

Nepal Basic and Primary Education Programme II

Textbook Provision Experiments

Progress and Status Report

20 May – 1 June 2001

Carmelle Denning

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The visit to Nepal for the textbook provision experiments took place from 21 May to 1 June 2001 and continued the support to the implementation of the textbook provision experiments. The objective of the consultancy was to assist the DoE to prepare for Year 2 of the textbook provision experiments and to review the 1st progress report of EastConsult, the company contracted to evaluate the experiments. In the event, however, the preparation for Year 2 could not be conducted with time to make changes as the MOES brought forward the beginning of the school year by two months, so that officially it was to have begun on 14 May.

The consultant worked closely with the PAT Danida Office, with the General Manager of the Experimental Distribution Management Group and with EastConsult. In addition, the consultant attended a meeting of the Advisory and Monitoring Committee on 30 May to report on progress and had a debriefing meeting at the Royal Danish Embassy on 31 May.

Abbreviations

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

PREPARATION FOR YEAR 2 OF THE TEXTBOOK PROVISION EXPERIMENTS

2.1 Year 1 results

Information from the EastConsult report

It is clear from the draft 1st Progress Report that the three new systems have not been implemented correctly in all schools and that even in the JEMC Coupon districts – the system that had been used the previous year – some schools are confused. Part of the problem is that, from the preliminary information in the EastConsult first report, about one third of the headteachers have not attended the information meetings in the Resource Centres. In addition, the quality of information given by the Resource Persons during these meetings is not known. A cascade system for publicity and information was used from Kathmandu to the Resource Centres in the experiment districts. This needs to be corrected for Year 2 of the experiments, although, on the other hand, the failure to implement the systems correctly in all the experiment schools (and the continuing confusion of headteachers using the JEMC Coupon system which, after all, *was* the national system) itself indicates, perhaps, that only the simplest systems can, for the moment, be implemented.

Again according to the EastConsult report, some schools in Kavre (Re-use district) had not put up their storage cupboards. These are particularly needed to store the durable textbooks at the end of the school year when the headteachers in the Re-use districts must organise the collection of the textbooks from the students in order to give them to the next cohort of students. A secure place to store the textbooks is needed during the textbook re-allocation period.

Sajha, which is responsible for the selling and distribution of textbooks around the country, has not been playing its new roles correctly as defined in the experiments. Sajha is paid for its services through JEMC and so, in the sense that organisations pay the greatest attention to those who pay them, it is possible that some confusion has arisen, since it is the General Manager (rather than JEMC) who is the authority on the new roles of Sajha in the experiment districts.

The consultant found that the problem has been exacerbated by the contract between JEMC and Sajha which is not sufficiently precise about the extra tasks and methods for Sajha for the experiments. For example, the role of Sajha in the distribution of textbooks to schools in the Re-use and the Bulk experiments is identical according to the experiment plan. The Sajha agents should stay at the Resource Centres to distribute books for 8 days (Jhapa and Chitwan) or 15 days (Kavre, Darchula, Surkhet, Mustang). But this was not included in the JEMC-Sajha contract for 2000-01 and so it is hardly surprising that not all the Sajha agents stayed for the required periods at the RCs. The Advisory and Monitoring Committee was alerted to this problem and agreed to ask JEMC to make the Year 2 contract with Sajha more precise.

The Sajha General Manager pointed out that an additional problem for Sajha to play the role exactly as defined in the experiments was that, for example, in Mustang Sajha has only one agent. It is clearly impossible for him to get to all the RCs and distribute textbooks to schools for 15 days. In the event, he had to get some local help to do it and this opens the door to mistakes when workers who are not responsible to Sajha play a part.

Information from the General Manager

For the Re-use experiment, it was decided not to provide grade 1 students with durable textbooks (the books are used as consumable workbooks). Instead, the ordinary grade 1

textbooks have been distributed. The General Manager arranged for them to be distributed through the RCs by Sajha – in fact, the same system and books as for the Bulk experiment districts.

The General Manager reported that some experiment books – all experiment books going to schools are supposed to be stamped by the school with its unique stamp – are being sold on the market and students are being given old books which are now unusable. Also, there had been some mistakes in book distribution; for example, a 3-class school received books for grades 4 and 5. But the extent of this faulty distribution is not known. One problem had come from new schools in the experiment districts which had been opened on the agreement of the DEO, not of the MOES – should they receive books if it means that properly registered schools in the districts do not receive enough copies? The MOES will be asked to decide.

Information from the DEO meeting organised by the General Manager

At a meeting in Sano Thimi for DEOs and others from the experiment districts, the view from the field on the conduct of Year 1 of the experiments was given. Firstly, the DEOs did not know when the books were going to arrive and so could not answer when teachers came and asked. It has been a problem time for the DEOs, with chaos in the districts and opposition. They need clearcut instructions from the centre about the experiments. Another problem for DEOs in the Bulk and Re-use districts has been that they do not know how many books have been distributed from the RCs and how many are lying idle – it is the job of the DEO to adjust the numbers of books in schools where surpluses (eg, students do not attend after having enrolled and so do not receive the textbooks collected by the headteacher) and deficits exist. In Surkhet, the Field Workers asked for the payment before the work had been completed and the DEO then had to use his own workforce to complete the work. By contrast, in Parsa everything was done on time and there were no problems. In Mustang, the textbook allocations came late, but the Field Workers did well. There are only two RPs there at present because of its remoteness. In Kailali, it took two months to collect the data from the field. Problems in getting enough books for the enrolment arose both because of an increase in private tuition fees which had the effect of driving students into the state schools and because of nonformal students joining formal education when their nonformal training programmes ended. Generally, increases in enrolments through the Education For All policy has resulted in unsatisfied demand as the CPE districts cannot enrol all students. In the LPO districts, a delay in releasing funds from CDC also created problems.

Some participants complained that the Field Workers did not always do an accurate job in collecting enrolment data from schools and recommended that they should be recruited from the districts themselves – outsiders would not be able to function well. Some respondents in the field do not like giving information. Typically, they write in pencil so that they can change what they have written and they do not like signing. Travelling around in the experiment districts is disliked because of the danger from Maoists. Even in nearby Kavre district, the Field Workers do not like going far away from town. All this adds to the difficulty of collecting accurate field data.

Feedback from the Bulk experiment districts

- Too few Field Workers.
- Sajha agents were in the RCs to distribute the books to schools which came to collect before the schools themselves were informed that they had to go to the RCs.
- Receipts for textbooks were not always filled in correctly. (Sajha agents are responsible for this.)

Feedback from the Coupon experiment districts

- Too few Field Workers.
- DEO Kathmandu is very busy.
- Books should be collected within two weeks of the issue of the coupons.
- The RCs (where they exist) should be used to distribute books rather than the Sajha shops.

Feedback from the Re-use experiment districts

- New schools do not have the storage cupboards (in Kavre district there are 20 new schools without storage cupboards, in Jhapa 10, in Darchula 5).
- What should be done with surplus used durable books in schools?

Feedback from the LPO experiment districts

- Too few Field Workers.
- Each district needs an office assistant to keep records of the textbooks distributed

2.2 Impact of the new date for the school year on Year 2 preparation

MOES has brought forward the school year so that it was supposed to have already started (around 13 May) at the time of the consultancy. It is scheduled to end around the beginning of May 2002 and the June end of year exams should take place at the beginning of May. However, since it is said that MOES plans to bring forward the school year by another month in 2002, possibly this school year will end in April 2002.

The consultant could get no final information on when the change to the date of the school year was announced, but it may have been only in the preceding month, ie, April 2001. This has had a major impact and not only on the preparations for Year 2 of the textbook provision experiments. In the schools, it was reported that only those in urban areas had started the school year in May, while in the remote areas the schools did not know about it. In Lamjung district (LPO experiment), schools have already opened for the new school year, but there are no textbooks and 400-odd schools have been trying to get them.

Some concrete information is needed soon on the official end of this school year because the timetabling must be planned for the final evaluation report on the textbook provision experiments and the subsequent discussions of the recommendations of the report.

The impact on the experiments has been to:

- reduce the time for resolving problems in the districts;
- make the distribution of textbooks for the 2001-2 school year late in all the experiment districts except for the Re-use districts (note – the advantage of durable, re-use books);
- remove the planning period for the second year of the experiments;
- necessitate the employment of 29 additional field workers over the 12 experimental districts to do the necessary field work as quickly as possible.

2.3 Year 2 preparation

Experiment staff

A greater effort will have to be made this year on publicity and information in the districts. To this end, the recommendation has been made that the General Manager in charge of the implementation of the experiments is given a deputy and the use of extra field workers has been agreed by the PAT Office. The project is already employing 89 field workers for about 2 months each and the following 29 additional field workers will be needed:

District	Existing number of field workers	Recommended additional field workers
Kailali	7	5
Lamjung	9	4
Jumla	6	3
Jhapa	8	3
Kavre	14	2
Darchula	12	1
Chitwan	7	4
Surkhet	10	4
Mustang	5	0
Parsa	2	1
Kathmandu	5	1
Taplejung	4	1

The General Manager had suggested to the DEOs that they use the same Field Workers to collect the data where this is possible. But the Field Co-ordinators for Jumla and Darchula have left and will have to be replaced. In any case, the Field Workers in the Re-use, Bulk and LPO districts will be trained for two days, while those in the JEMC Coupon district will be trained for one day.

The Experiment Manager (Bulk) has already been replaced by the Production and Distribution Manager of the PPC (who is also a member of the Advisory and Monitoring Committee for the experiments).

Management documents

The General Manager of the Experimental Distribution Management Group had already distributed the "June exam results" form (to be renamed "May ..." or perhaps "April ..." for 2002). In addition, he had designed a form to collect enrolment data for the second distribution of textbooks, an "extra students" form for schools. (He reported that schools were confused about too many data collection forms in the first year of the experiments and so there would only be these two for Year 2.)

(The second distribution takes place when the schools know how many students need books because the school year has already started. Additional copies of books to those distributed before the beginning of the school year are usually needed. Around 10% of the original quantity distributed is distributed during the second distribution. Unfortunately, the EMIS form is distributed too late to use as a data source for a second distribution of textbooks. This is a pity as the EMIS form should unite all the data collection systems and activities. Perhaps once the beginning of the school year is stable, the timing of the EMIS will be reviewed and its data can then also be used to inform the textbook distribution activity. But for these experiments, this is not a crucial point.)

In the Compulsory Primary Education districts included in the experiments, Chitwan and Surkhet, there is liberal promotion from grade to grade. This tends to lessen the problem

of not knowing how many students will be in grades 2-5 as they will be newcomers to the districts, which mainly takes place in the Terai districts (ie, Chitwan).

Migrating students are a particular feature of Nepal which any textbook provision system will have to take into account. For Year 2 of the experiments, therefore, migrating students who bring their own textbooks to an experiment district school will not be issued with new books and their textbooks will not be stamped (which needs to be taken into account in noting if the experiment schools has stamped all its textbooks or not). Migrating students who do not bring textbooks to an experiment school are still a problem for the system, however, as getting a certificate to affirm that they did not receive textbooks in their former schools will be very difficult.

The General Manager has designed a summary form for RCs for grade 1 textbooks in the Re-use districts (really this is the Bulk experiment methodology even though it is in the Re-use districts) and for the districts in the Bulk experiment so that the number of books needed can easily be seen. The consultant recommended that the “textbook loss” form for the Re-use districts be printed and distributed to schools (part of the document, “Preparations For Year 2, January- October 2001”, written in preparation for Year 2 during the consultant’s last visit in January 2001), since the books are supposed to last three years and some authority is needed to give replacement textbooks to schools (see Appendix 1).

Changes to operations and roles from the experiments blueprint

A deviation from the original planning for the experiments is caused by the second distribution of textbooks. The General Manager considers that it is not possible to ask the Sajha agents to distribute the small number of additional books during the second distribution from the Bulk experiment RCs. He has therefore authorised the Sajha agents to distribute the second distribution textbooks from their offices – not from the RCs. In the view of the consultant, this is undesirable in the long term although understandable as an immediate solution to the problem; however, a different mechanism will be needed if the Bulk system is eventually adopted by MOES. The different mechanisms could include providing the RCs with storage cupboards and racking, as for the Re-use districts, so that they can store additional books, which would have the advantage of giving schools easy access to them and their distribution might be controlled by the RP.

The question has arisen about the role of the Resource Persons in the Resource Centres in the experiments. The experiments were designed so that they would have scarcely any role because MOES/PAT considered that they needed to have more emphasis put on their pedagogic role with regard to their teachers and less on the administrative function. The Experiment Manager (Re-use) has, however, pointed out that the RPs in the three concerned districts (Jhapa, Kavre, Darchula) have a stockholding role as well as being technical support to teachers; stockbooks are needed in the Re-use districts and, therefore, the General Manager has put this in hand.

Publicity and information meetings

The General Manager is proposing to give a special one-day information/training programme for Sajha managers, both Regional and District, from the 9 districts of the Re-use, Bulk and LPO experiments. Nothing will be given for the JEMC Coupon districts as that is the regular system in the 3 experiment districts concerned.

For the school publicity/information meetings in the districts, the General Manager will ask that either the headteacher or another teacher must attend the meeting in the RC. It will also be desirable to put the experiment business first in the order of proceedings at the RCs (they are the ordinary meetings for schools with information about the experiments as an extra agenda item) and there should also be an attendance register. The

District Co-ordinator could then consult the register and follow up those schools which did not attend an information meeting; in the evaluation, EastConsult might also be able to correlate attendance at the information meeting with correct implementation of the system in the school.

(The General Manager is not planning information meetings for the JEMC Coupon schools. Since this contradicts the planning for the 2nd year of the experiments drawn up by the consultant and the General Manager in January 2001, "Textbook Provision Experiments: Preparations for Year 2, January-October 2001", EastConsult should be warned of the deviation from this plan.)

Special activities in the Re-use districts

JEMC reported that 10% of the previous quantity of durable textbooks was being distributed to the Re-use districts (Darchula, Kavre, Jhapa) for school year 2001-2. But JEMC had been asked to distribute all the remaining durable books (104,000 textbooks). These textbooks are intended not only to cater for increases in enrolment in grades 2-5 ("additional" books), but also to replace textbooks which have been lost or ruined during the first year of the experiment ("replacement" books). Resource Centres are authorised to supply up to 10% of "replacement" books to schools; above that, the DEO has to authorise it. The number of "additional" books supplied will obviously depend upon actual increases in enrolment. With only 10% extra textbooks delivered to the RCs, the number of additional and replacement books needed could exceed 10%. The Advisory and Monitoring Committee agreed to ask JEMC to distribute all the remaining durable textbooks and the JEMC representative on the Committee agreed that it would be done.

The textbook provision experiments uses the number of schools in the 12 experiment districts given by the MOES before the beginning of the July 2000 school year. For the Re-use experiment, cupboards were bought for those schools. It is now reported that there are schools which have no cupboards. It is not proposed to buy further cupboards as this is an experiment rather than the implementation of a new system.

A proposal was made to reward those students in the Re-use districts who return their textbooks in good condition by giving them, for example, a plastic bag. An example is the Unicef bag which was produced by JEMC. About 100,000 bags might be needed, but the problem is not the price, but rather that this sort of reward just for the Re-use schools will distort the results of the experiments and it is not sustainable (the Project will not pay for it in future years). However, the publicity posters which went to the Re-use schools suggested that some reward would be available and therefore some reward that is small and easy to administer at the district level (eg, pencils) could be considered by the General Manager.

EastConsult's first evaluation report was received by the PAT Office which distributed it to the General Manager and to the consultant. It is a draft 1st Progress Report on the evaluation of the experiments and was based on data from 139 schools out of the 906 which EastConsult has been contracted to study. The PAT Office agreed to the smaller number of schools for this first report because it was needed before the next school year began so that lessons learned could be applied. (In the event, because of the advancement of the 2001-2 school year, everything had to be rushed – see section 2.2 above.)

The report is a good one. The PAT Office and the consultant studied it, along with the General Manager, and given some constructive feedback to EastConsult (see Appendix 2). EastConsult has been asked to revise the draft report in line with the feedback, add the data from the rest of the 906 sample schools and submit a revised updated 1st Year Progress Report in August 2001 after which the consultant will visit for the continuation of the experiments. The Advisory and Monitoring Committee received the report on 30 May and will add any comments as necessary.

The report was written before EastConsult's methodology using the "focus group" was begun. The district co-ordinators for the evaluation were acting more like data collectors than as co-ordinators.

Since this is an experiment rather than the implementation of a new system, EastConsult was advised that the number of sample schools which they are contracted to study is 906 and that the growth in the number of schools in all 12 experiment districts does not change the 906 sample number.

Of particular concern to the validity of conclusions drawn from the results of the evaluation, however, is the fact brought out in the report that the three new systems (LPO, Re-use, Bulk) have been implemented correctly only in some schools. (See section 2.1 above.) This may well be connected with the claim of some headteachers interviewed by EastConsult that they had received no training at the RCs (despite the fact that one day's training for the headteachers in the experiment districts is included in the budget and instructions on how to proceed are given). To overcome this difficulty, EastConsult will have to divide up those schools which are correctly implementing the system from those which are not and give weight to the opinions and results from the former schools. But the latter schools can also convey something about what is and is not possible to implement in a typical operational situation and the extra measures that will be needed.

In order to have a comprehensive evaluation of the four systems being experimented, an answer from the MOES to the following policy question would be useful: *To whom do the textbooks belong – the student who receives them or MOES/school? If the latter, why are all the textbooks not returned to the schools after the end of the school year?*

4.1 Former national “Reimbursement” textbook provision system

The Advisory and Monitoring Committee for the Textbook Provision Experiments has raised again the desirability of having an evaluation of the Reimbursement system – despite the fact that the Education Secretary in 1999 did not require one since the Reimbursement system was so discredited. The monitoring study of the Reimbursement system being done by the General Manager of the Experiments will be completed in September 2001. At that time, the various reports on the Reimbursement system will be put together with the monitoring study to see if the critique is sufficiently devastating. If it is not, the possibility of having a small study in September will be discussed with the Joint Secretary Planning.

As an example of the low regard in which the Reimbursement system was held, the following two paragraphs are taken from the *BPEP Master Plan, 1997-2002* (MOE, HMG, 15 May 1997):

“17. Distribution of textbooks has been made through Sajha Prakashan which also uses its dealers for the supply/distribution of books in those districts where it has no network of its own. The experience has shown that this system is not working efficiently from the very beginning. In many districts and schools, especially in the remote areas with no transportation facilities, books have not been available in required quantity even after months of school calendar (METCON, 1995). BPEP staff visiting schools for monitoring purposes are regularly concerned by low levels of textbook availability. This concern is sufficient for BP EP management to be considering ways and means of providing at least one free set of textbooks and teachers’ guides to each teacher.

“18. Ministry of Education has implemented new policy of textbook distribution since FY 1992/93 under which the parents have to buy the books first on their own and the reimbursements are made later upon submission of the purchase bills to the relevant school authorities. Positive as well as negative effects of this policy have been discerned in these years. The demand of the books in the initial grades of primary level appeared to have declined (Dali, nd), whereas cases of delayed reimbursements or even non-reimbursements to parents have been reported from various districts (VaRG, 1993:82). The reimbursement scheme has created a blizzard of paper work and bureaucracy. There are thousands of invoices and claims to be scrutinized and authorized by the DEOs in their respective districts. Reimbursement finance from CDC is not paid in one tranche but in three or four tranches spread over the year. Thus there is usually insufficient finance in the DEO’s reimbursement budget early in the academic year to pay all claims at the same time. In sum, this reimbursement policy is reported to be not operating smoothly (BPEP, 1996:4). Several remedial measures have often been discussed of which introduction of a coupon system has drawn the attention of relevant authorities in the Ministry. However, the detailed modalities and implications of the system have yet to be examined.” (pp. 309-310)

Dali, Lokesh R. nd. Appraisal Report of the Japanese Grant Aid under the Project for the Expansion of the Janak Education Materials Centre. Sanothimi: JEMC

VaRG. 1993. A Study on the Effectiveness of the Primary School Textbook Distribution System. Kathmandu: Valley Research Group.

4.2 Role of JEMC

JEMC has a critical and irreplaceable role in the provision of textbooks. Danida has already provided support in the form of equipment, training and technical assistance for the introduction of modern management systems. JEMC has now had six months on its own to run the management systems and there is evidence that serious steps have been taken. In addition, the MOES has proposed that JEMC be given the responsibility of printing the School Leaving Certificate examination papers, for which JEMC would need to establish a reliable security printing unit.

The PAT Office asked the consultant to prepare terms of reference for a specialist printing consultant to advise on the two aspects of JEMC's possible future role. The two sets of terms of reference are reproduced in Appendix 3.

4.3 Recommendations

1. The consultant recommends that in Year 3 (2002-03) the 12 experimental districts carry on with the current systems until the MOES makes its decision about the national system(s) and the preparations for the switch-over are made. This will then give the schools in the experimental districts some stability and a further opportunity to understand their provision system before they have to change over once again for the school year beginning in 2003. In summary:

2000-01: Year 1 of the experiments (4 provision systems)

2001-02: Year 2 of the experiments (4 provision systems); comparative evaluation of the 4 systems

2002-03: Year 3 of the 4 provision systems; MOES decision on national system(s); preparation activities

2003-04: Start of new national system(s)

If the MOES accepts this, Danida will be asked to finance two items for a 3rd year of the provision systems:

- grade 1 textbooks for schools in Darchula, Kavre and Jhapa;
- the cost of Sajha delivering textbooks to the Resource Centres in the 6 Re-use and Bulk districts.

(There will be no further cost in manufacturing durable textbooks for the Re-use experiment. JEMC is storing enough durable text paper and cover board to produce a further 250,000 durable textbooks which could be manufactured in 2001-02. These textbooks would then be distributed at the start of the school year in 2002, Year 3 of the Re-use system.)

In the Re-use districts, when the number of "additional" and "replacement" durable textbooks (definitions are given in 2.3 above) needed for Year 2 is known, more durable textbooks could be manufactured in 2001-02. JEMC is storing enough durable text paper and cover board to produce a further 250,000 durable textbooks. These textbooks would then be given at the start of the school year in 2002. This would be Year 3 of the Re-use system.

2. The Advisory and Monitoring Committee recommended that there should be spot checks from the centre (the General Manager, proposed deputy to the General Manager, Experiment Managers) to the districts, especially to the RCs which have an important role to play in the Re-use and Bulk experiment districts. In addition, the Committee considered that a regular publication with instructions and information to schools, RPs and DEOs would be useful for the implementation of the experiments. For example, one

of the messages in the publication could be an invitation to schools and others to suggest what improvements could be made to the conduct of the provision systems.

3. It is recommended that Danida support the General Manager and one other person active in the experiments, such as an Experiment Manager, undertaking a study tour to countries in the region in order to gain experience and knowledge of other textbook distribution systems. Suitable countries might include Malaysia, Thailand and Bangladesh.

APPENDIX 1
TEXTBOOK LOSS FORM FOR SCHOOLS TO GET REPLACEMENT
TEXTBOOKS IN THE RE-USE DISTRICTS

Textbook loss form

Textbook loss (3 copies: school, RP, DEO)

Name of school **Name of cluster**

Date	Signature of head teacher
Date	Signature of RP
Date	Authorisation by DEO for more than 10% replacement textbooks
<i>Name and grade of student</i>	Textbook How and when was textbook lost/destroyed? lost/destroyed

APPENDIX 2

BPEP II

TEXTBOOK PROVISION EXPERIMENTS

Comments on draft of 1st Progress Report of the Evaluation Study by EastConsult, 30 April 2001

The draft report contains much useful information. The sections on the 4 experiments are organised in a consistent way which assists comparisons. The aim of the following comments is to assist in finalising the 1st Progress Report by giving a direction to follow in revising some parts of the text.

General

1. Please use both Nepali and international calendars.
2. Only use percentages for larger numbers (eg, not for 2 out of 3 DEOs). Fractions can also make the point strongly if they are rounded – eg, “about two thirds of headteachers went to publicity meetings”.
3. Tabulate information where possible (eg, p.14, 9.1.4 a – number of days after the beginning of the school year that textbooks were received).
4. The number of sample schools should be the original number (906) and the new schools which have subsequently opened should be discounted.
5. The tabulated results should distinguish (i) between schools more/less than 2 hours’ walk from the headquarters/market place, and (ii) between primary schools attached/not attached to lower secondary schools.
6. In the end, posters were only produced for and distributed to the Re-use districts. However, 3 types of leaflet were produced, corresponding to Re-use, Bulk and LPO experiments and distributed to the relevant districts. These are not mentioned much in the report (because they had disappeared from the schools? or they had never reached the schools? eg, 9.3.3).
7. Please give qualitative information and judgments if they are interesting, even if only one person said them, since we are interested in improving the systems being experimented as well as finding the most suitable one(s).
8. On the matter of headteachers’ attendance at the publicity/information meetings at the Resource Centres, useful information is given, that only about two thirds attended:

Bulk districts	70%
Re-use districts	73%
LPO districts	65%

It would clearly be very useful if this information could be broken down by district as it is relevant to the way that the systems are implemented in the schools, including rubber stamping the books, for example. (For school year 2001-02, meetings for headteachers are also planned in the RCs in Parsa and at the school sectors in Taplejung and Kathmandu.)

9. Although not all of the books have been rubber stamped, some have and your field staff should note the dates on the books. This information will then allow them to check on when the school received the books and to correlate the age of the books with their condition. It will also enable them to check if the books are on sale in the market and whether this is illegal or legal (during the school year or after the end of it), and, next year, on the use of old books in schools.

This also raises an interesting policy question whose answer I do not know: To whom do the textbooks belong – the student who receives them or MOES/school? If the latter, why are all the textbooks not returned to the schools after the end of the school year?
10. Presentation of information: Perhaps a comparison table on one page giving some early (and perhaps indicative?) results but without comment. For example:

	Bulk system	Re-use system	LPO system	JEMC Coupon system
Student:textbook set ratio				
% stamped books				
% books unusable				
% students with bags				
% schools at RC meeting				

Details

1. Please clarify the meaning of the figures for book distribution to girls and boys in the tables entitled “Book distribution ...” (Tables 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 20, 21, 22, 33, 34, 35). Do the tables mean that there are surplus books? If, for example, there are surplus books for girls and too few books for boys, were the surplus “girl” books given to the boys? Or is the meaning that given at the top of page 43 (“...more books distributed than enrolment is due to the late admission of students, which was not recorded in enrolment ...”)? At the beginning of the last paragraph on page 30, you express the ambiguity.
2. The role of Sajha in the distribution of textbooks to schools in the Re-use and the Bulk experiments is identical. The Sajha agents should stay at the Resource Centres to distribute books for 8 days (Jhapa and Chitwan) or 15 days (Kavre, Darchula, Surkhet, Mustang). (Reference page 11, end of 2nd paragraph.)
3. Please clarify “...make payment from the central level collecting vouchers and bills from the districts” (page 13, 9.1, Bulk distribution). For example, who are the payments to, what are they vouchers and bills?
4. Please put 30 as the sample number of schools in Mustang (Table 1).
5. Figures are missing from Table 4, grade 4, girls, book distribution.
6. Please clarify whether Table 5 concerns sets of books or individual books and make it consistent with Tables 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, 37, 38, 39.
7. Is there a figure missing from Table 6 (grade 5, unusable books)? Also, the total number of books (614) does not correspond to the total number of books under “book condition” (575). (This may be because one of the field staff did not look through all the books. If this is the case, it should be stated as a footnote to the tables.) This discrepancy also occurs in Table 7 (9,294 or 10,985?), Table 12 (2,775 or 2,326?), Table 13 (1,010 or 1013?), Table 25 (4,342 or 3,911?), Table 26 (15,408 or 15,223?), Table 37 (2,904 or 2,162?), Table 38 (6,871 or 6,582?) and Table 39 (5,511 or 1,540?).
8. Please clarify that it is the additional cover that is being referred to in “the quality of cover used in the books also was found to be poor since they could not protect the books...” (page 19, after Table 7).
9. Recommendations: Please give any extra information that you have about why the one RC in Surkhet was bypassed by Sajha (page 20, 9.1.6). Is there something to be learned from this?
10. Is the number of head teachers interviewed in Kavre (19) a typing error in Table 8 since only 16 schools were visited? If not, please explain!
11. Is there any further information on why only 57 schools had posters (page 22, 9.2.3)? Had they thrown them away or did they never receive them? (If they were distributed at the RC meetings and some headteachers did not go, then they did not receive the posters.)
12. Tables 9, 10 and 11 do not seem to “show that the number of books supplied are greater than the number actually distributed to the children” (page 24, top). Also, the number of pupils enrolled in Darchula and the textbooks distributed do not seem to

match (as stated in the first paragraph of page 24). And, it is a very interesting observation that in Jhapa the textbooks were only given to those students who brought school bags, but there are no figures showing that a “lot of surplus was created”. Please could you expand on this.

13. The sentence “The percentage of students carrying school bags and covering their books ...” (page 25, under Table 13) should be rewritten to give (i) the percentage of students carrying school bags, and (ii) the percentage of books which were covered. This also applies to the similar sentence under Table 14 (only 22% of books were covered).
14. It was not supposed to be the task of RC headteachers (or of RPs or teachers) to distribute the books from the RCs (page 26, 2nd paragraph). It was supposed to be the job of Sajha agents in the Re-use districts. (See also the recommendation at the top of page 27.) Please could you explain more about the context here.
15. There has been no mention of the storage cupboards and racking that were supplied to the RCs in the three Re-use districts. Did your field staff find any; did the RPs know what their use was supposed to be; and how were they being used?
16. Comments on the recommendations for the Re-use system:
 - (i) Please could you develop this suggestion about the use of the register in the planning of book quantities required and allocation of books to schools.
 - (ii) Please could you see how much of the awareness programme (including posters and leaflets) was actually executed in the districts? What in addition should be planned (since we do not know if these activities were actually done or not!)? What concrete effect has it had on the conduct of the Re-use system that some schools (how many?) do not understand the system?
 - (iii) Please see the comment at 14 above.
 - (iv) Agreed. Whose responsibility? See also 20(v) below.
17. It would be useful to know why only about half the headmasters had filled in the experimental data form and the exam results form (page 28, top).
18. The information in Tables 19 and 32 should be divided up by district and by schools which are more than/less than 2 hours’ walk from the headquarters/market centre.
19. So far there is no information on the DEOs’ attitudes to and work methods for filling in an LPO for each school with the number of textbooks (did the DEOs do them? did the RPs do them?). There is also no indication about the time it took and whether the issuing and receipt of the LPOs by the schools really accounted for the delay in getting textbooks (page 30, “... it seems that delay in getting LPO or submitting them to retailers has been the major cause for delay in receiving books by schools”). Also, were any people in the districts aware that the LPO is more flexible than the JEMC Coupon: if the retailer does not have enough books for a school, the school writes on the LPO the number of textbooks received and gets another LPO for the books still to be acquired, if need be, from a different retailer?
20. The recommendations in 9.3.7 are very apposite as they show that the implementation of the LPO system may not be going according to plan!
 - (i) The EMIS certainly has a role in adjusting the numbers of books in schools, but, because it is undertaken after the beginning of the school year, it cannot function as the prime source of information on the number of books needed in grades 2-5. However, now that the school year has moved to mid-May, there may be too much disruption and confusion to use the number of students who sat the end of year exams (*formerly* the June exam results form whose information was available one month before the next school year). It would be very good if you could consider what the sources of information should be/could be. On the use of the special forms which you mention, the RPs/school supervisors were supposed to be responsible for the collection of the data. Please could

- you investigate this further, as it sounds as if they have not been collecting the information.
- (ii) There are supposed to be leaflets on the LPO system (as well as on the Re-use and the Bulk systems). Please could you find out if they have been distributed to schools or if the schools have filed them out of sight! Please could you also advise on whether schools find the content of the leaflets sufficiently practical, giving the sort of information which you have mentioned.
 - (iii) Who should organise these meetings? The RPs?
 - (iv) You mentioned that 65% of the headteachers found out about the LPO system at the RC meetings. This was also where they were supposed to have found out why they were to rubber stamp the books! Perhaps the RP forgot to mention this? Is it/should it be mentioned in the leaflets? Perhaps the headteachers who did not understand about rubber stamping were the 35% who did not attend the RC meetings? Clearly, the RC meetings are critical for the success of (all) the systems, but they are not being attended by all the headteachers and the critical information may not be passed to the headteachers. Did they all have their rubber stamps?
 - (v) An interesting suggestion. Perhaps we can get more information on the situation in Jhapa where your field staff report that schools only gave textbooks to those with bags. Should this be a decision for each school or each school cluster or DEO?
21. Table 24 lacks information on book condition and on book care for grades 4 and 5.
 22. How long did it take for schools to get their coupons from the DEOs (page 39, penultimate paragraph)? What is the attitude of the DEO toward and work method for the JEMC Coupon system?
 23. Would it be possible to get the number of old textbooks that are being returned to the schools (page 43, top)? Not just in the JEMC coupon districts, but also the LPO and Bulk districts?

Carmelle Denning
29 May 2001

BPEP II
TEXTBOOK PROVISION EXPERIMENTS
Additional comments on draft of 1st Progress Report of the Evaluation Study by EastConsult,
30 April 2001

1. The draft report has made it clear that there are schools which are not correctly implementing the provision systems, as well as RPs and Sajha agents who are confused. So far, the size of the problem is not known. Even the headteachers' attendance (about two thirds of the 139 schools covered in the draft report) at the RC publicity and information meetings may not be good enough to overcome the confusion if the RPs themselves do not understand the systems.

In the 2nd year of the experiments further efforts will be made to implement them correctly.

Nevertheless, it is very important for EastConsult to distinguish between those schools which are correctly running the systems and those that aren't. The opinions and results from schools which are doing it correctly should be taken into account, whereas the opinions and results of those schools which are not doing it correctly are

not relevant to the evaluation of the system itself. These must be carefully distinguished.

The number of schools which are not doing it correctly is important in the comparative evaluation because it may indicate the difficulty in correctly implementing the systems. If a system is difficult to correctly implement, then it may not be suitable for Nepal.

Of course, in reaching such a conclusion, the importance of factors such as headteachers not attending the RC meetings needs to be carefully considered, as does the quality of the information given by the RCs at the meetings. If the schools do not understand the systems because of either of these two factors, does this indicate that the system is too complicated for Nepal? Can EastConsult, in its finalreport, make suggestions about the successful implementation of the preferred system?

2. Please could EastConsult collect information on the stockholding of durable textbooks in the Resource Centres of the Re-use districts. There are management documents for receiving and for issuing textbooks and there will be a stock for recording the stock held at the RCs.
3. Please could EastConsult begin to suggest what should be the comparative indicators so that the 4 provision systems can be compared with each other. Obvious examples are cost of the whole system (including one-off costs and recurrent costs); speed of the books going into schools; receipt of whole sets of textbooks; more teaching time (less time lost because the books are already in school or in the RCs).

Carmelle Denning
30 May 2001

APPENDIX 3

BPEP II

Danida: Support to textbook provision experiments

TERMS OF REFERENCE: Specialist for JEMC (management systems)

Background

JEMC is alone responsible for printing the primary and secondary textbooks for the formal education system and is, currently, the only printing house in Nepal which has the capacity (as well as the legal right) to do so. It may also print other education materials, such as trial editions of textbooks and supplementary reading books, if awarded the contracts. It is seeking to strengthen its management systems in order to increase efficiency and quality on the one hand, and to control and if possible reduce its costs, on the other hand. Danida has already assisted in the provision of print specialists to design and introduce specific print production management systems into JEMC's operations. These systems are at various stages of implementation but are dependent for their success on a modern general management infrastructure which JEMC wishes to strengthen. The last specialist report on the implementation of the management systems was in November 2000 and, subsequently, there have been various discussions with the General Manager JEMC and the PAT Office.

Main activities of the print specialist

1. Specify at least one week in advance the information to be provided by JEMC relating to its operations on the first day of the consultancy.
Monitor and evaluate progress at JEMC on the implementation of the following specific print production management systems:
 - Quality assurance
 - Production control
 - Costing and estimatingIn addition, monitor and evaluate the use of the prepress equipment and the competence of staff in the Prepress department (equipment and training on the equipment, with the exception of training on the imagesetter, were provided by Danida in the context of the durable textbooks experiment). Check upon the condition and use/storage of the binding equipment also provided by Danida. Report upon progress, analyse the causes of lack of progress or failure to implement fully the systems and operations, propose action to remedy.
2. Assess the further management system needs in JEMC both to support the specific print production management systems (1 above) and to install a modern management infrastructure which will provide complete accountability across the whole spectrum of activities and responsibilities in JEMC to produce primary and secondary school textbooks. The modern management infrastructure will be comparable to that in regional or international private sector printing houses in order to promote market-oriented procedures which produce competitive printed products which represent good value for money.
3. Integrate the assessments and recommendations for 1 and 2 above into an outline long-term plan for the upgrading of JEMC to print primary and secondary school textbooks. This plan should include an outline of investments (equipment, training) and of a schedule which highlights critical achievement points and triggers (evaluation criteria) to go on to the next stage of development. Since the plan should be comprehensive (although only in outline), it will indicate the additional technical assistance inputs needed to specify equipment, training of various sorts (management and technical), building rehabilitation, etc.

Timing

About 2 weeks in June 2001.

BPEP II

Danida: Support to textbook provision experiments

TERMS OF REFERENCE: Print specialist for JEMC (SLC examination papers)

Background

JEMC is alone responsible for printing the primary and secondary textbooks for the formal education system and is, currently, the only printing house in Nepal which has the capacity (as well as the legal right) to do so. It may also print other education materials, such as trial editions of textbooks and supplementary reading books, if awarded the contracts. It is seeking to strengthen its management systems in order to increase efficiency and quality on the one hand, and to control and if possible reduce its costs, on the other hand. Danida has already assisted in the provision of print specialists to design and introduce specific print production management systems into JEMC's operations. These systems are at various stages of implementation but are dependent for their success on a modern general management infrastructure which JEMC wishes to strengthen. The MOES wishes JEMC to be able, in addition, to print its School Leaving Certificate examination papers, which are at present printed in India as there is no suitable security printing unit in Nepal which is capable of manufacturing them.

A print specialist will be assisting JEMC in drawing up a development plan to be grounded on sound management systems (separate terms of reference) and it is proposed that the specialist will carry out a feasibility study on security printing of the SLC examination papers. JEMC will be responsible for providing information and documents from the Nepal Examination Council relating to the production task on the first day of the print specialist's visit (to be specified by the print specialist in advance).

The report on SLC examination paper printing will be the output of this consultancy and will be shared and discussed with government and relevant donor agencies in Nepal for further action. However, the printing of the SLC examination papers is an element in the system leading to the provision of examination papers to the Nepal Examination Council and so a systematic procedural description from the beginning to the end of the process, from conception to delivery of the papers to the examination centres, will be needed from the MOES after the study of JEMC.

Main activities of the print specialist

1. On the basis of the information provided by JEMC and the Nepal Examination Council, assess the print production task involved in printing the SLC examination papers at JEMC under appropriate conditions of security. The information should include an estimate of the quantities needed over the next 15 years.
2. Assess JEMC's needs in terms of human resources, skills training, systems, equipment, raw materials, technical assistance, rehabilitated buildings, etc, to take on the task and to perform it adequately into the future.
3. In a brief report, state JEMC's needs (buildings, equipment, systems/procedures, training, etc) to print the School Leaving Certificate examination papers under conditions of security. Give an outline plan with a timetable of preparation and implementation steps.

Timing

About 1 week in June 2001 (following on from the consultancy on management systems and development of JEMC).