

**Rapid Assessment  
of  
School Improvement Plan**

Submitted to  
The Department of Education, Sanothimi  
&  
European Commission Education Coordination Office  
Kathmandu

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May 20, 2002

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## Assessment of the School Improvement Plan

### Context

The democratic bureaucracy advocated by Max Weber in the West got cultural flavor in the East. As a result Nepali bureaucracy instead of local control promoted central control. In Mac Greger's term Nepali bureaucrats applied X theory to rule the system and their subordinates. But along with the changed "world view" many terminologies emerged in the field of administration, planning, management, and bureaucracy. Decentralization, stakeholders' participation, democratic decision making, grassroots planning, and micro level understanding are some of them, which Nepal could also not stay aloof from. Playing around with these words, Western consultants and also local consultants to some extent along with their financial partners persuaded Nepali bureaucrats to apply these terminologies into action. The Decentralization Act (1999) gave another bedrock to promote grassroots planning. Ownership theory guided national and international consultants to promote micro level planning in the centrally tuned bureaucratic culture. It is in this context School Improvement Plan (SIP) emerged.

New ERA did pioneering activity to put the SIP concept in operation. Following this initiative, some of the schools of Ilam and Chitawan prepared SIPs. Teachers, members of School Management Committee (SMC), and local elites became instrumental in this process. National consultants provided inputs in the field. But the SIPs were never funded. Currently the Department of Education (DOE) has revitalized its SIP preparation process. In this process five districts- Dadeldhura, Chitawan, Jhapa, Bardiya and Syangja were selected. In other districts too SIP preparation initiatives have been introduced.

With the primary goal of achieving effective schools- the Basic and Primary Education Program (BPEP) II provided impetus to SIP. The Department of Education (DOE) has thus been preparing district level human resources both at district and local levels in order to materialize the SIP concept. Recently SIP, which is a means of decentralization in education, has received a great deal of attention from both the government and donors. This clearly indicates that the focus has been shifted from the center to the school as a unit of change. This is very much reflected in the recent documents of BPEP. A prominent example of this is the addition of SIP as a separate Component within the BPEP program by the Mid Term Review of March 2002. Originally SIP was built-in

under the Local Capacity Building sub component (BPEP, PIP, 1999). However, since it was subsumed within other sub components SIP could not gain momentum in the current spirit of decentralization process. The decision to move it to the major component area will help to regain that momentum thereby strengthening the decentralization process in education.

As a “spill over effect” of SIP preparation initiative, INGOs such as Plan International/Nepal, Save the Children (Japan), and Save the Children US are extending their hands to work with schools. Their initiatives are discussed later in this report.

### **Objective**

In this context DOE supported by the European Commission (EC) are undertaking this rapid assessment of current status and models of SIP. The goal of this rapid assessment is to improve and/or strengthen the existing SIP practice/process. Thus the main objectives of this assessment are to document the status of SIP process being carried out by the DOE and to document other school improvement models being carried out in Nepal through various programs in the primary and secondary sub sectors.

### **Process**

The document review, and discussion with the stakeholders were the major activities undertaken in order to achieve the above mentioned objectives. The documents including training packages, different models, evaluation reports, and any other relevant literature were reviewed. Interview and discussions were held with concerned people of the department, other agencies/programs and field level implementers. The process followed in the assessment is presented below in the table.

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Activities/processes</b>	<b>Types of information gathered included</b>	<b>Time line</b>
Review the current coverage and status of SIP implementation	Document collection, Document review, interview, group discussion, FGD	Quantitative and qualitative	1st and 2nd week
Review the training manuals and materials	Document review and discussion with the training participants	Qualitative	1st and 2nd week
Document other models of SIP and available impact studies.	Document review and discussion with concerned people from different agencies who were applying SIP in their programs.	Qualitative	1st and 2nd week
Document the implementation process of SIP	SIP assessment document is prepared on the basis of the information drawn from all of the above activities/processes	Quantitative and qualitative	3rd week

The key informants from the DOE who were involved in the SIP processes were interviewed. The interviews focused basically on the experiences and the limitations faced in SIP development and implementation.

Two districts- Chitawan and Jhapa were visited in order to assess and document the implementation situation of SIP. Both in Chitawan and Jhapa two discussions were held. In Chitawan one was held with the RP and headteacher at the DEO. Another was held at Dibyanagar RC. The participants of the discussion held at Dibyanagar RC included VDC chairperson, RC chairperson, SMC chairperson, SMC members, and headteachers. The initial design was to do the focus group discussion (FGD). But the idea of focus group discussion was dropped for several reasons. It was

realized that the FGD did not allow many people to join the discussion. In the case of the discussion organized at DEO Chitawan while the RPs were sharing their views a headteacher from a cluster other than Dibyanagar arrived. At that moment it was important to listen to his viewpoint as well so he was also accommodated in the discussion. Similarly, in the Dibyanagar discussion the number of participants were more than ten, which is not an ideal size for FGD and since some participants had other responsibilities they either came late or left early. In terms of gathering information and understanding people's experience or viewpoints the group discussions, which lasted from 1 and half hour to 2 hours were very useful.

In Jhapa bottom up planning RC (Haldibari RC), its school (Haldibari Ma. Vi.), one of the VDCs of Haldibari RC (Jalthal VDC) were visited. Headteacher, teachers, VDC Vice-chairperson, community members were contacted. Headteacher of Mahendra Ma. Vi., Jalthal, Secretary of Haldibari VDC were also contacted. One focus group discussion with 8 RPs of Jhapa district was conducted. Interaction with individuals and interaction during focus group discussion was related on SIP training, development of SIP, SIP implementation plan, feasibility of SIP implementation etc.

### **Document Review**

Different documents supported the SIP concept in Nepal. Among them four documents viz., Program Implementation Plan 1999 (PIP) of BPEP, Technical Panel Report 2001 (TPR), Mid Term Review 2002 (MTR), and Secondary Education Support Program 2002 (SESP) are often credited. PIP is the document prepared to guide the implementation of BPEP II master plan. TPR is the assessment report prepared by an independent team of experts about the progress and achievement made by BPEP II. The assessment was undertaken keeping in view the introduction of decentralization Act, the forth coming Tenth Plan and EFA framework of action plan. MTR is a periodic review conducted each year jointly by the DOE and the donors. SESP draws a special attention because it is a joint document prepared by DANIDA, a donor and ADB, a loaner to support MOES in secondary education. The review of these documents is presented below.

According to the PIP (1999) SIP is a micro planning exercise, which includes both physical and instructional improvement action plan. Through SIP exercise, the PIP hoped to materialize the concept of bottom up planning process. Once SIP is prepared, an individual school is supposed to submit the plan for evaluation. There are pre-determined criteria, procedures, and budget ceiling for

the evaluation of SIP. Despite the proposed amount, a school was eligible to get only Rs.15 thousand per year for SIP. Since SIP was a new and a challenging task in the context of Nepal, the PIP realized a need for an extensive capacity building at the local level. An urgent need of accurate data collection and updating in a more systematic way was also recognized in order to make the SIPs more realistic. Thus the PIP recommended strengthening school level EMIS. Additionally, raising Head teacher's qualification to Intermediate Level, and making SMCs and VECs important player in the bottom up planning process were two other significant proposals of PIP. Unfortunately, neither the SIPs got funding nor the Head teacher's qualification could be raised. The assessment and observation showed that in most cases SMCs played a negligible role in SIP formation. Regarding VEC, the advisory wing of VDC never took off the ground. Nevertheless, the idea of SIP did not cease to float within BPEP.

The Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP) 2001/02 (cited by TPR 2001) was another turning point to push SIP concept into operation. This ASIP pointed out the ineffectiveness of school level planning exercise. Lack of commitment of the authorities and lack of stakeholders' participation in planning educational activities were identified as the causes. The ASIP thus concluded that the bottom up planning process was not taking place, and even the prepared SIPs turned out to be more academic and less realistic. The TPR also identified that the monitoring activities were heavily guided by central level agenda, as one of the causes of schools being deviated from their genuine developmental needs. This certainly has resulted in a "supply driven plan" with limited reflection of school specific and/or context-based demands. Nonetheless, the TPR time and again reiterated the importance of bottom up planning. It also emphasized the need of empowering and capacitating Head teachers along with increased role of SMC, VDC and VEC. It further expected that the revision of SMC composition in accordance with the amended Education Act (2002) would expedite the SIP making process.

Going through the status, the ASIP 2002/03 however has recognized the need of revisiting the SIP in order to make it more practical and effective. The experience of SIP in five pilot districts helped draw this conclusion. The proposal of ASIP 2002/03 to implement the SIP according to the Local Self-Governance Act is also encouraging.

The MTR of March 2002 is a landmark in the BPEP II as it restructured the program by moving SIP to the main component from the activity or sub component column. This is a major shift in the priority and/or focus of the program. Moreover this shift reconfirms the education sector's commitment towards the decentralization process at least at the policy level. As PIP, MTR has also pointed out school development and quality improvement activities as core area of SIP. Though not specifically coined, the term 'school development' equated with physical facility improvement. Whatsoever the case, the MTR mission agrees, "HMG will allocate a token maintenance budget for each school receiving having received physical facility inputs and also seek VDC commitment to support maintenance of constructed facilities". (p. 8). It is also agreed that the criteria for targeting school physical facilities be revised and modified in order to reach the most needy school, which until now has not been successful in doing so.

One of the major findings of the MTR is inadequate consideration to the language of instruction and of textbooks. Language of instruction is an important issue because observation shows that many children from non-Nepali speaking language group are found having difficulties in communicating and understanding what they were taught. However, how much the schools or communities have internalized this issue and whether this would be reflected in the SIPs is a matter of concern.

A quick review of some of the SIPs of Chitawan justifies the urgency of instructional planning from language perspective. Similar observation can be made with regard to the continuous assessment system (CAS) and the idea of school based teacher training both of which are highlighted by the MTR. Though teachers have criticized CAS on many occasions as not being effective in student assessment this is not reflected in the selected SIPs. The school based or cluster based teacher training is also something not well communicated at the school level as a potential means to need based and/or demand driven training. The review of selected SIPs and the discussions with the local level stakeholders helped derive this conclusion. Neither does the list of the elements expected in a SIP give adequate weight to the aspects that are crucial to the quality improvement of teaching and learning (ref. thematic paper on Block Grant Funding Based on School Improvement Plan)

Additionally, the MTR agrees to modify some of the activities and identify new activities to address the needs of the districts affected by Maoist insurgency. How will this affect the SIP preparation

and funding is a matter of further discussion. Regarding the funding of SIPs the MTR proposes block grants to schools. This also requires to be communicated to the local level.

Secondary Education Support Program (SESP) (2002) is a joint initiative of DANIDA and ADB. This joint initiative is guided by three main objectives, which are to improve (a) access and equity in secondary education (b) quality and relevance of secondary education and (c) institutional capacity to support a school-focused secondary education system. In order to achieve these objectives a Community School Improvement Plan (ning) (CSIP) modality has been proposed. The proposed modality is guided by the goals of decentralization in the ducation sector and poverty reduction.

The modality anticipates greater role of parent, teachers and well-wishers in formulating the plan. It further assumes that the vision formed by these stakeholders will guide the improvement of this plan. This "will give communities more control and ownership over their local school and also increase accountability of the school and its teachers to the community" (p.31). First the SESP focuses more on the decentralized planning process, which is still new to the Nepali culture. Second, the school teachers are already feeling overburdened by filling out separate data formats of different divisions and fulfilling requirements of SIP preparation. If the secondary school is attached to the primary level then the burden will further increase, as they have to prepare CSIP in addition to SIP. Third, both SIP and CSIP are trying to achieve similar objectives. In this situation it is crucial that SESP and BPEP have extensive consultation before embarking into CSIP. Since the available documents do not explain how CSIP modality is implemented there is not much to infer about at this moment. Nevertheless there is much to be learned from SIP experience, which SESP could recognize.

### **Reflection**

Both SIP and SESP are bottom-up planning. They demand a decentralized frame, which contradicts with the existing "centralized bureaucratic mindset". At the field level as well the "center oriented mentality" is common. This mentality also goes against the notion of local self-governance and decentralization Acts. A communication gap prevails between these two notions. At one pole there is the local self-governance and decentralization frame where people are yet to be reoriented to give up their "center oriented mentality." At the other pole there is an "enforced policy decision" to put decentralization process into action. In this dilemma, some policy decisions such as block grant,

school based teacher training, and bilingual teaching program have been made. These decisions can be seen as another push towards decentralized planning. But is the ground ready to accept such a change? Can the center give up its “power” to the grassroots? Can the experts value school level “planners”? Is the funding mechanism ready to earmark its budget through SIP and SESP? Are the people on the ground ready to bear centrally delegated responsibility in a continued manner? Examples drawn from the SIPs of Chitawan district shows that centrally assigned roles and responsibilities for the local stakeholders without communicating with them yielded unintended result. The result is that some schools didn't even know that BPEP is no longer a project. This “unknown situation” was reflected in some SIPs that identified Pariyojana<sup>1</sup> (BPE project) as one of the funding sources in addition to DEO as another.

The ASIP (2002/03) has now introduced SIP based Development Program in five districts. Provisions are made to provide a block grant under SIP. Accordingly, unit costs (estimated cost per child) in Terai and Kathmandu valley and Hill are Rs. 150, and Rs. 170 respectively, whereas in mountain it is Rs. 200. This piloted scheme is proposed to be tested by channeling block grants to 1800 “Community schools” of Jhapa, Chitawan, Syangja, Bardiya and Dadeldhura. Here again question arises what would be the reaction of the teachers and their unions? Has this been communicated to them? How efficient the SMC/VEC/VDC would be to manage this huge amount of money? How could the current educational administration be able to control the fake reporting system of the schools? Perspectives drawn from different stakeholders of education in Chitawan and Jhapa districts show that it is very premature to derive conclusions about the success and failure of SIP implementation under the block grant system. For example in Jhapa the stakeholders' perceptions showed that SIP has provided an ample opportunity to exercise planning at the grassroots level. Though SIP prepared by the schools are far from perfection, it has opened up local initiative to plan by themselves. But knowingly or unknowingly listing out of school children from catchment area other than one's own was indicated so that school/VDC receives more funding.

Most of the consulted documents have emphasized the role of VEC, which is yet to be formed. In most of the schools the SMC is defunct and preparation is going on to form SMCs according to the

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<sup>1</sup> In Nepali project is known as pariyojana. Some schools in Chitawan still do not know that Basic and Primary Education Project has been absorbed by the DOE as a regular program. Thus they are still expecting the project money to achieve the identified activities

new education act. This shows that the ideas, plans or programs at all levels are influenced more by assumptions than field level realities. The discussion with different stakeholders of education in Chitawan and Jhapa districts stood as a proof to this argument. How will these plans, programs or proposals respond to the fundamental questions such as when and how the VEC will be constituted? What would be its relationship with VDC's role in promoting education under the local self-governance act? How can SMC work together with the VEC? Is VEC a VDC level body or it is a school level body? In the middle of these unanswered questions SIP funding under block grant is a matter of great concern.

## **School Improvement Plan -- Training and Development**

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is supposed to be a plan developed by the school with support from the community and to be implemented by the school along with the community. Training has been conducted in order to provide essential knowledge and skills to the concerned persons (VDC, SMC, and Headteacher) at the grassroots level. An SIP training manual for the SMC members has been developed.

### **Training for SIP Preparation**

#### Conduct of the training

SIP master trainers from the center were involved in training Resource Persons (RPs) in the districts and RPs trained SMC members, VDC representatives, headteacher of the respective schools in bottom up planning pilot districts. For other districts one of the RPs was invited in the center for training and he/she then trained RPs in the districts including RP in the resource center level. The training modality consisted 2 days of theory, 2 days of fieldwork, 1 day of document preparation and 1 day of discussion. RC was given flexibility to adjust the 6 day training according to their needs. The training was of 4 days theory and 2 days practical in one of the RCs of Jhapa and it was 2 days orientation and 3 days practical in one of the RCs of Chitwan. Regarding 6 days of training RPs have following comments:

- Two day's orientation and 3 day's practical was not enough to comprehend and be able to make others understand.
- Compartmentalization of the theory and practical was not suitable. These should have been blended together -- exposition of theory and related practical should be in a sequence.

#### Content of the training

Envisaged modality of the training is of participatory nature -- trainees inferring solution for the questions put forward. It is found that in the SIP training package theoretical/information aspects, which need to be provided through didactic discourse, were also intended to be a concept to be inducted through group work. Some of the examples of theoretical aspects, which would have been better presented through didactic discourse instead, presented for group work are:

- What do you understand by management? Discuss in the group and present.

- Why is good management essential? What are aspects covered by this? Make a list and present.
- What are the skills required for good management? Discuss in the group and present. (Pages 2-3).

*Time would have been saved and utilized in other relevant exercises if theoretical aspects such as meaning, characteristics of the good management, skills required for good management would have covered through didactic discourse. Also rephrasing questions would make the group work more worthwhile such as,*

- What should be done to improve management in your school? What skills do you think are essential for this?

Some of the activities suggested in the training, though important are not well timed such as:

- Are the functions, roles and responsibilities assigned by the 'Education Act 2058' sufficient for effective management of the school? If not what functions, roles and responsibilities should be added, suggest.
- What is the rationale for your suggestion? Why these are required? Provide reasons. (Pages 4-5)).

*As the 'Education Act 2058' is already amended, there is little room that it will be amended immediately. Therefore instead of such exercises, other more relevant aspect related to SIP could be covered.*

There are comments regarding the contents of the SIP training from the field as well:

- Some of the theoretical aspects (such as management, school management) covered during training are not related to SIP preparation. Most of the content matter covered from pages 1 to 9 does not imply directly to the SIP preparation.
- Management and administration aspects are covered by other training as well.
- Theory and practical exercises are not presented sequentially such as 'Description of School and Community' is in page 9 and actual work on this aspect is in page 24 and these are separated during training as well. *These need to be blended together.*
- Some of the suggested activities are complex such as activity given in page 12.

- Need to make user-friendlier. It is not adequate or complete in the sense that it does not provide enough guidance to pass on the messages, and learning. Not enough creative exercises.

### Training participants

In SIP training participants were invited from VDC (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Ward Chairpersons), SMC (where available) and Head teachers. Three head teachers of Jhapa district who were visited during field work informed that mainly teachers of the school were involved in the preparation of the SIP. The main lead teacher in the case of the secondary school was the teacher of primary level in-charge. Teachers involved in the preparation of the SIP as well RPs suggested that *in case of secondary school primary level in-charge should also be invited as a participant in the training*. However it was informed from the center that RPs could invite more teachers other than head teachers if it was necessary.

## **Data Collection and Analysis in SIP**

### Confusion regarding defining catchment area

Defining catchment area has been one of the major problems faced during data collection by the school. This has been stated as a problem as children used to transgress the boundary set as a catchment area of the school. RPs also felt that this confusion need to be clarified: *major issue is to identify primary school age children who are not going to school and try to bring them in the school. Whether child goes to this or that school is not the issue*.

### Some items missing in the data collection forms

Household survey data collected during school mapping exercise last year has been the source of the data for SIP. Teachers and RPs indicated some of the discrepancies in the forms used for data collection:

- Teachers who were involved in collecting data pointed out that there were some gaps in the data collected last year such as in the household survey occupation and education columns were not filled up properly. In the educational qualification, in a number of places only literate/illiterate was mentioned without specifying grades passed by an individual. Due to

this specific status of the community in the educational accomplishment was difficult to state. *Such requirements need to be specified clearly either in the manual or during training.*

### Ambiguous term

For some of the teachers involved in the data collection for SIP, terms such as children (primary age, school age or other), literate (was there a need to mentioned grades in which the person dropped out?) were not clear. This had affected data collection. Some of the data collectors concentrated on primary age level only thinking it was related to the primary level alone. Some of the teachers and RPs also expressed their view that SIP is meant to focus on primary level only. *If SIP is to cover all the grades/levels of the school, i.e. school as an entity then SIP need to be that of the school not the primary level. This needs to be clearly specified in the training manual, in the training and other documents.*

### Data analysis

It was a hectic exercise for the school. They experienced data tabulation more difficult than data collection. RPs of Jhapa pointed out that there has been as less input as possible from RC as SIP is supposed to be a plan prepared by the school and community. RPs provided suggestion when they were asked at the time of confusion. RPs were generally satisfied that schools at Jhapa district were able to produce a better SIP this year than previous year. However, there were some mistakes in the data analysis in the SIP:

- In one of the SIP, increasing trend was set over five years period in all the indicators including GER. The mistake was later pointed out and explained the meaning of GER by the RP and then corrected by the school. It will be better to provide glossary of fundamental terms in the training manual.
- In the final SIP, some of the schools have set GER and NER to 100%. RPs viewed that schools did not understand the meaning of 100% GER/NER and it will not be possible to achieve the target in 5 years time.
- A similar mistake was made in the case of increase in achievement. Some of the schools have set a fixed rate of increment such as 5 points, 10 points increase in the score in each subject each year. In others, the aim was to increase 3 points in first and second year, 4 points in third and fourth year and 5 points increase in fifth year. Still in some, it was 5 points increase in first year, 4 points in second, 3 in third, 4 in fourth, 3 in fifth. *RPs agreed that this was due to lack of understanding of the concept of educational achievement. Educational achievement should not be*

*treated in an interval or ratio scale. Increasing score from 70 to 80 is not same as increasing it from 40 to 50. Such concepts need to be clarified in order to set rational indicators/targets.*

Though there are some mistakes in setting targets in the five year plan school, community, VDC as well as RPs opined that SIP preparation should be taken as a good and healthy exercise towards building capacity at the grassroots level. They also suggested that *even though SIP is prepared for 5 years, the target indicators might be required to be revised in the coming year in order to set rational target as well make appropriate plan for achieving the target. This might require refresher training and revision of the target indicators in the coming year.*

## **SIP Development**

### Numerical achievement

Both in Chitawan and Jhapa districts SIP preparation was going on but not completed in all the schools yet. In Jhapa RPs were expecting SIP from all of the schools within their RC in about one to two weeks period. As reported by the 8 RPs of Jhapa district, more than two thirds of the schools (99 out of 130 schools in 8 RCs) have already submitted the SIP. Others are either typing or in the final touch stage. RC-wise SIP development in Jhapa is as follows,

<b>Resource Center</b>	<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>No. of SIP Submitted*</b>	<b>Percentage of SIP submitted</b>
<b>Topgachhi</b>	17	17	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Gauradaha</b>	13	13	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Budhabare</b>	15	5	<b>33.33</b>
<b>Bhadrapur</b>	20	14	<b>70.00</b>
<b>Prithivinagar</b>	20	13	<b>65.00</b>
<b>Shanishare</b>	22	14	<b>63.64</b>
<b>Ghaladubha</b>	10	10	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Haldibari</b>	13	13	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>76.15</b>

\*As of 15 May 2002

### Involvement of the community

Involvement of the community was not same in all the schools. Involvement depended upon the perseverance of an individual. For example VDC Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of Jalthal VDC of Jhapa divided 4/4 schools amongst themselves and visited communities to organize meeting at the community. But VDCs were not directly involved in preparing the SIP of individual schools. VDC has requested schools to submit one copy of its SIP. Jalthal VDC was going to organize a meeting and decide what support the VDC can provide to the school and what they need to do in order to bring out of school children in the school. The VDC plan would be based on the SIP of the schools within their VDC.

In Chitawan as well, wider participation was the problem. More so in the hilly belt (9 hilly VDCs) and Tharu villages. Due to poverty, and the fact that most families are dependent on daily wages it was very difficult to hold them for things that do not give immediate and tangible benefit for the families. Moreover according to RPs those areas lack competent or capable people who could help in exercise like SIP. The community is solely dependent on teachers for any activity. They are not in a position to make an economic contribution to the SIP. Some NGOs and INGOs have supported schools in these areas. For example SNV supported one lower secondary school. But support from NGOs or INGOs is scattered and concentrated mostly in convenient places. Rather than working collaboratively or supporting the government's effort to fulfill the schools' needs by using their resources and sharing ideas/experiences they tend to use RPs for their purposes. They expect RPs to fill out their forms as if the RPs' job is to collect data for everybody. In most cases community meetings/gatherings were not organized. "Had we organized the meetings people would have agreed and given consent to whatever local elites (thula bada) said".

### Defunct SMC

One of the major problems faced by the schools in involving the community was due to the defunct SMC in many of the cases. A new SMC has not been elected and as their children were not in the school some the members of the existing SMC were reluctant to be involved as a member of SMC. As the new Act was not made available to the school, it was also indicated as a hurdle in involving the community. *Thus the SIP was prepared mainly by the teachers of the school. But feedback from community gathering has been a good source of information in some of the cases.*

### Support from RC

The RC has provided training as well as provided other necessary inputs in the development of the SIP. In the view of RPs, to have a plan, where there was none is a very good step. The schools felt extremely uncomfortable in developing the plan. One of the reasons is that it is a creative work, which schools have hardly experienced. "We ourselves are not clear whether the intention of SIP preparation is to give responsibility totally to the community or this is only an experiment". Schools who are better, produced better SIPs but those who are not better produced lower quality SIPs. Thus the SIP alone does not seem to improve the situation of schools that lag behind. Rather than improving the SIP focus should be given to its implementation aspect. A program should be continued for at least 3/4 years before deciding it as good or bad. The same is expected of SIP. Frequent change in the program and introduction of new programs with immediate halt has put the DEO personnel in a false position. SIP is hoped not to do the same. Another important view shared by the RPs was to let the school do the SIP exercise with minimum support from the RC. Therefore, RPs had provided suggestion/support when they were asked for and there was need to clarify some concepts. For this purpose, some of the RPs asked teachers to contact them when needed and some of the RPs organized a meeting to share what difficulties were faced during SIP preparation.

### Difficulties faced

There were a number of difficulties faced while preparing SIP. Some of these were:

- Confusion in setting priorities. There are plenty of necessities, but no budget to fulfill them all. How to decide which one is more important than these other when all of them are direly needed. Thus communities are not convinced that they would get anything out of this process. They believe that SIP is prepared to spend the money that they would get from DEO. The questions that the stakeholders are puzzling with are- Why SIP? What is the benefit of preparing SIP? Where will the money come from? Sense of ownership is just not there among the primary stakeholders (teachers, SMCs, communities, etc.)
- Many schools still have not understood or are not properly communicated about change in the status of BPEP from project to regular program. This is reflected in the SIP where they have identified the project (parijojana) as one of the sources in addition to the HMG as another.

- Most lacked ability to identify the sources other than the government sources/ conventional sources. Sources that were commonly identified by SIPs included MP fund (Samsad kosh), VDC, DDC, BPE project and DEO. In Chitawan the tendency of identifying these, as sources are more prominent in the SIPs of hilly belt and Tharu villages.
- In some cases the VDCs denied endorsement of SIP on the ground that the historical background section missed some contributors' names and also did not reflect the VDC contribution adequately.
- VDC representatives, HTs, SMC members expressed that they had difficulty in managing the quantitative data. Since the sole responsibility was put on HTs, other stakeholders (VDC representatives, parents, SMC members) did little work. Thus they knew very little about the SIP concept and process.
- The stakeholders said that it would have been much better if the SIPs were prepared right after the household survey done a year before. By the time SIP was made the data was not right in many ways. Particularly, in the case of villages adjoined with India this has been a constant problem. For example in one case the number of enrolled children exceed the number of children in the locality. How to deal with this has been a challenge.
- Many faced difficulty in identifying the activities that requires no money.
- VDC representatives, SMC members of Dibyanagar said, "Whatever we gathered during the six day workshop we handed over to the HTs". We were not involved after that.
- There were difficulties faced due to lack of proper data as well. For example in the description of EMIS it is mentioned that schools need to find out the achievement level of their students in comparison to the nation and district. Neither are such items included in the data sheet nor is such information or source of information provided in the manual. *Such information would have been relevant for setting ideal targets in SIP.*
- The objectives and probable shortcoming mentioned in the SIP guidebook were used in most SIPs. Later these objectives did not seem to have matched or reflected the school's own objectives or problems or shortcomings. Following the indicators and program activities listed in the guidebook also prevented schools from being creative in identifying their genuine problem and corresponding program activities with problems.
- Communities were informed but not involved in the process. HTs were entirely responsible for preparing the plan. Though SMC and community were supposed to be involved it could

not be done. One of the reasons is that there is no clear mention of how much responsibility does SMCs, social workers or parents hold in this process. And who is going to set the parameter of responsibility as the regulation changes all the time. Since the SMC members were not adequately oriented about the SIP they could not assist. Responsibilities of different stakeholders could not be identified also because till today the communities were solely dependent on schools and teachers with regard to educational matters. Thus the HTs prepared the SIPs and SMCs endorsed them.

- HTs had to miss many classes during SIP preparation -- some even said that it took more than a month to prepare SIP. SIP appeared to be an additional burden on HTs. The primary responsibility of SIP rested on the HTs also because all the necessary data and information are in the HT's possession. Nobody else has access to such data. When the EMIS is put in place this may not be a problem.
- It was also very difficult to collect quantitative data. Moreover, it is still very difficult to use formula in data processing. Lots of issues or problems were looked for only through data. This would not give an entire picture.

#### Some common problems

The most common problems identified by the SIPs reviewed included poverty (parents' inability to provide their children with enough food, school uniforms and educational materials such as note books, pens and pencils), lack of enough teachers, inappropriate Student Teacher Ratio (STR), lack of awareness among local community members about education and responsibility towards schools.

While discussing about orientation and training for teachers some HTs said that RC's frequent invitation to teachers for different training and orientations compels schools that already lack enough helping hands, to shut down for the entire day.

Headteachers and teachers of the school are not familiar with the technicalities of the target indicators they have filled up in the forms. Also such important aspects are not backed up by related activities to be undertaken. Thus, there might be a wonderful numerical data such as achieving 100% NER in five years period, but there would be lack of a clear agenda how that could be accomplished.

## **Implementation of the SIP**

### Addressing the needs

In many cases actual needs are not reflected. Emphasis is given to the needs related to physical facilities rather than the quality aspects of teaching and learning. According to a HT of Chitawan unless there are adequate physical facilities such as enough space for children to sit, quality education cannot be achieved. In his words, "physical facility is a means to quality education". HT and teachers of one of the schools of Jhapa said that they were not able to maintain instructional materials and works of students in the classroom itself due to lack of wall boundary in the school.

In Chitawan, schools were also found documenting SIP together despite the differences in their needs and context. For example, SIPs of four schools from one cluster are exactly the same.

The tendency across the board is not to include the access and retention of children from disadvantaged community and girls under the activities that require money.

### Possibility of receiving expected supports

When asked about the reason for laying more emphasis on physical development and less on quality aspects, HTs and teachers said that they are aware of this problem. As physical aspects are tangible, it was obvious that they could clearly identify the problems regarding physical aspects. However, they also maintained that they were able to concentrate on the quality aspects more this time than last year. Regarding fulfillment of their expectation one of the schools (HT, teachers) of Jhapa said that they consulted parents, municipality, NGOs during preparation of the SIP and after getting positive response from them the school set a certain amount as their contribution in the SIP. Another school (HT, teachers) has also included certain amount as community contribution, but there was no prior consultation with the community whether they were willing to contribute or not. The head teacher and teachers of this school also do not seem optimistic that they would receive financial contribution from the community. They have included community contribution budget line only because this was emphasized in the SIP manual.

### Partnership with VDC

SIP in general and bottom planning in particular envisages partnership among VDC, community and school. School and RPs expressed mixed reactions on this matter. One of the schools in Jhapa district expressed that the VDC with all sorts of responsibilities on its shoulders might not be able to provide time in the affairs of the school whereas another school was positive about the contribution of the VDC. One of the VDC personnel also gave an opinion that support from the VDC usually mean monetary contribution, therefore the VDC is not usually eager to partner with the school. This comment of the VDC personnel indicates lack of matching fund idea to increasing enrollment of disadvantaged group children and girls, and provision of 40% bottom up plan budget for increasing access to the non-schooling primary-age children within their VDC.

### Implementation process

Once a SIP is prepared by the school, the budget will be released through DEO on the basis of the SIP. Budget items cover Rs. 1000.00 for SIP preparation, (this could be released during SIP preparation as advance to the school) 2000.00 for maintenance/material (A), 11000.00 as matching fund for construction/repair (B), and 15,000.00 for increasing enrollment of disadvantaged group children and girls (C). A school is entitled to the SIP preparation budget and any one or two or all the budget items of A, B and C. RCs from Syangja, Bardia, Dadeldhura, Chitawan and Jhapa that are selected for piloting the bottom up planning receive 600 thousand rupees for implementation of the SIP. *Current status of the implementation of SIP is that the preparatory phase of the SIP is going to be completed shortly. Therefore budget is not released yet and SIP implementation is not on the way.*

### The impact of the SIP

Though SIP is not implemented yet, it has been taken as a positive exercise. Such as:

- At least the history and other information of the school is documented for the first time in many of the schools.
- To some extent a sense of responsibility towards the school has begun to sprout among school community.
- Competition has been noticed among schools to produce better looking SIPs.
- A good beginning to make school and community work together to improve schools but at present the exercise is driven more by the hope of getting monetary support.
- The culture of keeping a written document has begun.

- A sense of importance of reliable data has been inoculated.
- Schools seem to be concerned how they would fulfill the targets they have set.

## **Reflection**

SIP training seemed to have born a similar fate like other training organized in haste. Training was organized in the absence of the training manual.

SIP preparation was carried out more on the basis of the examples of objectives, shortcoming, problems given in the SIP training manual. Schools used the same objectives, shortcoming, problems from the SIP training manual rather than analyzing their own situation and identifying objectives, shortcoming, and problems relevant to them. For example four schools of Chitawan produced exactly the same SIPS.

Related personnel specifically the primary level in-charge at the secondary level who had to manage everything of SIP was not invited as a participant.

Since HTs and SMC chairs were the participants of the training it is very unlikely that women, other than a negligible number of female HTs, women were involved in the training.

Since the existing relationship between non-governmental organizations and the government personnel are taking place on more personal and informal levels. In this situation there is concern about how to mobilize both to successfully and in a more comprehensive manner rather than on a piece meal basis implement SIPS.

RPs and the local elite such as VDC chairperson seems to doubt the community's ability to understand, comprehend and respond to the subject matter. RPs' comments and Dibyanagar VDC chairperson's way of explaining what they should talk about, and what the topic was during our discussion on SIP process are examples of this. For example, the VDC chairperson explained why the discussion was taking place, and what they were expected to talk about in a way that a primary school teacher explains to her/his students. Time was not allowed to spontaneously or naturally unfold the discussion. The reviewer was more quite and was giving time to the participants to think

and recall their memories and slowly get into interaction. But both the VDC chairperson and the RP seemed to have less tolerant to that kind of strategy. In this situation how to regain the community's voice and include it in the SIP is a challenge.

The reason behind schools' inability to identify the sources of funding other than the government source can be attributed to their inadequate practice or experience in planning. They could think about other sources other than conventional ones (government, municipality, VDC, Samsad Kosh, INGOs, NGOs).

In almost all SIPs reviewed the responsible people for door-to-door program are female teachers in Chitawan and female teachers were involved as much as male teachers in Jhapa district. Since in most cases the list of program headings was copied from the package it can be assumed that this activity also came from the same package. The concern here is the inability of the package to look at the tasks from a gender perspective. To expect female teachers only (who oftentimes have double or triple responsibilities to fulfill) to visit door-to-door is inappropriate.

VDCs seem to be keen on reviewing the SIP document to see whether it has adequately reflected its contribution and has reflected the VDC chairperson's opinion. This was reflected in the Dibyanagar VDC chairperson's remarks. At first he denied the knowledge of SIP preparation program and process. Secondly he said that he would not endorse unless he is sure that everything is properly stated and presented in the document.

The activities identified under no-budget activity reflect the perceived need of orientation in this respect. For example in some SIPs activities such as video presentation and using posters to raise people's awareness, and prize distribution to sustain motivation of the students, both of which need funding, are also identified as no-cost activities.

The activities identified by the reviewed SIPs mention the need of teacher training, teacher orientation, teacher-parent interaction, additional teachers, etc. But they hardly touch upon aspects such as teaching practice, teacher behavior, learning style, language transfer and teacher transfer that directly or indirectly impact students' access, retention and achievement, and quality education.

There is still no confidence in students as potential partners in SIP development as well as implementation among the local leaders and teachers as well.

## **School Improvement Plan -- Other Models**

Leading agencies that are involved in school based planning process implementation are Save the Children US, Save the Children Japan, School action planning (SAP) program of SEDP, Plan International Nepal and Community Owned Primary Education (COPE) of UNDP. In this section models of SIP practiced by these INGOs are discussed. Most of these INGOs implement their programs or in this case SIP through local NGOs.

### **Save the Children US (SCUS)**

The school improvement initiative of SCUS is known as Child Friendly School Initiative.

#### Objective

The main objective of Child Friendly School Initiative (CFSI) is to promote awareness about the Child Right Convention (CRC) with the active involvement of teachers, community, students and parents. This overarching objective includes both physical and non-physical aspects of an effective school.

#### Process

The focus of CFSI strategy is on individual schools. The process however begins with a community level meeting. The main purposes of this meeting are to inform about and to check the readiness of the community to implement the CFSI process and the number of disadvantaged children in school. These two factors determine the implementation of CFSI. The community level meeting is followed by a workshop, in which all the primary stakeholders such as teachers, students, SMC members (where available) and parents are involved. The workshop begins with sensitizing stakeholders about the rights of children. The workshop then embarks on a school self-assessment exercise in which stakeholders identify and analyze the existing situation of the school. The workshop provides time and space for all the stakeholders to express their experiences, feelings and ideas about the existing situation. For example teachers, students and parents are accommodated separately so that they can freely express themselves. Having gone through this process of sharing and reflection on the school situation and future direction including their own behaviors, the stakeholders are engaged in planning. The participants at their respective levels identify the factors that would assist in materializing the CFSI as well. Thus the planning is based on the information generated by the

stakeholders themselves during the previous sessions. The outcomes of the workshop are school improvement plan and school improvement committee, consisting of student members as well. In many child-friendly schools a separate student committee is also formed. The primary objective of the committee is to assist in achieving the goal of children's right to education by performing relevant activities to increase access, enhance quality and protect child rights. It is important to note that along with CFSI SCUS provides other inputs as well such as school uniform to dalit children, and stationary support to disadvantaged children, including girls.

According to a SCUS education program review (2002) school self-assessment "not only helped identify the factors that would or would not help to make a school child friendly but also provided opportunities to listen to each other's experiences and feelings especially among teachers, students and parents" (p.35). This indeed would help develop a more realistic plan.

SCUS uses the DOE and DEO personnel as resource persons in their CFSI related training. But how the efforts of these two institutions could be made complementary and how to institutionalize the collaboration still require more attention at central level. In order to minimize the confusion at the grassroots level the use of terminologies by these institutions should also be carefully thought through. For example in SCUS far west program area the school improvement committee is called a village education committee. This can be confused with the HMG proposed VEC. Who is responsible for communicating this or clarifying the difference to the primary stakeholders who continuously experience the experiment of different agencies?

### **Save the Children Japan (SCJ)**

The school improvement initiative of SCJ, which is carried out by a local NGO, Aasaman, is known as School Improvement Program. Like SCUS's CFSI the school improvement program of SCJ is also guided by right-based approach to education.

#### Objective

Inspired by the aim of enrolling all children from the school catchment area the objectives of SCJ's School Improvement Program (SIP) are: to reduce of out of school children between the age of 5 to

14, to make more children complete primary education and to enhance capacity of local partners for better education services.

SCJ's School Improvement Program consists of four components- (1) capacity building of partners (2) access and retention, (3) school health and (4) early childhood development.

Activities, which are important to decentralized school development process such as SIP formation, SIP Committee (SIPC) formation, SIP training, CRC training, resource identification, resources mobilization, interaction program, and involvement of primary stakeholders fall within the Capacity Building Component of SCJ's school improvement program.

### Process

The schools begin with school enrolment status survey and family education status survey of their catchment area. A consultation meeting is also held with teachers, SMC members, and VDC representatives of individual schools. A similar meeting is organized with the DEO, RP and, Supervisors. A joint meeting with VDC representatives, SMC members, schoolteachers, head teachers, and local elites follows these separate meetings. These stakeholders, including parents are oriented about SIP preparation. SCJ's field level machinery that is Aasaman Nepal in this case facilitates the SIP preparation activities.

The evaluation of 22 schools (2002) that have been experiencing the SIP intervention of SCJ shows that about half of these schools enjoy community support. The SIPC seem to be more active and committed in these schools.

With some exceptions these schools are better off financially. Schools that are not enjoying that much of community support mostly belong to poorer communities. The SIPC's are also not that active or committed in these schools. But in general SIP has shown positive impact in all the schools in one way or other.

It is important to note that all these school follow a basket funding modality in scholarship. The funding obtained from any sources (DEO, Political Parties, individual, Aasaman, etc.) is deposited in

one fund though the donation boxes are kept separate. The SIPC along with the school itself assist in deciding the allocation of the scholarships.

### **Community Owned Primary Education (COPE)**

COPE is a UNDP sponsored initiative implemented in 6 districts. This is a community based school program independent of the MOES mechanism. UNDP has partnered with the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD) in this venture.

#### Objective

The main objective of COPE is to empower the local level stakeholders in order to enable them to effectively and efficiently deliver primary education through community owned schools. The objectives also include the capacity building of local stakeholders, access, equity, enhanced teacher performance, improved pedagogy, effective monitoring, and collaboration with other government and non-government organizations.

#### Process

Since the decentralized planning process is the 'centre-piece' of COPE it started with local stakeholders' workshops on participatory planning processes. Relevant manuals and guidelines were developed. Workshops are organized at central and district levels to orient the COPE implementers about those manuals and guidelines. The manuals and guidelines were revisited after field-testing them. A District Primary Education Profile (DPEP) followed this. The DPEP was helpful in identifying and prioritizing the needy and feasible areas. Similarly, a VDC level primary education profile (VPEP) of all 57 VDCs covered by COPE was also prepared. Dialogues with community organizations followed the profile production activity. The dialogues helped in finalizing the location of the schools and thereby strengthening participation and support of the community. A baseline survey of all (90) COPE schools' catchment areas was conducted.

One of the most important aspects or features of COPE program is the establishment of a school endowment fund in all ninety schools. Another significant feature is that the parents or guardians have to commit by signing a form that assures that they would send their children to school on a prescribed date for enrolment. Nevertheless there is a growing concern over the phasing out plan of

COPE. Will it be absorbed by the system? Will local community and local government be able to give continuity? If so what would be the role of MOES machinery in it?

### **School Action Plan (SAP) of SEDP**

#### Objective

SAP initiative was introduced by SEDP to identify and address the factors that restrict the enrollment of children, particularly girls in secondary education. The major objective of this local level action was "to raise awareness of gender issues in education, including awareness of the constraints which face girl students and teachers and prevent their full participation in school" (SEDP, 2000, p. 8). Other objectives included the local level team building, local ownership of the school and enhancement of local motivation and capacity to increase female participation in school. The objectives also aimed at quality improvement of teaching and learning.

#### Process

The school level gender action planning process began with a workshop on writing and developing facilitators' handbooks and participants planning handbooks followed by a trial of the materials in the Far Western Region. The Regional Gender Officers, SEDU chiefs, representatives of BPEP and SEDP were involved in the process. After the materials were tested regional workshops were organized in the remaining development regions. The workshops included an orientation workshop for representatives of the Regional Education Directorate, and District Education Officers, and SEDU Senior Master Trainers and other trainers in each region. The material preparation workshop took place at the central and workshop/training at regional levels.

At the local level a four-stage process was organized. The participants of the process consisted of head teachers; teachers, SMC members, Ward Chairpersons, VDC chairpersons, VDC secretaries and Community level social workers.

The first stage was a two day action planning training. In this training the participants were assisted in identifying, prioritizing and finding ways to overcome the local problems. The

participants also prepared a draft action plan. The second stage was a six week long plan consolidation process. In this stage the participants contacted and discussed with other stakeholders of their catchment areas and finalized their draft action plan. In the third stage the participants came back together for a day long workshop and shared/reviewed their plans. The final stage was the implementation stage. In this stage the participants along with other co-opted participants took the responsibilities to implement the action plan within a self-determined time-frame. The trainers and the participants also agreed upon the monitoring visits in the final stage.

SAP was able to derive a range of issues and information regarding ethnicity, gender and inequalities of the catchment areas through its social awareness as well as social mapping components. This information was helpful in identifying the nature of interventions as well. The nature of interventions and needs ranged from financial support in the form of a stipend to physical facilities, such as toilets to extra-curricular activities for girls.

One of the most significant parts of the whole process is the resource mobilization at the local level to implement the plan of actions. The team was successful to some extent in mobilizing resources from the VDC development funds, NGOs and community members. The contributions were obtained both in monetary and non-monetary (time and skills) forms. However, after the phasing out of the project the drive slowed down. The project was successful in institutionalizing the position of gender focal person in all five Regional Education Directorates but the original spirit could not be sustained.

One of the aspects that needs to be addressed if SAP is to be continued is the classroom practice and/or teacher behaviour. This has not been adequately raised or identified by SAP as one of the potential contributing factors to the girls' choice of subjects and their decision to continue their education.

### **Plan International Nepal**

Plan has also begun to implement SIP in one of its program districts. It has completed first round of training and has borrowed the DOE SIP package. But since it has not developed its strategy and nothing has been documented yet there is very little to speak out PLAN's SIP intervention.

## **Reflection**

The above models, though initiated by different agencies are driven towards achieving the same goal. The goal is providing Nepali children with universal access to quality education. The approaches may vary but the basic concept of increased community ownership of both financial and non-financial matters of a school is same in all the modalities. Moreover, all of the SIP models used the DOE human resources for initial training and adapted the DOE school mapping data collection format.

The initiatives have helped understand that (a) SIP can be a baseline document to ensure EFA for all children (b) it has been a means to ensure community support (c) it has been a tool for rapport building with the community (d) it has been an exercise to develop grassroots planners (e) it has been a tool to develop ownership at the immediate stakeholders level and (f) it has been an opportunity to develop positive relationship among teachers, parents and students.

## **Future Direction**

The Department of Education (DOE) is gradually changing its centralized bureaucracy towards local self-governance and decentralization. Policy decisions such as block grant, school based teacher training, and bilingual teaching program are some of the steps taken so far. These steps are promoting decentralized planning at the grassroots level. SIP is an example of grassroots planning in education. Currently SIP based Development Program has been introduced in five districts -- Jhapa, Chitawan, Syangja, Bardiya and Dadeldhura. It will be premature to derive conclusions about the success/failure of SIP implementation at this stage. However it has provided a useful opportunity to exercise planning at the grassroots level. The outcome of these grassroots planning is SIP, which needs a lot of improvement. In this context, the following directions are recommended.

### Direction for updated training

Thematically, SIP developers were lacking some basic knowledge. In order to provide it some contents are to be added in the training program. These contents are (a) theories imbedded with SIP and grassroots planning (b) ways of theorizing grassroots practices (c) ways to ensure compatibility between BPEP and SIP components (d) concept of school catchment area (e) ways to update school mapping data (e) approaches to target setting with more emphasis on quality targets (f) setting and identifying a targeted action to one aspect of learning (g) approaches to needs assessment of different target groups of the school catchment area, and (h) concept of low cost and high cost planning.

Pedagogically, SIP training was found weak. This situation helped suggest some measures for the future. These possible measures are (a) practical exercise to clarify the concept of GER, NER and increment in educational achievement (b) field exercise to prepare a mock SIP in a specific component during the training period, and (c) reviewing the exercise for the identification of SIP needs.

Academically, there were some textual problems in the SIP training manual. Questions given in the manual were not promoting group work. This situation demanded revision of the SIP training

manual that incorporates (a) more exercise in group work (b) revised target indicators (c) revised data collection form that caters SIP requirements, and (d) updated national and district data.

Administratively, there were some grey areas where DOE can work. These areas are (a) initiation of refresher training (b) school classification for specific SIP inputs, and (c) periodic workshop for SMC members about teaching and learning process to help them monitor and evaluate teachers' performance.

#### Direction for SIP implementation process

Both SIP and SESP are grassroots planning. But they are not going together. As it appears now a school with grade one to ten would develop two planning documents. The first planning document deals with primary grades under SIP. So does SESP with secondary grades. In this situation, some futuristic ways are suggested to minimize, if not controlled, resource duplication. These futuristic ways are (a) amalgamation of SIP and SESP under the rubric of CSIP (b) joint initiative of BPEP and SESP for grassroots planning in education, and (c) periodic discussion with parents/guardians, SMC and other stakeholders of education about community ownership of school, and (d) on the spot training for SIP preparation at school level.

#### Direction for SIP implementation

Both field observation and SIP analysis gave the impression that there are schools with improved physical facilities. Even these schools are asking support for physical improvement because of the specificity of SIP guideline. In this context, the future direction would be (a) provision of school specific need - based SIP (b) setting rolling targets and new quality pertinent to the school context (c) relaxation of centrally assigned SIP areas (d) provision of multi-partner approach to fund SIP initiative other than BPEP (e) assistance to carry out monitoring of the implementation of SIPs by local communities (Parent teacher associations, VECs) and district level mechanism (DEO).

#### Direction for linkage with other partners

Field observation shows that there are other NGO Partners working with SIP. These partners follow different models other than DOE. In this context, there is a need of modular as well as functional linkages between these partners. The potential linkages could be (a) shared conceptualization of SIP (b) shared methodology to develop SIP (c) shared SIP planning (d) shared

SIP implementation strategies (e) periodic forums for the sharing of learning (d) collaborative research for the identification of bottlenecks and coping measures, and (e) collaborative undertaking with shared accountability.

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