (The objective is still to be able to introduce the new system in April 2003, at the beginning of the next school year.)

EastConsult is scheduled to submit the final comparative evaluation report on 10 October, which the PAT Office thought to be enough time to get it duplicated for the workshop (although the participants will not be given copies because it is a long report) to serve as reference copies. After this it will be possible to draw up a summary which will be distributed to the workshop participants, a day in advance if possible, as requested by the Advisory and Monitoring Committee.

The consultant drew up terms of reference for the input of the Faculty of Education academic (Annex III). The consultant had reviewed the report written by the assistant dean of the Faculty of Education on the fieldwork on the Reformed reimbursement system, approved it with a few minor corrections and agreed with the PAT Office that the same author would be the ideal person to present the summary of the comparative

evaluation report on the four experimented systems as well as a summary of the report on the Reformed reimbursement system.

Finally, the consultant agreed with the PAT Office the input of the IBD textbook distribution specialist to assist with the workshop and work with the Textbook Taskforce in order to assist the MOES in making its decision before the November target. The IBD specialist will visit BPEP II from 17-27 October.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Since this consultancy visit was mainly concerned with reviewing reports and advising on their further development, there are few conclusions and recommendations to make.

Wastage in the present system

Through reviewing both the report on the “Reformed reimbursement” system and on the comparative evaluation of the four experimented systems, it is clear that there is wastage in the present systems (reimbursement and JEMC Coupon). Even ordinary books can be made to last longer than one school year with proper management at the school level. Indeed, the fieldwork in the comparative evaluation report revealed that a number of schools already collect back the used ordinary books at the end of the school year and distribute them to students at the beginning of the next school year. Therefore, any future system MUST allocate the textbooks to the school and not to the student/guardian so that re-use even of ordinary books can be practised. This means that any system such as reimbursement which gives the books to parents/guardians is a wasteful system.

Re-use of textbooks is the only way to reduce the textbook provision bill, get books to students on time and increase the contact time of student with textbooks. Therefore, schools must be asked to provide safe storage areas for books out of the school fund and/or contributions in cash or in kind from parents/guardians.

Target date for introduction of the new textbook provision system

If at all possible, it is highly desirable to introduce the new textbook provision system for 1 Baishakh/mid-April 2003, the start of the school year, rather than wait yet another school year.

Technical assistance to achieve the target date

It would be helpful, therefore, to offer the MOES/DoE technical assistance to draw up the national implementation plan.

It is clear from the implementation of the experiments, that a lot more training, supervision and monitoring will be needed to introduce the new system at all levels from the centre, to the regional offices of JEMC and Sajha, to the DEOs, RPs and Sajha agents in the districts. Since any training will be a cascade type, with the problem of increasing lack of clarity and accuracy as each subordinate level is reached, the training at the centre will be crucial and must be long and thorough.

For the planning and the implementation, technical assistance should amount to about three visits between November 2002 and April 2003, followed by three monitoring visits during the first year of national implementation.

Cost of distributing books through the RCs

If the MOES adopts the system of distributing via the RCs, the Government accountant should be involved with JEMC and Sajha in calculating the real costs of delivery to the RCs, as the present system is an unsuitable base for adjustments to be made.

ANNEX I

BPEP II
TEXTBOOK PROVISION EXPERIMENTS
Report to Advisory and Monitoring Committee,
19 September 2002

1. In addition to the Committee's review of the EastConsult draft comparative evaluation report, the consultant also reviewed the report and gave comments to EastConsult. Since coming to Nepal, the consultant has continued with the discussions with EastConsult, in particular concerning the use of the 11 agreed comparative evaluation indicators:
 - Textbook distribution effectiveness
 - Ability to cope with inaccurate enrolment information
 - Effects of Nepal's varied terrains
 - Understanding of the system
 - Acceptability of the system
 - Educational effects
 - Printing and production of the textbooks
 - Other physical resource requirements
 - Administrative and management requirement
 - Systems costs
 - Cash flow and financial accountability

2. The timetable for the completion of EastConsult's evaluation work is:
 - Friday 27th September: Final comparative evaluation report from EastConsult
 - Thursday 3rd October: Deadline for all comments to EastConsult
 - Thursday 10th October: Revised final comparative evaluation report from EastConsult (*end of report process*)

3. The next step will then be the MOES Workshop on the National Textbook Provision System. The workshop will present and discuss the recommendations of the comparative evaluation report and formulate the recommendation to the MOES concerning the best national textbook provision system (or systems, given Nepal's varied terrains). The Committee is asked to consider the date, objective, participants and agenda for the 1-day Workshop. The suggestions are:
 - a. *Date:* Tuesday 22nd October
 - b. *Objective:* To make recommendations to the MOES about the best textbook provision system for Nepal's primary schools
 - c. *Participants:* Policy makers, educationalists, representatives from the 12 experiment districts
 - d. *Agenda:*

Time	Activity	Presenter
08.30-09.00	Breakfast	
09.00-09.30	Introduction and welcome	DG DOE
09.30-10.00	MOES policy context on textbook provision and future national policy directions relevant to the choice of the national textbook provision system for primary schools	Secretary of Education

10.00-10.30	Brief description of the 4 textbook provision systems experimented in 12 districts for 2 years	Former deputy director, Educational Material Development Section, DoE
10.30-11.00	Tiffin	
11.00-11.30	Brief description of evaluation conducted (fieldwork, focus group discussions, interviews), stages of reporting and introduction to content of final comparative evaluation report, 11 comparative evaluation indicators	EastConsult
11.30-12.15	Presentation of major findings from the comparative evaluation report	Academic from Faculty of Education
12.15-13.15	Lunch	
13.15-13.30	Presentation of major findings from the study in 10 districts of the reformed reimbursement system	Academic from Faculty of Education
13.30-14.30	Discussion and questions	Panel: former Dep. Director EMDS, Faculty of Education, IBD distribution specialist, EastConsult
14.30-15.00	Tiffin	
15.00-16.00	Formulation of recommendations to MOES	Faculty of Education
16.00-16.15	Summary of recommendations and closing	DG DOE
16.15-17.30	Social gathering and informal discussions	

4. The Committee is asked to nominate the membership of a small “Textbook Taskforce” whose job will be to plan the implementation of the recommended system for the MOES. (The model for this already exists as the *Textbook Provision Experiments, Implementation Manual, Revised February 2000 – Final Version*, which was translated into Nepali.) The Taskforce should consist of about 3 members and should start work the day before the Workshop (on 21 October). On this day and the day of the workshop and for about 1 week after the workshop, the Textbook Taskforce will work with an IBD distribution specialist who will provide information, support and guidance. The final output of the Taskforce should be a clear plan for the MOES, with next steps and timetable. After that and the acceptance of the MOES of the recommendation, an implementation plan will be necessary.

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ANNEX II

NEPAL: BASIC AND PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME, PHASE II WORKSHOP ON TEXTBOOK PROVISION EXPERIMENTS, 22 OCTOBER 2002

Objectives

- To consider the comparative evaluation report on the four textbook provision experiments (Bulk, Re-use, Local Purchase Order, JEMC Coupon)
- In the light of the report's findings, to make recommendations to the MOES about the best textbook provision system for Nepal's primary schools
- To provide the Textbook Provision Taskforce with guidance to formulate and create the plan for the MOES

Agenda

Chairman: Joint Secretary Planning (MOES)

Time	Activity	Presenter
08.30-09.00	Breakfast	
09.00-09.20	Introduction and welcome	DG DOE
09.20-09.40	MOES policy context on textbook provision and future national policy directions relevant to the choice of the national textbook provision system for primary schools	Secretary of Education
09.40-10.10	Brief description of the 4 textbook provision systems experimented in 12 districts for 2 years	Former deputy director, Educational Material Development Section, DoE
10.10-10.30	View from the grassroots on the textbook provision systems in the districts	Headteachers, parents/guardians
10.30-11.00	Tiffin	
11.00-11.30	Brief description of evaluation conducted (fieldwork, focus group discussions, interviews), stages of reporting and introduction to content of final comparative evaluation report on the 4 systems and to the 11 comparative evaluation indicators	EastConsult
11.30-12.15	Presentation of major findings from the comparative evaluation report of the 4 systems	Academic from Faculty of Education
12.15-12.30	Presentation of major findings from the study in 10 districts of the "Reformed Reimbursement" system	Academic from Faculty of Education
12.30-13.30	Lunch	
13.30-14.30	Groupwork. Discussions led by group co-ordinators (1 per group) to consider: (i) the recommendations, (ii) their feasibility, (iii) mechanisms needed for implementation	Co-ordinators: Dep. Director EMDS, 2 former Dep. Directors EMDS, IBD distribution specialist, EastConsult
14.30-15.00	Tiffin	
15.00-16.00	Continuing groupwork and reporting back by co-ordinators	Reporting to Academic from Faculty of Education
16.00-16.15	Summary of recommendations and changes needed for better implementation. (To be taken forward by Textbook Provision Taskforce.) Closing	Joint Secretary Planning, MOES
16.15-17.30	Social gathering and informal discussions	

ANNEX III

NEPAL: BASIC AND PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME, PHASE II TEXTBOOK PROVISION EXPERIMENTS

**TERMS OF REFERENCE: SUMMARISER AND PRESENTER AT THE
WORKSHOP OF 22 OCTOBER 2002 (Dr Tirtha Raj Parajuli)**

Background

Since the school year beginning 2000, the DOE has been conducting four two-year experiments into textbook provision systems in primary schools. Four systems (Bulk, Re-use, LPO, JEMC Coupon) have been experimented in 12 districts, so that each system has been experimented in all three ecological zones of Nepal. EastConsult was contracted to evaluate the four systems over a 1½ year period, culminating in a comparative evaluation report (which will be available on 10 October 2002). The MOES wishes to select a system by November 2002 and, in order to facilitate the process, the DOE with the support of the Danida-PAT Office is running a workshop on 22 October 2002 for the stakeholders. (The provisional agenda is attached and the list of invited participants to the workshop can be obtained from the Deputy Director Education Material Development Section, DOE, or from the PAT Office.)

Tasks

1. Study the final report by EastConsult on the comparative evaluation of the four textbook provision systems and prepare a paper to present to the workshop based on it. The paper will clearly present the major findings of the report, together with conclusions and recommendations, in a succinct way. The presentation will last for three-quarters of an hour (see attached provisional agenda). The consultant will also write suitable short texts for making into overhead projections (OHPs) to accompany his presentation at the workshop. (The OHP texts should be submitted to the PAT Office by 18 October.)
2. Prepare a paper giving the major findings of the report (already written by the consultant) on the study of the “Reformed Reimbursement” system and give a 15-minute presentation on it at the workshop (see attached agenda). The paper will be succinct and clear on the suitability (or lack of suitability) of “Reformed Reimbursement” as a national textbook provision system and will end by referring back to the presentation given on the EastConsult comparative evaluation report as the most suitable system based on the evidence.
3. Take note of the reports back from the groupwork sessions at the workshop and prepare an instant summary of recommendations and changes needed for better implementation for use by the Joint Secretary Planning of the MOES in his closing presentation at the workshop (see workshop agenda).