

Nepal Basic and Primary Education Programme II

Textbook Provision Experiments

Selection of an Evaluation Group for the Experiments and Progress Report

17-29 September 2000

Carmelle Denning

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The visit to Nepal was made between 17 and 29 September 2000 with the main aim of identifying the Nepalese consultancy group to begin the work on evaluating the experiments on four systems of textbook provision to primary schools – Local Purchase Order, Re-use of durable textbooks, Bulk distribution and JEMC Coupons. Previous work (December 1999, February and June 2000) had been concerned with developing plans for the experiments, writing a manual to guide the implementation and evaluation of the experiments, and monitoring the progress in preparing for and implementing the experiments. In addition to the activities connected with the two-year evaluation, progress was monitored on the introduction of the experiments in the 12 experiment districts and on the upgrading of JEMC both to produce durable textbooks for the Re-use experiment and for overall quality and efficiency improvements.

The consultant worked with the General Manager of the Experimental Distribution Management Group (which has the day to day responsibility for the implementation of the distribution experiments), the director General DoE, the General Manager JEMC, Acting Chief Technical Advisor and Programme Officer PAT, and met Sajha (physical distribution of textbooks) and the Primary Publishing Cell. The visit coincided also with two specialists on the printing side who were providing technical assistance to JEMC on durable binding, production management and quality control. The consultant joined a meeting of the Advisory and Monitoring Committee on 28 September 2000 to consider the proposals for doing the evaluation of the Textbook Provision Experiments.

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 |
| LPO | Local Purchase Order |
| PAT | Programme Advisory Team, Danida |
| RC | Resource Centre |

2. SELECTION OF AN EVALUATION GROUP FOR THE EXPERIMENTS

2.1 Process of evaluation of the proposals received

The PAT Danida office invited proposals for the evaluation of the textbook provision experiments on 24 August 2000 and, by the deadline, had received six proposals:

- Educational and Developmental Service Centre
- Development Vision
- EastConsult
- New Era
- CEDA
- IDRS

The consultant and the Special Education Advisor then devised an evaluation schedule, based on the terms of reference and the background information given to the bidders, and agreed a scoring system for both the technical evaluation and for the financial evaluation (see Appendix 1). The PAT Danida office had put the emphasis on the technical proposal, allocating it 75% of evaluation points, while the financial proposal would receive 25%. The six technical proposals were then evaluated and the results, without the names of the bidders, submitted to a special meeting of the Advisory and Monitoring Committee on 28 September. The Committee asked the consultant to open the financial proposals of the three leading technical proposals and to evaluate them in the way described at the end of Appendix 1 and so to complete the evaluation.

The final results of the evaluation are tabulated in Appendix 2. The successful proposal from both technical and financial aspects was that of EastConsult.

2.2 Finalising the successful proposal

Although EastConsult submitted the best proposal, certain parts of it were either not detailed enough or not wanted/acceptable. As part of the contract negotiations, therefore, the PAT Danida office has been corresponding with the consultant to assist on finalising the EastConsult proposal. One change, for example, which was necessary to the original terms of reference was to bring forward the date of the first Progress Report to March/April 2001 so that the interim feedback could have some effect on the second year of the experiments.

3. PROGRESS MADE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPERIMENTS

3.1 The changed context

The MOE replaced the Reimbursement system for provision of textbooks to primary schools with the JEMC Coupon system in July 1999. In July 2000, the MOE partially reverted to the Reimbursement system. Now, 42 districts (Terai and accessible Hilly districts) are using the Reimbursement system, while 33 districts continue with the JEMC Coupon system (with modifications from last year). The 12 districts involved in the Textbook Provision Experiments are included in the group of 33 districts – even though only 3 of the 12 are operating the JEMC Coupon system in the experiments.

3.2 Status of implementation in the experiment districts

The General Manager EDMG reported on the situation in the experiment districts as follows:

| |
|--|
| Chitwan (Bulk experiment) Textbooks have been distributed to schools from the RCs and the 3 sub-centres. The books have been rubber stamped by the schools but had not been dated. The DEO has been informed and will get it done. |
| Surkhet (Bulk experiment) The DEO is not satisfied with the work of the Field Co-ordinator and has not renewed his contract to complete the work, nor are there any Field Workers because the DEO did not sign contracts for a 2 nd 2-month period. Textbooks have been distributed but the DEO is dissatisfied with the data collected by the Field Workers. The General Manager EDMG is to visit to find out what the problems are. |
| Mustang (Bulk experiment) Textbooks were received in time because the roads can be used during the monsoon. |
| Jhapa (Re-use experiment) All 22 RCs had received the textbooks and 2 had not yet distributed them to schools. |
| Kavre (Re-use experiment) Received textbooks before Jhapa. Some RCs had not yet distributed the books to schools. Sajha agents were distributing the books from their shops rather than from the RCs. The General Manager of Sajha has been told of this mistake. The DEO has asked for the contracts of the Field Co-ordinators and Field Workers to be extended by one month to complete their work. In general, the distribution has been well done and the textbooks were correctly tuber-stamped and dated. |
| Darchula (Re-use experiment) After Tihar the roads to and in Darchula will be open and the durable textbooks can be distributed (26 October). The General Manager will visit the district to see if the contracts of the Field Co-ordinators and Field Workers need to be extended. Darchula has meanwhile been using the ordinary textbooks which were there before the monsoon. |
| Kailali (LPO experiment) The only problem was the late delivery of textbooks from JEMC. |
| Lamjung (LPO experiment) No problems. Books received in time. |
| Jumla (LPO experiment) No problems. Books received in time. |

It is not known whether the schools in the three JEMC Coupon experiment districts (Parsa, Kathmandu, Taplejung) have rubber-stamped and dated the textbooks.

The General Manager EDMG was preparing special instructions to the Re-use experiment schools so that teachers will tell students not to write in the durable textbooks (some parts of whose content has been designed as if they were workbooks). In addition, he has collated a list of common mistakes in the handling, distribution and treatment of the textbooks and is sending letters to the DEOs to advise them.

He has explained that no extra durable books were distributed to the three experiment districts because numbers were based on the enrolment data collected by the Field Workers. (However, this is a mistake as the surplus books were supposed to be distributed along with the necessary books so that they would be in place at the beginning of the next school year.)

He will discuss with the 12 DEOs of the experiment districts what is needed for the second year of operation. Probably the Field Co-ordinators will be given 2-month contracts and the Experiment Managers will not be used again.

3.3 Storage cupboards for textbooks in the Re-use experiment

District tenders were held in Kavre, Jhapa and Darchula for the manufacture and supply of the metal storage cupboards and racks (see report 21 May – 3 June 2000 for the details). At the time of the visit, contracts had been awarded in Kavre and Jhapa and manufacture had started. In Darchula, the bids were opened and evaluation to select contract winners started. (The storage cupboards are only needed when the students return their textbooks so there is plenty of time for this.)

3.4 Upgrading of JEMC

The binding equipment provided to JEMC to manufacture durable textbooks – and all the other equipment except for the imagesetter, which was ordered later than the rest – is installed and working. The binding production specialist (see separate report by Tony Ashe, 28 August-15 September 2000) reports that all the machines are of excellent quality and should provide reliable service for many years. He also reports that textbooks are being produced to a high standard, but that trim and rubbish should be cleared away frequently for the sake of safety, and smoothness and speed of the binding operations. But, the major outstanding problem which he raises is the lack of progress in implementing the production management system and the costing and estimating system.

The quality control system designed for JEMC in 1999 had not been implemented and the General Manager JEMC had asked that a follow-up visit take place in September 2000, when the main burden of textbook printing had been completed. The quality control specialist therefore worked in JEMC for 3 weeks on quality control (thanks to the agreement of DANIDA Copenhagen, a re-allocation of days enabled the specialist to spend more than the originally planned 2 weeks at JEMC). The specialist reports that, although the durable textbooks produced by JEMC are of good quality, much has still to be done to implement quality control. (A separate report, 10-30 September 2000, on this work has been prepared by Ken Cowan.)

The General Manager was visiting offset printing machine manufacturers in Germany at the end of September 2000 and visited the UK also. The PAT Danida office had authorised IBD to re-allocate one day of technical assistance to JEMC into arranging and accompanying the General Manager on a visit to a good book printer in the UK for one day in order to see the role of production management and quality control in action. Unfortunately, because the General Manager brought forward his visit to the UK, it was impossible in the very short time to find a printing house for him to visit. However, it would still be useful for the General Manger and senior management of JEMC to visit a good book printer in a foreign country, as mentioned by

both specialists who have worked in JEMC. They suggest that a printer in India or, perhaps, in Singapore would provide a working example of the importance of a quality control system, costing and estimating system and production management system, and would provide a model of general management which is lacking in JEMC.

3.5 Printing and Binding of Durable Textbooks and Unused Paper

The Advisory and Monitoring Committee had decided that durable textbooks should not be manufactured for the three grade 1 titles because their design asks for the students to write the answers in the books. In fact, the grade 1 textbooks are workbooks which by their nature are not durable books. Therefore, grade 1 of the Re-use experiment was removed from the experiment. Consequently, the durable paper for these books (print runs were 70,000 copies of each, a total of 210,000 copies) is now available to reprint durable textbooks for grades 2-5 for the second year of the experiment in 2001. The exact amount of text paper left over from the first “durable” printing is 1,729 thousand sheets by physical stock check (theoretic balance 1,504.5 thousand) and of cover board 63,800 sheets by physical stock check (theoretic balance 127,600), which should make a further 250,000 books (all figures from the report of Ken Cowan).

Since additional sets of durable textbooks for Darchula for July 2001 should be distributed in May 2001, JEMC should start printing the remaining durable textbooks in March/April 2001.

3.6 Distribution of textbooks

As mentioned in 3.2 above, distribution of all textbooks except those for Darchula (Re-use experiment district – distribution has to be done in May, otherwise it has to be delayed until late October because of the impact of the monsoon on roads) had been done. There had been some confusion over the modified role of Sajha in the Re-use and Bulk experiments – Sajha agents were to distribute textbooks to schools which came to collect them from the Resource Centres over a period of 8-15 days, not from the Sajha shops.

The next monitoring visit, scheduled for December 2000, should gather all available figures on books distributed to the experiment districts and also the number of durable textbooks manufactured at JEMC. This is important because the report of the quality control specialist to JEMC states that he was told that surplus durable textbooks were stored (presumably) at JEMC. But the *Manual on Textbook Provision Experiments*, which is the authority, requires surplus durable textbooks to be delivered to the experiment districts and to be stored there in the metal cupboards and racks which are being provided to the Resource Centres specially for this. There is a very good reason for distributing the surplus durable textbooks to the RCs along with those required immediately for the school year: distribution at the start of the school year 2001 of replacement textbooks for those lost or damaged during the course of school year 2000-01 will be straightforward, from the RCs, and will not depend upon roads being passable.

4. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) JEMC senior management would benefit from a study tour to a book printing house in India or Singapore. This is mentioned in reports of the two print-production specialists who have been visiting JEMC for short periods since Autumn 1999. The aim of the study tour is to show JEMC how production management systems, including quality control, operate in a good quality book printing house. This would help to reinforce acceptance and implementation of the management systems to which the specialists have introduced JEMC. If the study tour can be taken on by Danida or by the Danish Embassy the print-production specialists could be asked to draw up a programme for up to 8 staff for about 10 days, during their visits in November 2000 (see point 4 below).
- 2) The JEMC-based specialists should establish during their next visits the precise amount of durable text paper and cover board available for printing more durable textbooks for the school year starting in July 2001. In addition, they should calculate the approximate number of textbooks which could be manufactured.
- 3) The next consultancy visits of the JEMC-based specialists and of the progress monitoring specialist should establish the number of durable textbooks of each title manufactured at JEMC, the number of each title distributed to each of the three Re-use experiment districts, the numbers of each title stored in each of the Resource Centres, the numbers collected by schools and the numbers of each title still held at JEMC. This will clarify whether the plan in the *Manual on Textbook Provision Experiments* has been followed, as well as giving important information on the success of the distribution of the durable textbooks. All surplus durable textbooks were supposed to be delivered to the Resource Centres of the three experiment districts and stored in the metal cupboards and racks ready for on-time supply to schools needing extra copies (to cover enrolment growth and lost and destroyed books) at the beginning of the next school year in July 2001.
- 4) The next visits of the specialists to JEMC should be:
 - Tony Ashe, production management and costing and estimating system, 20 November – 8 December 2000
 - Ken Cowan, quality control system, 20 November – 1 December 2000Although the PAT office expects the donors' visit to continue until 24 November, since the two specialists will be working exclusively in JEMC, they will be able to continue with their work without having to ask the PAT office for assistance. When debriefings/ wrap-up meetings are needed at the end of their visits, the PAT office will be free again.
- 5) The next visit of the specialist to monitor the progress of the textbook provision experiment (Vincent Bontoux) should be 4-15 December 2000. Since the donors will then have left, the PAT office would be free to accompany the specialist to some of the experiment districts, if wanted. The specialist will be concentrating on the experiment districts and will work closely with the General Manager EDMG.
- 6) The IBD team leader (Carmelle Denning) should visit in early January 2001 (8-17 January) to plan the technical assistance inputs needed for the remainder of the period of the textbook provision experiments and to ascertain progress made by the evaluation group.

APPENDIX 1

BPEP II EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS TO CONDUCT THE EVALUATION OF THE TEXTBOOK DISTRIBUTION EXPERIMENTS

Name of bidder

Date of evaluation of proposal

A. TECHNICAL (75%)

| 1. Relating to the bidder | Max score | score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| a) Experience of evaluation work in general and formative evaluation in particular | 4 | |
| b) Experience of education work, especially school education | 3 | |
| c) Adequacy of qualifications of key staff of bidder's company: research and statistics | 2 | |
| d) Suitable premises and equipment: computers and software | 2 | |

| 2. Relating to the technical proposal | Max score | score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| a) Understanding of the context of the distribution experiments | 2 | |
| b) Understanding of the objectives of the evaluation according to the TOR | 3 | |
| c) Design for monitoring each of the 4 experiments | | |
| i. Number of schools to be surveyed: 350-450=1 point (9% minimum), 451-550=2 points, 551-650=3 points, 651-750=4 points, 751-850=5 points, 851-950=6 points, 951-1050=7 points, above 1050=8 points (about 27% and above | 8 | |
| ii. Inclusion of criteria for discriminating between schools locations: remote/village/town/district centre=4 points, remote/accessible=2 points | 4 | |
| iii. Distribution of schools in each of the districts is adequate: acceptable=1 point, wholly adequate=2 points | 2 | |
| iv. Coverage of stakeholders (1 point each): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents - Headteachers - some RPs/ school supervisors - all RPs/school supervisors - all DEOs - Sajha agents/retailers (minimum requested in TORs) - More than minimum requested Sajha agents/retailers - Sajha experiment districts branches - Sajha head office - JEMC - DOE - classrooms | 12 | |

| | | | |
|-------|--|--------|---|
| v. | Other informants (1 point for each relevant extra) | 2 | |
| vi. | Data to be collected: - as in TORs (4 points)/ less than in TORs but with justification (3 points) - relevant extras (some=1 point, lots=2 points) | 4 2 | |
| vii. | Data collection methods are appropriate to the informants (1 point for each) - interviews - questionnaires/surveys - discussions/group discussions - observation | 4 | |
| viii. | Computer analysis of data | 2 | |
| ix. | Content of progress report corresponds to TORs | 2 | |
| x. | Useful extra activities/stages proposed | 2 | |
| | | | |
| d) | Design for summative evaluation | | |
| i. | Evaluation of each experiment to be performed is satisfactory | 4 | * |
| ii. | Comparative evaluation and its methodology are satisfactory | 4 | * |
| iii. | Content of summative report corresponds to the TORs | 3 | * |
| iv. | Useful extras are proposed | 2 | * |
| | | | |
| e) | Staffing for the evaluation | | |
| i. | Organisation of the staff proposed adequately covers the data collection, analysis of information, making judgements, comparison of distribution experiments | 2 | * |
| ii. | Staff have suitable qualifications for their roles | 2 | * |
| iii. | Training for other staff is suitable | 2 | * |
| | | | |
| f) | Implementation schedule | | |
| i. | Tasks/stages are identified | 2 | * |
| ii. | Timing is acceptable and feasible | 2 | * |
| | | | |
| g) | Overall comprehensiveness and clarity of proposal | 3 | |

| | | |
|--|-----|--|
| TECHNICAL TOTAL SCORE (WITHOUT WEIGHTING) | 86 | |
| TECHNICAL TOTAL SCORE PLUS SPECIAL WEIGHTING: * = x 2 | 109 | |
| FINAL SCORE CONVERTED TO 75% OF TOTAL POINTS | 75 | |

B. PRICE (25%)

"Lowest bidder price" divided by "This bidder price" multiplied by 25 = %

APPENDIX 2

BPEP II

EVALUATION OF TEXTBOOK PROVISION EXPERIMENTS

Evaluation of proposals received by PAT Danida Office

The 6 proposals were evaluated first for the technical part of the proposals and scored out of 75 maximum points. At the request of the Advisory Committee, the financial parts of the 3 best proposals from the technical part were then opened and scored out of 25 maximum points. The results are given below.

| | <i>Technical score</i> | <i>Financial score</i> | <i>Total score</i> |
|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| A. | 50/75 | 10/25 | 60% |
| B. | 50/75 | 25/25 | 75% |
| C. | 40/75 | 7/25 | 47% |
| D. | 37/75 | | |
| E. | 34/75 | | |
| F. | 29/75 | | |

Proposal B, the proposal with the highest number of points (75%), is EastConsult. EastConsult should be asked to confirm that the financial part contains all the costs over the period of the evaluation work (July 2002); in particular, the cost of fieldwork tools, the cost of data entry, analysis and reporting by computer and the production of the database as requested in the terms of reference, the cost of training of district co-ordinators and field research assistants, the cost of a large enough number of district co-ordinators and field research assistants for 12 districts (bearing in mind that the use of RCs/ school supervisors is not permissible).

Proposal A, the proposal with the next highest number of points (60%), is Educational and Developmental Service Centre.

Proposal C, which came 3rd with 47%, is Development Vision Nepal.