

# EVALUATION DEPARTMENT



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Photo: Ken Opprann

## Evaluation of Norwegian Multilateral Support to Basic Education: **Nepal Case Study**

# Evaluation of Norwegian Multilateral Support to Basic Education: Nepal Case Study

Development Portfolio Management Group

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## Acknowledgements

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Field work for the Nepal case study was conducted by Pramod Bhatta (team leader) and Lynn Bennett. Lynn Bennett took the lead in preparing the draft and final reports with support from Sue Berryman.

Linda Morra Imas provided an independent peer review of the draft document. Her review was complemented by quality assurance reviews by the DPMG Director, Xavier Legrain.

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This report is the product of its authors, and responsibility for the accuracy of data included in this report rests with the authors. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of Norad's Evaluation Department.

## Table of Contents

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<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>I: Introduction: Objectives, methods, theory of change</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>II: Nepal Country Context</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>III: The School Sector Reform Program – Interventions</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>IV: Outcomes and Program Results</b> .....	<b>18</b>
A. Introduction .....	18
B. GPE Contributions to Norway's Focus Outcomes for the SSRP .....	18
C. UNICEF Contributions to SSRP .....	28
<b>V: Aid Management, Financial Management, and Enabling Conditions</b> .....	<b>36</b>
A. Aid Management .....	36
B. Financial management .....	42
C. Enabling conditions .....	43
<b>VI: Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	<b>45</b>
A. Conclusions .....	45
B. Recommendations .....	46
<b>References</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>Annex 1. Terms of Reference</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<b>Annex 2: Schematic of the project cycle and questions that reveal the quality with which it is implemented</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>Annex 3: List of those interviewed in the field</b> .....	<b>63</b>
<b>Annex 4: Nepal case study instrument</b> .....	<b>64</b>
<b>Annex 5: Project/Program Assessment Instrument</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>Annex 6: MOE list of positive UNICEF contributions to basic education</b> .....	<b>81</b>
<b>Annex 7: Views of members of the LEG on UNICEF strengths and weaknesses</b> .....	<b>82</b>

## Tables

<b>Table 1: Basic Information</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Table 2: Classification of 125 Groups into Major Caste/Ethnic Groups in 2011 Census and Proposed for Nepal's Education Management Information System (EMIS)</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Table 3: Government Allocations to the Education Sector</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Table 4: Internal Efficiency in Primary and Basic Education, 2009-2013</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Table 5: Average student achievement in NASAs, 2011-2013</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Table 6: Variation in net attendance rate</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 7: Distance to Educational Facilities by Consumption Quintile</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 8: Education Domain: mean (percent) and index scores by broader social group</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 9: Results for the UNICEF Country Programme for Nepal</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Table 10: Ratio and Trend Analysis</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>Table 11: Enabling Conditions</b> .....	<b>44</b>

## Figures

<b>Figure 1: Theory of Change</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Figure 2: SLC Pass Rate, 2007-2014</b> .....	<b>20</b>

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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CA	Constituent Assembly
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CFS	Child Friendly School
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
DEO	District Education Office
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DOE	Department of Education
DP	Development Partner
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoN	Government of Nepal
GPI	Gender Parity Index
JFA	Joint Financing Agreement
MLE	Multilingual Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOI	Medium of Instruction
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MTR	Mid Term Review
NASA	National Assessment of Student Achievement
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OOSC	Out of School Children
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PMEC	Priority Minimum Enabling Conditions
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RC	Resource Center
SE	Supervising Entity
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program
SSR-Plan	School Sector Reform Plan
STR	Student Teacher Ratio
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
SZOP	Schools as Zones of Peace
VDC	Village Development Committee
VEC	Village Education Committee
UML	United Marxist Leninists

## Executive Summary

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### Introduction

1. The Nepal case study is one of four case studies conducted for the Evaluation of Norway's Support to Basic Education through UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) from 2009 through 2013, the other three being Ethiopia, Malawi, and Madagascar. The two main questions for the Evaluation are these: 1) what are the intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of the basic education initiatives that Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds indirectly through two agents, GPE and UNICEF; and, 2) what is the value-added to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments. Two causal pathways are used to assess these questions: the research team's theory of change based on the factors that can be expected to improve the three outcomes of interest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity) and the processes and quality assurance mechanisms that increase the probabilities of good aid management of the project/program cycle.

2. Each case study is based on multiple sources of evidence: interviews with relevant staff at UNICEF's headquarters in New York, GPE's Secretariat, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and Norway's Norad; analysis of the financial management of UNICEF, GPE, and partner country government education programs and budgets; desk reviews of multiple documents prior to the field work; and extensive fieldwork in each country. The fieldwork complemented and deepened the desk reviews of documents for each case. It involved interviews with outside observers and all parties that affected the GPE and UNICEF programs, such as members of the Local Education Group, supervising or managing entities for GPE programs, UNICEF staff, and Ministry of Education managers and technical staff.

3. The four basic education programs during the period under study were: 1) the GPE grant to the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP, 2009-2014),<sup>1</sup> with World Bank as the Supervising Entity;<sup>2</sup> 2) GPE Global and Regional Activities grants to UNICEF to fund the development of the Consolidated Equity Strategy for the SSRP and also to run the National School Enrolment Campaign each year; 3) UNICEF's pooled funding for the SSRP that includes its core education program of Early Childhood Education and Development, formal primary education, non-formal education and peace/emergency education); and 4) a UNICEF BEGE-funded program of specific education-related activities outside the pool funding that includes initiatives like Schools as Zones of Peace<sup>3</sup>, Child Friendly Schools, Learning without Fear, the Campaign against Child Marriage, etc.

### Findings

4. The Theory of Change developed by the Development of Portfolio Management Group highlighted the three outcomes of interest to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the evaluation; **improved learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity (e.g., for marginalized groups)**. In this summary we first discuss the overall performance of the School Sector Reform Program in these three areas and then discuss our findings regarding the GPE and UNICEF programs to see to what extent they emphasized these areas.

5. Overall, the School Sector Reform Program has done well on gender equality, achieving gender parity at both primary and secondary level – though learning outcomes for girls are still lower than for boys. There is also convincing evidence that, overall, the SSR-Plan is pro poor and that removing fees and

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<sup>1</sup> The Nepal School Sector Reform Program is the Government's program for Basic Education and is based upon GoN's School Sector Reform Plan document. Confusingly, the acronym SSRP is used for both the program and the plan. To avoid this problem, this report will use SSRP to refer to the program and SSR-Plan to refer to the plan document.

<sup>2</sup> A GPE grant to fund the SSRP Extension Plan (2014-16) has been approved and is underway, but was not given in the period under consideration by this case study.

<sup>3</sup> The Schools as Zones of Peace initiative in Nepal was funded by the Government of the Netherlands.

providing in-kind and cash incentives to poor families has increased the economic equity of school education in Nepal. However, SSRP has not done as well on other dimensions of equity. There is little evidence that the school system is doing a better job of improving educational outcomes for children who are disabled, who don't speak Nepali or who belong to caste/ethnic groups facing social discrimination.

**6. GPE.** Since there was no way of regularly assessing student performance other than the School Leaving Certificate results which are not standardized between years, the main result for **improved learning outcomes** was to establish a system for regular student assessment. The National Assessment of Student Achievement has been established and is now in its third round collecting data on students in grades 3, 5 and 8 from a national sample of schools. In the absence of baseline data on learning outcomes, the SSRP has tracked a number of efficiency indicators on retention, survival and dropout rates. These have improved, almost to targeted levels. For **gender equality** the program sought to achieve gender parity in primary and secondary education and this has been done. In terms of **equity** for children facing disabilities, poverty or barriers related to location language or caste/ethnic identity, SSRP did not have clear outcome goals. There have been significant increases in Dalit enrolment at the primary level, but this drops off at secondary level. Other than the number of disabled, Dalit and endangered Janajati children receiving scholarships, during the evaluation period there was no systematic tracking of learning outcomes by any of the equity dimensions. The National Assessment of Student Achievement, piloted during the evaluation period, is now established. It will allow the systematic monitoring of learning outcomes. How well Nepal will be able to measure outcomes by subgroup depends on the accuracy and relevance of subgroup categorizations.

**7. UNICEF.** UNICEF Nepal did not have a specific outcome goal on **improved learning outcomes**. However, it did use various proxies such as promotion rates, repetition rates and dropout rates to assess the efficacy of its own programs in the districts where it works. For example, it reported in 2012 that children enrolled in one of the 1371 Child Friendly Schools in UNICEF districts, showed a 5 percent drop in repetition and a 2 percent reduction in drop-out rate. On **gender equality** UNICEF reports an increase in female enrolment rates in the districts it works in from 82 percent in 2007/8 to 86.1 percent in 2012. Finally, for **equity**, UNICEF did not focus on tracking results disaggregated by caste/ethnicity/ disability, economic status, etc. but rather on tracking the number of Out of School Children and trying to reduce the proportion of Out of School Children in the districts where it works. Systematic data by subgroup are not available in UNICEF documents for the evaluation period. However, UNICEF's introduction of a Child Deprivation Index promises to sharpen its tracking of results by subgroup.

### **Aid-Management, Financial Management, and Enabling Conditions**

**8. Aid management.** With some caveats, the quality of aid management by GPE and UNICEF in Nepal is strong. The two agencies complement each other substantively. GPE focuses on making progress against the objectives of Government's SSR-Plan. UNICEF focuses on advocacy at the national policy level as well as at the deeper attitudinal and socio-economic level.

**9.** In terms of process, GPE is strong where UNICEF is weak and vice-versa. In Nepal GPE and its agents, including UNICEF as GPE's Coordinating Agent, meet good standards for the project cycle: a) detailed designs for interventions; b) a reasonably well designed results framework; c) indicators for at least some of the development objectives that are consistent across time; d) consistent pursuit of the interventions until the end of the program period; e) systematic monitoring of program progress against key indicators; and f) in-depth and proactive supervision of program implementation. Their adherence to these standards means that all parties know how well interventions are implementing and whether they are having the expected effects on the outcomes sought.

**10.** UNICEF is much weaker on these dimensions, as indicated by its design and supervision documents for the period of 2009-2013. For example, those interviewed were concerned that UNICEF frequently shifted their priorities and failed to follow through on some initiatives. UNICEF notes that initiatives can be dropped because they are ineffective or because, being effective, they are transferred to Government. However, UNICEF does not clearly document what happens to initiatives that disappear. At

the same time, those interviewed saw UNICEF as dynamic, flexible, good at influencing both policy and social attitudes and behavior in sensitive areas and willing to try new ideas.

**11. Financial management.** The 2014 assessment of Nepal's public expenditure and financial accountability indicates that Nepal has made substantial progress in deepening the structures and processes of public financial management. At the aggregate level, the budget, both expenditure and revenue, is credible and that credibility has become internalized. Fungibility is not a major issue in Nepal where the fund utilization rate is quite high. A review of the public spending analysis shows that 96% of the total budget has been spent in the sector during the five year period (2005/06-2009/10).

**12.** Table A shows that Nepal's budget for education as a percentage of GDP has decreased steadily from 2009/10 to 2012/13, with some recovery in 2013/14 to about 4.2 percent, but still below the average of 4.9 percent for developing countries (in 2012). The table also indicates that the education sector has been receiving a declining percentage of the national budget; the 15.6% that it received in 2013/14 is well below the average level of expenditures for developing countries of 17.3 percent (in 2012) and the SSR-Plan-agreed fiscal framework that sought to gradually increase Government allocation to education to 20 percent of the national budget.

**Table A. Ratio and Trend Analysis**

Year	Education Budgets as % of GDP	Education Budgets % of total Budget	% of Education Budget Allocated to Basic
2009/10	3.6%	16.3%	71%
2010/11	4.5%	17.1%	64%
2011/12	4.3%	16.6%	69%
2012/13	3.7%	15.7%	65%
2013/14	4.2%	15.7%	60%

**Source:** MOE. 2014. Annual Strategic Implementation Plan/Annual Work Plan and Budget, 2014-15. Kathmandu: Ministry of Education.

**13.** Although Government's policy is to increase the proportion of the education budget allocated to basic education, basic education has seen a dramatic decline in its share of the education budget from 71% in 2009/10 to 60% in 2013/14. Thus, basic education is receiving a smaller share of the sector's smaller share. At the same time, budget releases to the local entities (District Education Offices, Resource Centers and Schools) have been regular and predictable, facilitating the effective use of the funds that are provided.

**14. Enabling Conditions.** The Theory of Change postulated that the following conditions would have an effect on the "ability" of the program interventions to make a difference on the desired educational outcomes, grouped by **System-Level Enabling Conditions** and **Basic Education Enabling Conditions** as shown in Table B.

**Table B: Enabling Conditions**

System-Level Enabling Conditions	Basic Education Enabling Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National/political commitment to improved quality and equity in BE, including ECE</li> <li>High share of national budget for education</li> <li>Conflict/disaster sensitive mechanisms in place</li> <li>Functioning Local Education Group</li> <li>Appropriate multi-lingual policy in place &amp; funded</li> <li>Disaggregated EMIS &amp; learning assessments in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community/ parental involvement and supports especially for girls/ disadvantaged</li> <li>Fee free policy, school feeding, scholarships for Disadvantaged</li> <li>Institutional capacity at national and local level (for planning and implementation)</li> <li>Strong budgetary support for BE, including ECE</li> </ul>



Place	
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15. The team examined the current status of each one of these conditions and roughly determined how strong each was, using a three point hierarchy, **strong, moderate, weaker**. The results are summarized here shading the above list as follows: strong: **green**; medium: **blue**, and weaker, **yellow**.

16. Most of the *system level enabling conditions* specified in the theory of change (See Figure 1 in Chapter I) are in place in Nepal. One missing element has been “an appropriate Multilingual Education policy in place and funded”. Although a policy has been drafted, it does not seem to have been adequately funded or implemented. There are also weaknesses in the Education Management Information System that have kept it from being able to adequately track equity and efficiency outcomes along caste/ethnic lines and from being able to verify and systematically cross check data generated by the schools.

17. In terms of the *enabling conditions for basic education*, things are a bit more complex. There is fairly “strong budgetary support for basic education including early childhood development and education” and most of the other enabling conditions listed are “in place”; however all have critical hollow spots that weaken SSRP’s ability to ensure that the necessary ingredients are there and that the expected causal sequence shown in the inner box in Figure 1 actually happens. “Institutional capacity for planning and implementation” at the national and especially at the local level, is thin.

18. Part of what is missing in Figure 1 is any reference to the power relations that operate at the school level, the ministry level and the broader societal level. What is not shown is the *undue power that the teachers have because of their links to political party structures*. Because of the strength of the teachers organizations, the Ministry of Education has not actually been able to give community schools power over their teachers. Even if there are *enough* teachers and even if they are *trained*, too many are not *committed*. So even though there are enough classrooms, toilets and at least basic teaching/learning materials, teachers are not “adequately supervised” to insure that they spend “adequate time on task with students”.

## Conclusions

19. The Nepal case offers some lessons for aid to socially heterogeneous countries in periods of political transition and uncertainty.

- **What you measure is what you get.** Because of the prior emphasis on meeting the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals of *access* and *gender parity*, indicators for these aspects had been developed. Data were regularly collected and analyzed by the education management information system. This attention – backed by a range of solid interventions by SSRP and earlier programs – has produced the solid results seen in these two areas. However, the goals of increased *quality* and *equity* have not been well measured – and achievements in these dimensions have also been disappointing.
- **The capability trap: Assumptions about capacity at the school level.** Capability traps occur when a system is expected to deliver results for which it is not adequately prepared. While school management has been increasingly decentralized, there has not been sufficient focus on capacity development, particularly at the school level where the majority of the education budget is spent.<sup>4</sup> Schools have been given increasing responsibility for managing funds, but the mechanisms and school capacity for ensuring transparency and accountability remain weak. As a result, the biggest donors (particularly the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank) have focused on Public Financial Management issues to the detriment of quality.

<sup>4</sup> Moriani, Farrukh, Bhuban B. Bajracharya, Pramod Bhatta and Sreyasa Mainali. 2013. *School Sector Reform Plan Nepal: Institutional Analysis and Capacity Development Plan*. Kathmandu: Asian Development Bank, Nepal resident Mission.

- **Unintended consequences.** The transfer of responsibility – specifically the responsibility for deciding the medium of instruction – to the School Management Committees has resulted in a shift to English Medium in many community schools. Since competency in English is seen as a path to good employment opportunities, parents want their children to be educated in English. This is what most of the private schools offer and what community schools feel they need to offer to be competitive. Unfortunately since most community school teachers are not competent to teach English and students are also unfamiliar with the language, this trend will not help to improve the quality of student learning and is further burdening the already complex issue of multilingual education.
- **UNICEF’s advocacy work and presence on the ground is highly complementary to what GPE and the other Development Partners bring to SSRP. However, UNICEF’s insecure funding reduces its ability to focus on longer-term goals and ensure that its good initiatives get institutionalized.** We heard a great deal of appreciation for UNICEF’s work in the education sector from government and all of the Development Partners. But we also heard disappointment that some of UNICEF’s most promising initiatives had not been institutionalized and thus were in danger of being lost.

## Recommendations

- 1) **Using the newly developed Consolidated Equity Strategy and Equity Index, broaden the equity focus of SSRP and strengthen the emphasis on improving learning outcomes for all children and reducing disparities between groups.** Align SSRP with the new Sustainable Development Goals – especially Sustainable Development Goal 1: Leave no one behind. Set explicit goals for *reducing disparities*, especially in learning outcomes, based on region, language, caste/ethnicity and, of course, gender. The SSRP has made real **progress on gender equity, but much less progress on other dimensions of equity – especially on addressing barriers related to language and caste discrimination.** The issue of language affects not only Janajatis or Indigenous Peoples. Millions of Nepalis from the Madhes/Tarai speak languages like Maithli, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Hindi, etc. that are from the same Indo-Aryan language family as Nepali but are not mutually intelligible. While many Janajati and Madhesi children are able to speak and understand Nepal when they reach school, there are also many who cannot – though precise data on this are not available.

One of the reasons that the language issue has been avoided may be because it would be costly to set up a system to provide quality mother-tongue instruction in the early years and then transition to Nepali. But the inertia among mainstream (Nepali-speaking) policy makers and managers in MoE may also be because they have not understood the impact that their failure to deal with the language issue is having on learning outcomes for the affected students.

- 2) **Improve the ability of the education management information system to better identify social groups where children’s access, participation and learning outcomes are lagging.** The education management information system is already serving as an important ‘dashboard’ for the SSRP, but it could do much more. The Department of Education **needs to make better use of the data to steer the SSRP implementation and stimulate policy change.** The Monitoring and Evaluation section is understaffed to fully analyze the data and learn from it and yet it is difficult for non-Ministry of Education staff to get access to the data of the education management information system.

The major limitation of the education management information system in terms of its ability to track and promote equity is that its **framework for disaggregation of social groups is completely inadequate.** All students are classified into one of just three groups: Other, Dalits, and Janajatis. This oversimplified categorization leaves out two other major groups with low educational outcomes, the Muslims and the Tarai Other Castes. However, members of even generally

disadvantaged subgroups vary on dimensions of disadvantage, with perhaps most but not all being disadvantaged. The Equity Index could be an effective way to monitor equity.

- 3) **Focus more attention on building local level capacity for school management and on improving the school governance systems to ensure adequate checks and balances.** School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations need continued support and oversight to perform their functions related to management, and the transparency and accountability in the use of funds. Part of this should be setting up guidelines for greater gender, social and economic diversity on the School Management Committee. Efforts to **develop specific Terms of Reference for Head Teachers and enter into clear performance contracts between School Management Committees and Head Teachers** should also be continued and documented to see if they help build accountability.
- 4) **The Development Partners Group should look for ways to open dialogue with government on how to address the underlying problem of the politicization of teacher recruitment and deployment.** This is extremely delicate but it needs to be discussed. One way to approach it is by drawing together the results of global research in this area and by undertaking research in Nepal to document the negative impact of the current system on student learning outcomes (and hence future earnings potential).
- 5) **Provide more stable funding to UNICEF in return for greater accountability for its (jointly agreed) outcomes within the overall SSRP.** One way to make better use of UNICEF's acknowledged comparative advantages would be for the Local Education Group (including UNICEF) to agree on certain key UNICEF initiatives that seek to bring attitudinal change and support greater equity within the overall framework of the SSRP. Funds could be earmarked for mainstreaming these selected initiatives more fully into the Ministry of Education's program as part of the SSRP. This would relieve UNICEF's education program of its current funding insecurity and allow it to focus on a longer time horizon within the framework of the SSRP.
- 6) **More Policy Research Needed.** In the absence of a political settlement, getting traction on the policy issues that are stalling SSRP is especially challenging. However, compelling research can stimulate new thinking and sometimes break the logjam. The SSRP needs to use research to find the best way forward on implementation and to influence key technical and political decision makers. Much more use could be made of the rich EMIS data – and perhaps the development of the Education Equity Index will stimulate greater effort in this area.

There are a number of assumptions in the SSRP model that need to be tested. Some of these questions of course would need data beyond what the EMIS collects. Some examples include:

- **Does ECED lead to improved learning** in grade 1? Does the impact vary by region, economic status, gender or social identity of the child? Where is the impact greatest?
- What is the **impact of scholarships** on student retention and performance – again looking at variations by region, economic status, gender and social identity?
- What has been the impact of the various **alternative schooling options**? Do some options work better in urban areas? What seems to work best for students of different ages, genders, etc.?
- There is a whole range of questions about the **medium of instruction, use of mother tongue**, etc. that need to be answered. Some of these will hopefully be dealt with in the Australian report but that will be just a beginning. If pilots are developed and implemented on the basis of the report, funds should be ear marked for rigorous impact monitoring. This was not done in the earlier Finland supported MLE project so few lessons could be drawn from that investment. It

will also be especially important to study the **impact of switching to English Medium** and which socio-economic groups of students are able to adapt and which are not.

- Could one of the DPs sponsor action research to assess the **impact of training teachers on CFS and more child-centered teaching learning methods on learning outcomes?** Such research would need to combine quantitative approaches with in-depth qualitative methods and would involve spending time in classrooms and with teachers and students. The NEGRP would be an ideal site for such a study. One of the objectives of this kind of research would be to draw the attention of the Nepal teaching profession, MoE and the LEG to *what goes on in the classroom* and documenting the difference it can make.
- What is the **origin and history of the 85 schools in Nepal that have only Dalit students?** Are these schools informally “segregated” as in America’s Old South because other caste groups do not wish to have their children study with Dalits? Or did these schools arise because Dalits often live in segregated communities and it made sense for them to have their own schools nearby? In other words, are these schools a product of discrimination or social geography? How do they perform in terms of student learning outcomes compared to other schools around them with more diverse student bodies? What do teachers and students in these school feel about being Dalit-only?

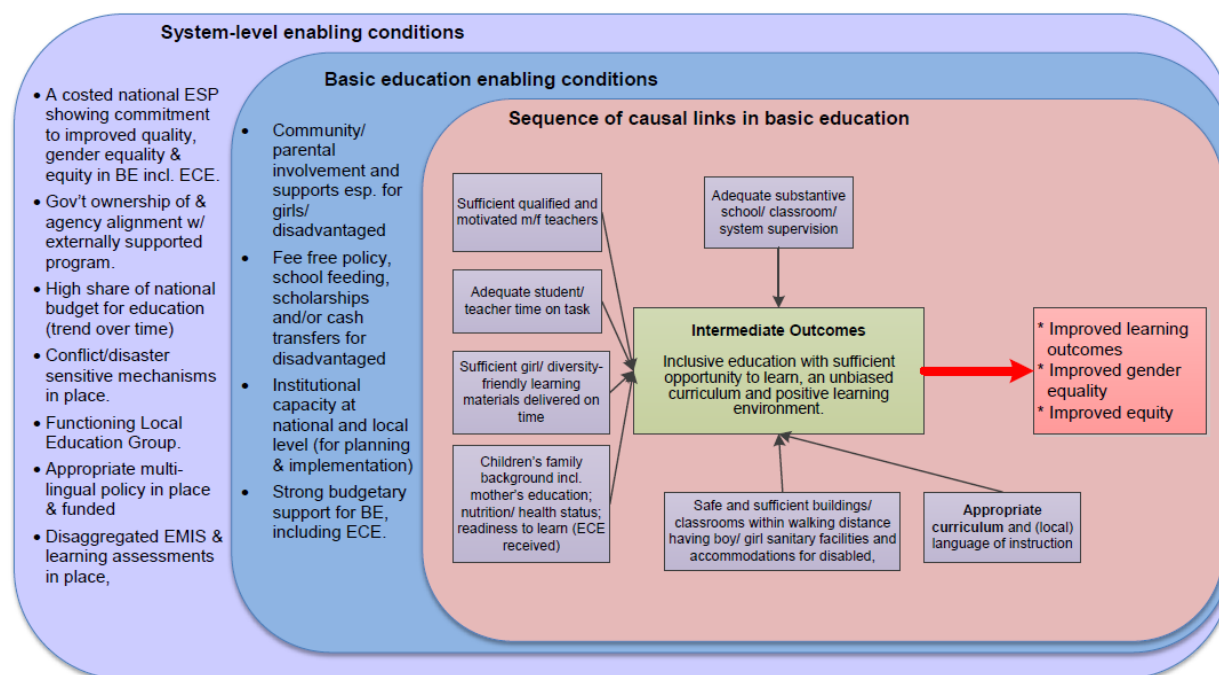
## I: Introduction: Objectives, methods, theory of change

1.1. The Nepal case study is one of four case studies conducted by the Development Portfolio Management Group (DPMG) for the Evaluation of Norway's Support to Basic Education through UNICEF and GPE, the other three being Ethiopia, Malawi, and Madagascar. The time period for the evaluation is 2009-2013.

1.2. The two main questions for the Evaluation are these: 1) what are the intended and unintended outputs and outcomes of the basic education initiatives that Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) funds indirectly through two agents, GPE and UNICEF; and, 2) what is the value-added to the MFA of using GPE and UNICEF as conduits for its investments. Annex 1 displays the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

1.3. Two causal pathways are used to assess these questions: a) the research team's theory of change or causal path (Figure 1 below) for improving three outcomes of interest to Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (learning outcomes, gender equality, and equity), and b) the processes and quality assurance mechanisms that increase the probabilities of good aid management of the project/program cycle, diagrammed in annex 2.

Figure 1: Theory of Change



1.4. The case study focuses on the following four contributions to the basic education programs during the period under study: 1) the GPE grant to the School Sector Reform Program<sup>5</sup> (2009-2014), with World Bank as the Supervising Entity;<sup>6</sup> 2) GPE Global and Regional Activities grants to UNICEF to fund the

<sup>5</sup> The Nepal School Sector Reform Program is based upon GoN's School Sector Reform Plan document. Confusingly, the acronym SSRP is used for both the program and the plan. To avoid this problem, this report will use SSRP to refer to the *program* and SSR-Plan to refer to the *plan document*.

<sup>6</sup> A GPE grant to fund the SSRP Extension Plan (2014-16) has been approved and is underway, but was not given in the period under consideration by this case study.

development of the Consolidated Equity Strategy and also the National School Enrolment Campaign each year; 3) UNICEF's pooled funding for the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) that includes its core education program of Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED), formal primary education, non-formal education and peace/emergency education. In addition UNICEF carried out 4) a program of specific education-related activities outside the pool funding that included initiatives like Schools as Zones of Peace, Child Friendly Schools, Learning without Fear, the Campaign against Child Marriage, etc.<sup>7</sup>

**1.5.** Each case study is based on multiple sources of evidence, including interviews with outside observers and the main parties connected to the GPE and UNICEF programs, such as members of the Local Education Group (including bilateral organizations and CSO members), supervising or managing entities for GPE programs, UNICEF staff, and Ministry of Education leaders and technical staff; and, where possible, school visits and school-based interviews. The fieldwork complemented and deepened the desk reviews of documents for each case. The case study teams consisted of two researchers, one senior and the other more junior, except in Nepal where they were both senior. Prior to the field work they were given the desk study results and invited to contribute to the field study design. The resulting field-study instrument, containing both standard items and customized ones, was jointly reviewed by the teams and the overall evaluation Team Leader during his one week visit to each country (except for Nepal) just prior to the field work, to assure full understanding or further adaptation of the items and inter-rater reliability. The Team Leader participated in many of the early interviews in these locations to assure that data collection was conducted according to the agreed upon design and standards

**1.6.** The case studies assessed not only the outcome and contributing variables (interventions) in our Theory of Change, but also the contextual variables (enabling conditions) in the theory that can affect the outcomes and interventions, such as national and political commitment to basic education improvement and equity, the share of national budget going to education, institutional capacity, and private subsidies for basic education (e.g., free meals and scholarships). They also took into consideration various national strategic conditions such as the coup d'état in Madagascar, Ethiopia's booming economy, Nepal's political turmoil, and, in Malawi, a major scandal at the Ministry of Finance that led to the suspension of aid by a number of donors. Each case study used process tracing, a method of checking whether the intervening steps in the theory of change were realized, to confirm the strength of the hypothesized pathways. This help establish whether inputs and outputs were related to outcomes through the processes outlined in the theory of change. The Nepal field team consisted of a Nepali consultant and an international consultant. Annex 4 displays the field study instrument used to guide the interviews. Those interviewed included parties that affected the GPE and UNICEF programs, such as members of the Local Education Group, the supervising entity for the GPE program, UNICEF staff, Ministry of Education managers and technical staff. The list of persons interviewed is presented at Annex 3.

**1.7.** The methodology had limits and potential biases. Educational outcomes cannot be directly or solely attributed to Government or donor-sponsored programs. Economic trends, natural disasters, and other factors can also affect outcomes. Each case study thus assesses not only the independent variables in the theory of change related to government and aid programs, but also the contextual variables (enabling conditions), such as economic and political events, population growth, and governance in the theory that these can affect outcomes. Each case uses process tracing, a method of checking whether the intervening steps in the theory of change were realized, to strengthen attribution of outcomes. This helps establish whether inputs and outputs were related to outcomes through the processes outlined in the theory of change. However, unlike statistical and experimental methods, process tracing cannot estimate the magnitude of the effects of each variable in the theory of change or of each enabling condition.

**1.8.** A second limitation is that the cases selected for study are not necessarily representative of the population of developing countries that received aid. Indeed, the case studies and desk studies were purposively sampled to include fragile states that pose difficult challenges for successful aid to basic

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<sup>7</sup> Norway funds half of UNICEF's global program on education that is used primarily for the Central Bureau of Statistics and Girls' education, but we were not able to trace the exact amount of Norway's support to UNICEF, Nepal's pooled and non-pooled education budget. The Schools as Zones of Peace (SZOP) initiative was funded by the Netherlands

education. Broad generalizations therefore cannot be made directly from any one case to the population of developing countries. It is possible, however, to make narrower, contingent generalizations from one or a few cases to subsets of cases that share key similarities. The challenges common to the several fragile states in the sample, for example, are more likely to be shared by other fragile states than by developing countries generally.

**1.9.** The case studies and desk studies are also constrained by the limitations of the available data. The programs being evaluated often tracked inputs and outputs, but they did not always have clear results frameworks, nor did they consistently measure baselines and outcomes. The programs being evaluated occurred some years ago (2009-2013). Some key players in the design and implementation of these programs, especially for the early part of the period from 2009 to 2013, were no longer available, or, if they were still in place, had to try to remember details. Respondents and authors of documents that were reviewed often had a natural interest in presenting events in a positive light. Where available, data from disinterested parties were triangulated with views that might be positively biased.

**1.10.** The report is organized into the following chapters: Chapter II presents the Nepal country context including the overall strategic context and the educational context. Chapter III describes SSRP interventions and Chapter IV presents the project/program outcomes and results. Aid management, financial management and enabling conditions are discussed in Chapter V. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter VI.

## II: Nepal Country Context

### General Country Background Information

**Table 1: Basic Information**

		2009	2013	Source
1	Population	26.5 m	27.8 m	WDI 2014
2	Population growth rate	1%	1%	“
3	Percent urban	16%	18%	“
4	National economic grown rate	5%	4%	“
5	GDP per capita	363	409	“
6	Infant mortality (under 5, per 1000)	38	32**	“
7	Poverty (percent of population below national poverty line)	31%	25.16%	NLSS II (2002/3) & NLSS III (2011/12)
8	Net primary enrollment ratio	2008	2012	
a	Female gender parity 2008 .98		97	WDI
b	Total EFA Eval Report ^ >	92	98	“
9	Net pre-primary enrollment ratio			
a	Female	62	83	WDI
b	Total	64	84	“
10	Net lower-secondary* enrollment ratio (* if not available, secondary)			
a	Female		61	WDI
b	Total		60	“
11	Primary school completion rate	2010		
a	Female	81	104	WDI
b	Total	82	100	“

\*\*According to UNICEF the Nepal Demographic and health Survey (NDHS) for 2006 showed 61 per 1000.

### Country Strategic Context

**2.1.** During the period under study (2009-2013) Nepal was emerging from a period of internal conflict and transition from a monarchy to a republic. After 10 years of violent insurgency that had killed some 17,000 Nepalis, the king was removed and a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed between the united Communist Party of Nepal - Maoists (UCPN-M) and the democratic parties in November 2006. Elections to the Constituent Assembly (CA) charged with drafting the country's new federal constitution were held in 2008 and the UCPN-Maoist party emerged as the single largest party. But without a majority it found it difficult to govern and between 2009 and 2012 there were four different governments – two Maoists and two led by the United Marxist Leninists (UML), one of the mainstream parties. After failing to meet its deadline for delivery of the constitution several times, the CA was finally dissolved on May 27, 2012 and elections for a second CA were held in November 2013, this time bringing in the long standing Nepali Congress and UML parties and leaving the Maoists far behind. In short, the period during which the School SSR-Plan was drafted and the SSRP began its implementation has been a politically volatile one in Nepal.

**2.2.** This volatility has affected the economy with frequent strikes – especially in the early years of this period – inflation in food and fuel prices and low job growth. The latter has led to increasingly large numbers of young men and women leaving the country to seek employment abroad – often in difficult and dangerous circumstances with little support from their government. Currently, some 28.8 percent of Nepal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from remittances, and in parts of the rural countryside, young men are a



rarity. Progress on economic reforms and key energy and transportation infrastructure investments has been slow, keeping Nepal's economic performance at a low level despite its two fast growing neighbors.

**2.3.** Nepal is a highly diverse country with 125 different caste/ethnic groups identified by the last Census (See Table 2) and some 123 different languages spoken. The Nepal Himalayas are at the confluence of the eastward moving Caucasian peoples who speak Indo-Aryan languages related to Sanskrit and practice Hinduism and the many Tibeto-Burman speaking groups of Mongoloid stock that traditionally practiced Buddhism, animism or shamanism. These latter groups call themselves Janajatis and claim to be the original inhabitants of the country. When the Hindu King Prithvi Narayan Shah finally took over the Nepal valley in 1768 after a long period of conquest, he classified Nepal's diverse peoples along the hierarchical lines of the Hindu caste system with the ritually pure Brahmin priests and Kshetriya kings and warriors on the top and the occupational castes on the bottom as "untouchables". The various Janajati groups the King had overcome – but still needed as allies – were placed in the middle of the hierarchy. Unlike most of India where indigenous groups or "scheduled tribes" made up only a small percentage of the population and were ranked as untouchable, in Nepal the Janajatis made up more than a third of the population (See Table 2) and were accommodated as "clean castes" from whom water – but not cooked rice – could be taken.

**2.4.** Table 2 shows the major caste/ethnic grouping in the left hand column with the corresponding sub-groups contained within each of these major categories on the far right hand column. In the center is a simplified set of 10 major caste/ethnic categories. A later section of this report discusses that the Department of Education's (DoE) Education Management Information System (EMIS) may wish to consider using these categories to capture a more comprehensive view of the access and educational performance of children from various lagging caste/ethnic groups. At the same time, it is a delicate issue to enshrine caste and ethnicity as determining education success, and the route chosen by the Access and Equity Thematic Working Group of the LEG may be preferable. The Group has developed an equity index that considers many determinants of inequity that may have more significance, such as geographic location.

**2.5.** The caste hierarchy was actually encoded as the law of the land (*Muliki Ain*) in 1854 during the Rana era and though it was formally abolished in the new code of 1963, it remains deeply embedded in the values and social practices that structure Nepali society. In fact, it was the groups who had been devalued and marginalized by the caste system – in particular, the Janajatis and the Dalits or former untouchables – who were particularly drawn by the Maoist call in 1996 to overthrow the old "feudal regime" and establish an inclusive people's republic. A third marginalized group were the women whose economic dependency and subordination to men was also part of the social fabric across all groups. Although the culture of male dominance was perhaps most stringent among the "high caste" groups whose ritual status depended on their control over the sexual purity of their women, patriarchy prevailed – even among the somewhat more egalitarian Janajati groups. Women too were among those attracted to the Maoist revolutionary rhetoric and many left their families to join the People's Army in the late '90s and early 2000's.

**2.6.** Another important distinction that cuts across Nepal's caste and ethnic groups is the Madhesi/Pahardi or Tarai/ plains-dweller and hill-dweller distinction. Since Hill Brahmin/Chhetris were the ruling group, they tended to view the plains dwellers or Madhesis as second-class citizens. In fact, during the Rana period Madhesis were even required to get special papers to come to Kathmandu, the capital of their own country. Madhesi resentment came to the surface during the period shortly after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in late 2006 when they feared that once again, even in the new post-insurgency regime, their concerns were being neglected. During 2007 and into 2008 there were riots in various parts of the plains as groups there demanded full recognition in the new constitution and a greater share in the ruling of the state. Along with the Janajatis, the Madhesis demanded their own identity-based states in the new federal structure that had been promised under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The reluctance of the traditional ruling group – who still have a strong hold on the mainstream political parties – to accept identity-based federalism as the best way to create a more inclusive state is one of the major reasons that the drafting of the new constitution has been stalled.

**2.7.** It is important to understand this social and historical context as we assess SSRP achievements and shortcomings on gender equality and equity for marginalized groups in education. We are looking at a post conflict period in Nepal when long standing caste, gender and regional hierarchies have been

fundamentally challenged by the Maoist insurgency and when many even from the traditionally dominant groups also deeply want change as part of making Nepal a successful and inclusive modern nation. At the same time, there are also those among the elite who resist the change. So what we are witnessing as we examine the implementation of the gender equality and equity goals of the SSRP is a process of *negotiation* through which new power relations between men and women and various caste, ethnic and regional identity groups are being forged – but now against a state-backed template of democratic equality rather than a religiously sanctioned ritual hierarchy.

**Table 2:** Classification of 125 Groups into Major Caste/Ethnic Groups in 2011 Census and Proposed for Nepal's Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Major Caste/Ethnic Group (% of population)	Simplified Caste/Ethnic Categories that could be used by EMIS	125 Caste/Ethnic Sub-Groups (from 2011 Census)
1. Hill Brahmin (12.2%)	1. "High Caste" Groups –Educationally Advanced	Bahun (1)
2. Hill Chhetri (16.2%)		Chhetri, Thakuri, Sanyasi/Dasnami (3)
3. Madhesi Brahmin/ Chhetri (B/C) (0.8%)		Madhesi Brahmin. Kayastha, Rajput (3)
4. Madhesi Other Caste (14.5%)		
4.1 Madhesi Other Castes – A (Literacy>50%)	2. Madhesi Other Castes – Educationally Advanced	Amat, Badhaee, Baraee, Dev, Gaderi/Bhedihar, Hajam/ Thakur, Haluwai, Kalar, Kalwar, Kamar, Kanu, Kathbaniyan, Koiri/Kushwaha, Kurmi, Lohar, Rajbhar, Rajdhob, Sonar, Sudhi, Teli, Yadev (21)
4.2 Madhesi Other Caste – B (Literacy <50%)	3. Madhesi Other Castes – Educationally Deprived	Bin, Dhandi, Dhankar/Karikar, Dhunia, Kahar, Kewat, Kori, Kumhar, Lodh, Mali, Mallaha, Natuwa, Nuniya, Nurang, Sarbaria (15)
5. Hill Dalit (8.1%)	4. Dalit – Educationally Deprived	Badi, Damai/Dholi, Gaine, Kami, Sarki (5)
6. Madhesi Dalit (4.5%)		Bantar/Sardar, Chamar/Harijan/Ram, Chidimar, Dhobi, Dom, Dusahdh/Pasawan/Pasi, Halkor, Khatwe, Musahar, Tatma/Tatwa (10)
7. Mountain/Hill (M/H) Janajati (27.2%)		
7.1 Newar (5%)	5. M/H Janajati – Educationally Advanced	The Newars have many subgroups but these are not enumerated in the Census (1)
7.2 M/H Janajati – A (Literacy >66%)		Sherpa, Yakkha, Jirel, Kulung, Yumphu, Mewahang, Bala, Gharti/Bhujel, Khaling, Durai, Magar, Chhantyal/Chhantel, Aathpariya, Bahing, Rai, Thulung, Gurung, Limbu, Lepcha, Samgpang, Dura, Chamling, Bantaba, Loharung, Thakali (24)
7.3 M/H Janajati – B (Literacy <66%)		Bhote, Bote, Brahm/Baram, Byasi/Sauka, Chepang, Danuwar, Dolpo, Ghale, Hayu, Hyalmo, Kumal, Kusunda, Lhomi, Lhopa, Majhi, Machhiring, Pahari, Raji, raute, Sunuwar, Tmang, Thami, Tokegola, Walung (24)
8. Taria Janajati (7.6%)		
8.1 Tarai Janajati – A (Literacy >50%)	7. Tarai Janajati – Educationally Advanced	Dhimal, Gangai, , Kisan, Koche, Meche, Munda, , Rajbansi, , Tajpuriya, Tharu (13)
8.2 Tarai Janajati – B (Literacy <50%)	8. Tarai Janajati – Educationally Deprived	Satar/Santhal, Jhangad/Dhagar, Dhanuk, Pattharkatta/Kushwadiya (4)
9. Muslim (4.3%)	9. Muslim – Educationally Deprived	Muslim (1)
10. Other (MPB) (0.3%)	10. Other	Marwardi, Punjabi/Sikh, Bangali (PB) (3)

11. Other undefined (1.0%)	Dalit others, Janajati others, Tarai others, undefined others (4)
12. Foreigner	Foreign citizens

Source: Gurung 1998; Acharya and Subba 2008; CBS 2011; Pandey et al. 2013; Gurung et al. 2014; Gurung, Y.B. 2014.

**Key:** Rows shaded in blue indicate educationally deprived groups; Column 2 is proposed by this report to replace the current 3 categories used by the current Education Management Information System (EMIS) which are: Dalit, Janajati and Other. This categorization misses many children from educationally disadvantaged groups. The categories in the left-hand and right hand columns are those used by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) for the last 2011 Census round.

## Education System and Situation Analysis

**2.8.** The school education system in Nepal has also been affected by the insurgency. With no locally elected village and district governments since 2002, the critical District and Village Education Committees are not functioning. The teaching profession has also suffered increasing politicization. Yet, despite a period of nearly twenty years of turmoil during and after the insurgency, Nepal has kept its schools running and has substantially increased the number of students it serves. The school education system in Nepal comprises at least one year of pre-school, five years of primary, three years of lower secondary, two years of secondary and two years of higher secondary education. With the implementation of the SSRP in 2009, school education was supposed to be restructured into 8 years of basic (through integration of primary and lower secondary levels) and four years of secondary education (through integration of secondary and higher secondary levels). However, this restructuring has not happened in the absence of the requisite amendments to the existing *Education Act 1971*, which is the main legal instrument governing the school education sector.

**2.9.** School education is offered through at least two types of schools—public and private. With the Seventh Amendment to the Education Act 1971 in 2001, all public schools have been renamed as ‘community’ schools and all private schools are called ‘institutional’ schools. The majority of children attend public schools but there is an immense desire for private schooling. At the secondary school level, about 15 percent of all children attend private schools, which increases to almost 27 percent if higher secondary education is also included. The vast majority of community schools receive support from the government in the form of teacher salaries, recurrent grants for school administration and management, student grants for textbooks and scholarships, and grants for construction of classrooms and toilets. However, only very few private schools (those that operate as trusts) are eligible to receive such grants. The majority of private schools are registered as companies and operate through user fees and are allowed to make profit.

**2.10.** In 2013/14, the total number of school units (both public and private) in the country was reported at 35,223, of which 34,923 offered basic (1-8) education and 9,021 offered secondary (9-12) education. In addition, there are a number of religious schools—*madrasas*, *gompas* and *gurukuls*—offering education in the Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist traditions respectively. Since 2008, the government has adopted the policy of mainstreaming these religious institutions, as a result of which they are eligible for state support in return for adopting the national curricula and textbooks.

**2.11.** Nepal has made good progress in enhancing enrollments and gender parity in education. Between 2009/10 and 2013/14, the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in primary basic education has increased from 83.2 to 86.3, surpassing the targets of 75 and 85, respectively for these years. However, within primary education, although good progress has been made in increasing NER, the original target of 97 had not been achieved in 2013/14. There has also been commensurate improvement in enhancing equity in the system. Gender parity in enrollments at primary, basic and secondary levels has been achieved. Likewise, the share of hitherto marginalized groups such as Dalits and Janajatis has also increased. In 2013/14, Dalit children accounted for more than 21 percent of all children enrolled in primary education and Janajatis accounted for more than 36 percent of all enrolled children. This is more than their proportional representation in the total population according to the Census 2011. However, the share of Dalits gradually

decreases to 14.6 in lower secondary, 10.5 in secondary and only 6.8 in higher secondary education, indicating that many Dalit children do not progress in the education ladder.<sup>8</sup>

**2.12.** The school education has witnessed remarkable progress in enhancing access and at least some dimensions of equity, and made robust gains in improving internal efficiency, the system continues to face significant challenges in improving student learning outcomes. The average student achievement in the annual school leaving certificate (SLC) examinations and the periodic national assessment of student achievement (NASA) has been poor, particularly in the public schools where the vast majority of children study (Please refer to the section below on outcomes for further analyses of learning outcomes).

### Education Sector Plans and Funding Support

**2.13.** Ever since committing to the World Declaration on Education for All in 1990, Nepal has continued to prioritize the education sector and undertake large-scale reforms in the sector, particularly in primary and basic education. These include the Basic and Primary Education Programs I and II (1992-2004), the Education for All Program (2004-2009) and most recently the School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2016). The main objectives of these programs have been threefold: to enhance equitable access to primary and basic education, to improve the quality of learning, and to enhance the institutional capacity of the education system for effective service delivery. These programs have gradually evolved from project to program funding modality, involving pooling of government and donor funds to support a jointly agreed common national program through direct budgetary support and the use of a sector wide approach. They have also expanded their coverage to include pre-primary education and secondary education in recent years. The ongoing Thirteenth Plan (2014–2016) also recognizes the key role of education in developing qualified and competent human resources, enhancing productivity, generating employment and reducing poverty.

**2.14.** Despite a prolonged political transition and frequent changes in government leadership, the education sector has consistently received high priority in the government’s annual budget allocation with an average of more than 15 percent of the national budget since FY 2008. However, the relative share of education in the national budget has seen a declining trend since FY2014 – as has the share of the overall education budget devoted to basic education (Table 3). The majority of the education budget is spent on the following components: teachers’ salaries, construction, scholarships and textbooks.

**Table 3:** Government Allocations to the Education Sector

Year	Education Budgets % of GDP	Education Budgets % of total Budget	% of Education Budget Allocated to Basic Education
2009/10	3.6%	16.3%	71%
2010/11	4.5%	17.1%	64%
2011/12	4.3%	16.6%	69%
2012/13	3.7%	15.7%	65%
2013/14	4.2%	15.7%	60%

**2.15.** Foreign aid has been an important component of the total spending in education. On average, donors have accounted for more than 22 percent of the total education budget, and donor contribution has enabled the capacity of the government to finance activities such as construction of buildings and toilets, provision of free textbooks, and scholarships through regularized grants to schools. Although the majority of donor agencies have channeled their resources directly to the government budget through the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp), a number of agencies such as JICA, UNICEF, UNESCO,

<sup>8</sup> In comparison, the share of Janajatis in total enrollments is 37.6% at primary, 40.8% at lower secondary, 40.4% at secondary and 31.5% higher secondary levels.

**2.16.** USAID, WFP and various I/NGOs continue to channel resources outside the pool in project mode. According to the Association of International NGOs in Nepal, I/NGO contribution to the SSR-Plan was around US\$ 20 million in FY2013/14.

### III: The School Sector Reform Program – Interventions

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**3.1.** The School Sector Reform Program provided the organizing framework for all interventions that GPE and other donors supported in basic education during the period under review. All of UNICEF's work in education – whether supported by its pooled or non-pooled funding -- was also carried out within the SSRP strategic framework. We now turn to examine the various SSRP interventions against DPMG's theory of change presented earlier in figure 1. The inner box presents the basic inputs that are considered necessary to produce improved learning outcomes for all students by helping to overcome barriers related to gender, economic status, caste/ethnicity and mother tongue. Reviewing these various components we find that SSRP has delivered in varying degrees on many of these requirements for inclusive education, but not on others. The core interventions that are considered critical to producing the outcomes of interest to Norway (learning outcomes, gender equality and equity) in the DPMG Theory of Change are described below:

#### **Schools and Classrooms**

**3.2.** School and classroom construction was a major emphasis of SSRP. It had sought to construct 19,500 new classrooms meeting minimum standards, and rehabilitate 13,000 classrooms, both of which were surpassed within the first 5 years. Likewise, there was a massive increase in the number of school units, from 32,130 in 2009/10 to 35,223 in 2013/14. Likewise, there has also been a significant increase in the number of pre-primary/Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) centers, from 29,089 in 2009/10 to 34,622 in 2013/14. Community initiatives continued to play a significant part in the establishment and management of the ECED centers and schools, which have been supported by the government through grants. However, the SSRP provision of school mapping has not been fully implemented. This had led to inequitable distribution of schools and ECED centers and in turn, to declining student numbers in many public schools. As a result, the government has now encouraged school merging and closure in areas that do not have adequate number of students.

**3.3.** Sufficient classroom space has been one of the five priority minimum enabling conditions (PMECs) since 2012. As a result priority has been given to supporting schools without adequate number of classrooms.<sup>9</sup> During 2012/13 – 2013/14, nearly 5,300 schools were supported to meet at least 3 out of 5 PMECs.

**3.4.** This has resulted in an increased access to schooling opportunities for the vast majority of children. According to the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11, nearly 89 and 95 percent of households in rural and urban areas respectively have access to ECED and primary school facilities within 30 minutes walking distance.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of 4-year old children enrolled in ECED centers increased from 66.2 in 2009/10 to 76.7 in 2013/14, and the percentage of new entrants in grade 1 with ECED/pre-primary experience increased from 49.9 to 56.9 in the same period. Likewise, the NER in primary and basic education increased from 93.7 and 83.2 in 2009/10 to 95.6 and 86.3 in 2013/14, respectively.

#### **Teachers**

**3.5.** In comparison to construction of schools and classrooms, the focus on teachers has been only moderate. The SSRP originally envisaged a number of reforms related to teachers. These included: qualification upgrading, separate career paths for basic and secondary teachers; recruitment and equitable redeployment; and teacher preparation. Some of these reforms were contingent on legislative changes to the existing Education Act. However, due to many mainly political factors that are beyond Ministry of Education (MOE) control, the Education Act is yet to be amended in line with the reforms envisaged by the SSRP, affecting the major reforms in the areas of teacher management and professional development. For

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<sup>9</sup> The Asian Development Bank was a major force in pushing the PMECs forward as it was one of the policy conditions of ADB's support to SSRP after 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics. 2011. *Nepal Living Standards Survey III 2010/11*. Kathmandu.

example, the plan of having separate career paths for basic and secondary teachers has not been implemented, and teachers continue to be assigned as primary, lower secondary and secondary teachers. Likewise, the proposed qualification upgrading of basic and secondary teachers has not been made mandatory, even though about 10,000 basic education teachers are reported to have gained the minimum qualification through a special course that was designed in collaboration with the National center for Educational development and the Higher Secondary Education Board.

**3.6.** There has been a steady increase in the number of trained and qualified teachers, largely a result of the Teacher Education Project that was supported by ADB from 2001-2010. The percentage of teachers with required qualification and training increased to 92.5 in basic and 91.1 in secondary education, up from 70 and 80, respectively, in 2009/10. The SSRP aimed to provide all teachers with a 30-days demand-based teacher professional development course in the first five years of the program. However, there is no official reporting on the number of teachers who have completed the course. It is estimated that less than 60 percent have actually completed this course.

**3.7.** Teacher licensing was strengthened during the SSRP, as possession of a license was made compulsory for teaching. However, no new recruitments in permanent teacher positions were made until 2014 due to factors that were beyond the control of the MOE. This delay has led to allegations that under-qualified candidates have entered schools as temporary teachers in the interim. More recently, apparently because of the lack of candidates with required competencies in these subjects, the government has revoked its earlier decision to require licensing for those teaching subjects such as English, math, science, computer and other technical subjects.

**3.8.** The effects of increased teacher qualification and training on improved teaching-learning in the classrooms and increased student learning are difficult to measure in the absence of systematic monitoring and supervision of teacher performance in the classrooms. Regular teacher attendance and time-on-task continue to remain critical issues. According to the MOE, there is a big gap between student enrollment and regular attendance. In 2012/13, average student attendance in school education was reported at 79.8 percent, and according to the MOE officials, this roughly correlates with average teacher attendance.

### **Curriculum and textbooks**

**3.9.** Curricular revision has followed the usual cycle of minor revisions every 5 years and major revisions every 10 years. In this context, in the SSRP cycle, major revisions were made to the lower secondary (grades 6-8) curriculum in 2010, followed by major revisions in textbooks in 2012, and secondary (grades 9-10) curriculum has also been revised recently. There has been support from agencies such as the UNICEF, UNESCO and Save the Children, but it has focused mainly on integration of peace, human rights and civic education and education in emergencies, mainly in the social studies curricula and textbooks. Finland has supported the incorporation of soft skills in the secondary curriculum and lower secondary curriculum, but otherwise, there has been little engagement of the SSRP Development Partners with the overall curricular and textbooks revisions process.

**3.10.** Nepal adopted the policy of free textbooks up to basic level with the introduction of SSRP. After 2010, this policy was revised to include grades 9-10 as well. As per this policy, all grades 1-10 students enrolled in public school have been receiving free textbooks although timely delivery of textbooks remains a critical issue. In 2013/14, on average 74.4 percent of all basic education students in public schools were reported to have received the complete sets of textbooks within 2 weeks of the start of the academic session compared to only 54 percent in 2009/10. Although this shows a significant increase over the years, it is well below the government target of universal textbook delivery before the academic session. Further, within basic education, only 67.1 percent of grade 1 students had received the textbooks on time compared to 78.6 percent in grade 5 and 77.2 percent of students in grade 8 – pointing to the negligence that occurs in the early years.

**3.11.** To enhance the timely printing and delivery of textbooks, various development partners (in particular the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have linked this to the release of their grants and also encouraged the Ministry to include private printers and distributors in the process. As a

result, the MOE has given the private sector such responsibility in the Eastern, Western and the Far-Western development regions.

**3.12.** Another critical issue is the quality of textbooks. All students are entitled to new sets of textbooks every year, resulting in significant wastage of resources. Dialogue on the possibility of using the same textbook for more than one year and the possibility of multiple textbooks has been ongoing. In this regard, the MOE had commissioned a study in 2013 to look at these issues. However, no further progress has been made on this front.

### **Learning Materials**

**3.13.** Other than textbooks, it is difficult to locate the universal provision and use of other learning materials in everyday classroom processes. The provision of learning materials/book corners/libraries has been one of the PMECs ever since 2012. MOE data shows that 1,186 basic education schools in FY 2013 and 1276 schools in FY 2014 have received targeted support for establishing book corners/libraries.

**3.14.** More significantly, there has been a steady emphasis on early grade reading since the mid-term review of the SSRP in 2012. This review recommended free distribution of learning materials produced by the Curriculum Development Centre and introduction of a “book flood” to improve reading skills in the early grades. The Government has since developed a national early grades reading program (NEGRP). Some elements of this NEGRP are being supported by USAID. Further the GPE is also using the LEG's stretch indicator on classroom-based early grade reading assessment involving the child's parents for the new round of funding from FY2015/16.

### **Language of Instruction**

**3.15.** This dimension will be covered in greater depth in the discussion of equity. It is our impression that this element has not been adequately dealt with by the SSRP which remains unclear about its policies in terms of medium of instruction (MoI) and multilingual education (MLE). The monitoring of this dimension has also been poor with the only thing regularly recorded in the EMIS being the number of classrooms at the primary level where some non-Nepali language is being used (either fully or partially) in the teaching. The EMIS data shows that there has been nearly 2.4 times increase in the number of primary level classrooms using such transitional language support (from 16,064 classrooms in 2009/10 to 38,154 classrooms in 2013/14). There has also been an increase in the number of languages used (from 19 in 2009/10 to 67 in 2013/14, excluding reporting on the use of Nepali and English as transitional languages). However, the government has failed to come up with a comprehensive language policy in education during the first 5 years of the SSRP period. Instead, the government adopted the policy of using English as an optional subject from grade 1 and many public schools have started to offer education in English medium. Currently, MOE with technical assistance from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and trade (DFAT), is undertaking a study on language policies and the findings are expected to inform the development of a comprehensive language policy in education.

**3.16.** In Figure 1 (chapter I) the policies on language of instruction appear twice. Once as a “system level enabling condition” and once in the inner box with the “casual links” or “ingredients of basic education where they are clubbed with the appropriateness of the curriculum. We did not do a detailed review of the curriculum, but our reading and discussions with knowledgeable Development Partners (DPs), brought up serious issues of disorganized presentation of the material with complex concepts and content introduced too soon before certain foundational material and concepts had been established. Moreover, although a manual had been developed to help teachers in how to present the new curriculum, one study showed that the manual never reached most teachers.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Parajuli, M.N. et al. 2012. Understanding School Processes in Nepal: A School Level Status Study of Policies and Practices of School Sector Reform Program.p.1.



## Teachers/School Supervision

**3.17.** There has been no significant change in the modality and effectiveness of supervision of teachers and schools, and classroom/school-based monitoring of teachers remains a critical issue. In general, schools and teachers continue to be supervised by the school supervisors (based in the District Education Office (DEOs) and the resource persons (based in the resource centers). Although the number of schools has increased dramatically, there has been no concomitant increase in the number of school supervisors and resource persons. In theory, these people are assigned the task of monitoring schools and providing professional support to the teachers at all levels. However, they have become the *de facto* field extensions of the DEO and are involved mainly in administrative work, including serving as the post office for communication between DEOs and schools.

**3.18.** Further, there is ongoing dialogue regarding the creation of separate head teacher positions. MOE officials pointed to the weakness in the position and authority of the head teacher as one reason for the lack of teacher discipline. At present the post of head teacher is a revolving position with both teaching and administrative tasks and carries no significant monetary incentives. The SSRP originally envisaged that the head teachers would be empowered for those roles through building their capacity in leadership and management. Lately, there has been an effort to move towards a system of creating a separate head teacher with specific terms of reference and authority, but thus far there has been little progress on this front.

## Improved learning environment at school

**3.19.** As has been discussed, SSRP's efforts to improve the learning environment at school and at home have been led by the UNICEF Child Friendly Schools (CFS), Schools as Zones of Peace and Learning without Fear campaigns. (See Annex 6 7 for details). The CFS framework was endorsed by MoE in 2010, but Nepal is still a long way off from having all its schools meet the 25 minimum criteria<sup>12</sup> – or even the streamlined minimum enabling conditions required for a school to be classified as a Child Friendly. The most basic of these 25 conditions have now become the Priority Minimum Enabling Conditions (PMEC) and “the number of schools meeting PMEC” is reported in the EMIS. There are some data recording progress in up-grading schools to meet these criteria in UNICEF supported districts, but the EMIS does not collect this information in its Flash Reports so no national level data are available on the number of community schools at different levels that have achieved Child Friendly Status (CFS) status.

**3.20.** Beyond just the physical aspects of the school, UNICEF has also supported training of teachers in child friendly teaching approaches. In 2009 the UNICEF Annual Report stated that 45 percent of the targeted teachers in UNICEF districts had received such training. Training for teachers under the NEGRP has also incorporated the CFS elements. But it is difficult to get country-wide numbers and no assessments on the impact on learning outcomes has been conducted. The SZOP and the Learn without Fear campaigns are other efforts to improve non-physical aspects of the school environment. Both these efforts have been accepted by government: in 2011 the government declared all schools as “Zones of Peace” and in 2013 the National Education Code of Conduct guaranteed children the right to uninterrupted access to education. The 2013 UNICEF Annual Report noted that, “during the election campaign for the second CA the political parties did not use schools as venues for speeches and meetings.”<sup>13</sup> MoE has also established a policy against corporal punishment in schools.

**3.21.** As noted elsewhere, there are a number of policies in the SSRP that have helped to make school the school environment more supportive for girls. These include hiring more female teachers, providing separate toilets for girls and boys<sup>14</sup> and the emphasis on making the entire school ground a secure place

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<sup>12</sup> In 2012 the original set of 250 characteristics of the Child Friendly School was reduced to 25 Minimum Criteria and further to 5 Priority Criteria.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF AR 2013

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF reported that the number of schools with separate toilets for girls has risen from 26% in 2009 to 65% in 2012.

where sexual harassment and other forms of Gender Based Violence are not tolerated. These efforts have probably all contributed to the rise in girls' attendance.

**3.22.** For religious minorities, some marginalized Janajati groups and especially for Dalits, a critical aspect of the school environment is whether or not discrimination is tolerated. Here it is less clear what is being done. The SSR-Plan 2009-2015 does contain among its strategic interventions the commitment to “develop and implement a code of conduct in schools to safeguard pro-poor, non-discriminatory and non-punitive practices”.<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to know whether this code has been developed, what it actually says and whether/how it is being rolled out across the districts. To judge its impact on the ground for groups that have traditionally faced discrimination would require rigorous research combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Anecdotal reports suggest that discrimination – especially caste-based discrimination – is still very much the norm in many school settings.<sup>16</sup> Instances of bullying – though not necessarily caste based – seem disturbingly high. The slow pace in increasing the proportion of Dalit teachers is also discouraging.

**3.23.** Changing the learning environment involves changing many engrained practices and deeply held beliefs. For one thing, it means moving from the practice of maintaining distance and hierarchy between students and teachers towards a more open and interactive style of engagement in the classroom. It also requires a change in attitudes behavior towards girls, Dalits and other socially excluded groups among both students and teachers. These are long-term tasks where progress is difficult to measure; but it is fair to say that SSRP has at least introduced some important changes in the school environment and has the strategies and approaches in place to do more.

### **Child's background and resources**

**3.24.** There are several major and well-funded strategies in SSRP to help overcome the deficits of the child's background and resources. These deficits most notably include poverty and the insufficient nutrition and poor health often linked with poverty. SSRP has mid-day meal programs in food deficit districts that not only help attract poor children to school but provide the nutrition they need in order to learn. Linkages between schools and the health system have also been established for immunization and WASH (both supported by UNICEF) – but not much evidence is available on outcomes in this areas. As discussed earlier, there is also an extensive program of scholarships that are intended to help the parents of children from poor and disadvantaged households offset the expenses of school attendance. But the distribution of these scholarships – and in some cases the very small amount of money involved – is widely recognized as needing reform.

**3.25.** SSRP's most successful strategy to overcome the deficits of the child's background circumstances has been the Early Childhood Education and Development program which has continued to expand rapidly. By 2013 73.2 percent of 4 and 5 year olds were enrolled in ECED centers and 55.6 percent of all children entering grade 1 had had ECED experience.<sup>17</sup> An important part of the ECED program has been the concomitant effort to provide training to parents – especially those from low-income households and marginalized caste and ethnic groups. The UNICEF Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) for 2013-2017 included a target to reach 80 percent of the parents with a child between 3 and 5 in poor and disadvantaged communities in the districts where it works with orientation training on the importance of early childhood development and regular school attendance. By 2009 the UNICEF Annual Report reported that 49 percent of the targeted parents (in the UNICEF supported districts) had received this training indicating good progress. After that there are no data but the program has continued.

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<sup>15</sup> DOE. 2009, School Sector Reform Plan. p.108

<sup>16</sup> Parajuli, M.N. et al. 2012. Understanding School Processes in Nepal: A school Level Status Study of Policies and Practices of School Sector Reform Program. Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu. p.16.; Bishwakarma, M. ND. Study of Dalit Education in Nepal,

<sup>17</sup> MoE. 2014. School Sector Reform Program/SectorWide Approach Extension Plan 2014/15-2015/16. p.3. The 2008 baseline on % of children entering grade 1 with ECED experience was just 36%.

## Community and parents

**3.26.** While the forgoing elements are considered in the inner box of Figure 1 as “ingredients” needed to produce the desired outcomes, “community and parents” are one level up as “enabling conditions”. The involvement of community and parents in the governance and management of the school is the core of the World Bank’s theory of change for education in Nepal. According to the World Bank,

Greater engagement of School Management Committees (SMCs) and parents in school management, teacher recruitment and the monitoring of school and classroom process can help enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom as well as overall school governance.<sup>18</sup>

**3.27.** While plausible, this theory does not take sufficient account of the political realities on the ground in Nepal. Local governments were dissolved in 2002 during the Maoist insurgency and there have been no local elections since then leaving a political vacuum at the local level. Various local User Groups and the School Management Committees have become the site of party politics where local leaders backed by their party machines vie for control of various forms of patronage that is then shared between local and central leaders. For the SMCs and local leaders it is temporary teaching jobs and school construction contracts that are in play; for the central level political parties it is the posts for permanent teachers that are allocated centrally through the Teachers Service Commission. As noted by the Mid Term Review,

Teachers are a politicized segment of the educational system and issues of corruption, nepotism arise in relation to their recruitment. Teacher management is a political issue as much as it is governance one, yet there is a tendency to sidestep any effort to find a political solution rather than a bureaucratic one.<sup>19</sup>

MOE officials are reluctant to engage with the highly politicized teachers’ organizations and this is one of the reasons that repeated efforts to “rationalize” the deployment of teachers under SSRP have had limited success.

**3.28.** The Mid Term Review criticized SSRP for trying to implement “decentralized service delivery without decentralized governance:”

The SSRP governance model of decentralized service delivery assumes and is predicated upon the existence of fully empowered, functional local governments. In reality there are no local governments with elected representatives and institutional platforms such as the DDCs and District Education Committees, Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Village Education Committees (VECs). All (these bodies are) headed by District and Village Development Officers.<sup>20</sup>

**3.29.** These unelected district level government staff and the VDC secretaries do not report to the local community but to Kathmandu-based ministries (DOE for the District Education Officer (DEO) and his staff and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD) for the VDC secretaries and the Local Development Officer who heads District administrative government. Even though education and local development are both sectors that have, according to the 1999 Local Self Governance Act (LSGA), been devolved to the district and VDC level, the central government ministries have refused to give up their power and influence. This creates an accountability gap because accountability processes are not linked to responsibilities and authority.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> World Bank. 2013. Nepal Report on Human Development: Access, Equity and Quality in the Education, Health and Social Protection Sector. P 34.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 31

<sup>20</sup> GoN. 2012. Mid Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform Program, p.28

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 30

**3.30.** A recent qualitative study of the implementation of SSRP processes at the school level found that in all the five schools studied the SMCs and PTAs were pleased that their school now had good buildings and increased numbers of students and were able to compete with the private schools. Yet the parents had “no idea of what was happening inside the class, whether children are learning, what they should be learning or whether teachers were teaching appropriately.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the study found that none of the schools were interested in improving school management, developing the School Improvement Plan or carrying out the Social Audit. In one school visit, the researchers found that,

The school had prepared the School Improvement Plan (SIP) but the members of the SMC, PTA, parents and many of the teachers did not know about this and, as remarked by one of the teachers, the prepared SIP was very sketchy. (The) same thing was true about the social audit, and (the) financial record was also not properly kept. Members of the SMC and PTA and parents had no idea on how scholarships and textbooks are distributed. ... More critically, they were of the opinion that they don't (sic) need to worry about these things.<sup>23</sup>

**3.31.** This situation is reflected in the Mid Term Review, which found that, “the expectations from SMCs and PTAs in relation to performing complex management and oversight tasks seem completely unrealistic, particularly when some government servants with training apparently also fail in their oversight role.”<sup>24</sup>

**3.32.** Yet the weaknesses of the community management model or theory of change in the current Nepal context does not seem to have been fully acknowledged. The World Bank has been deeply committed to community management in the school sector for more than a decade since its Community School Support Program (CSSP) in 2002 that focused on providing incentives for public schools under government management to transfer themselves to community management. The CSSP was mainstreamed into the Education for All Program (2004-2009) and later into the SSRP.<sup>25</sup> The premise has been that communities and parents would have a greater stake in the educational outcomes of their own children than the ministry of education and would be better able to insist on sound school level management and improved teacher performance. Based on this, more funds have been channeled directly to schools through Per Capita Funding grants, textbooks, grants for head teachers and grants for locally recruited teachers. At present, of Nepal approximately 29,000 public schools, some 12,309 (approximately 42%) are under community management.<sup>26</sup>

**3.33.** Among other things, the community management hypothesis underlying SSRP is based on the historical fact that all the early schools in Nepal were community run – and they were in fact, much better managed and produced better educational results than current community schools do. But that may have been partly because during the 40's-early 70's when the first schools arose, the parents who started these schools were among the local elite and sent their own children to them. That is no longer the case. Although there are many examples of excellent community managed schools in Nepal, in general, families that can afford to now send their children to private/institutional schools because the level of teacher discipline and SLC results for these schools are so much better.

**3.34.** The World Bank supported empirical research on the effectiveness of the community management model in Nepal and the found mixed results:

Using a randomized promotion design to account for self-selection into the program, impact estimates derived from an empirical strategy that combines instrumental variables and difference in difference methods suggest that community management helps to reduce the share of out-of-school children,

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<sup>22</sup> Parajuli, M.N. et al. 2012. “Understanding School Processes in Nepal: A School Level Status Study of Policies and Practices of School Sector Reform Program”. Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu.p1.

<sup>23</sup> IBID pp.1-2

<sup>24</sup> GoN. 2012. Mid Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform Program. p. 27.

<sup>25</sup> World Bank. 2013. Nepal Report on Human Development: Access, Equity and Quality in Education, Health and Social Protection Sectors. p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> World Bank. 2015. Education Sector Program Implementation Grant Application to GPE.p.22.

particularly from disadvantaged population groups, increase the grade progression rate and enhance community participation and parental involvement. On the other hand, there is no effect on teacher absenteeism and on student learning levels.<sup>27</sup>

**3.35.** This can be seen as a case of a glass half empty or half full. But the findings that community management does *not* reduce teacher absenteeism or improve student learning levels are major and should provoke some serious rethinking of community management, what it can and cannot do – and most importantly, what in the current Nepali context is stopping it from performing as expected.

**3.36.** The Mid Term Review suggests that one of the blockages may be the current lack of a “holistic policy duly approved by the Cabinet with supporting legislation where needed”.<sup>28</sup> An amendment to the Education Act of 1971 is necessary to provide the legal foundation giving schools the authority they need over teachers and funds. There are conflicts and inconsistencies between SSRP, the Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) of 1999 and Education Act of 1971. For example, the Local Self-Governance Act devolves responsibility for primary and secondary education to Village Development Committee (VDC) level while the Education Act places these responsibilities firmly with the MOE and its field offices. Further, the amendments to the existing Education Act, as envisaged by the SSRP have not happened. These inconsistencies are the perfect place for corruption and patronage systems to work. Although passage of the necessary amendment of the Education Act has been on the follow-up list of every Joint Assessment Review meeting held by the LEG in the past six years, it is not within the control of MoE and is unlikely to be passed until current political impasse is resolved and the new constitution is written. So to a certain extent, like many other reforms in Nepal at the moment, the core reforms needed to make SSRP work is hostage to the finalization of the new constitution.

**3.37.** In a discussion with the former Bank staff member who had played a leading role in getting initial government buy-in for community based management of schools, we asked what he thought about the disappointing performance of SSRP in terms of teacher management and student performance. In his view, true decentralization to the schools has not really taken place yet, so true community management has not been tested. Permanent teacher positions are still controlled at the center by the Teachers’ Service Commission and subject to party influence. In his view, until these positions also come under the control of the schools, the teachers will remain as he put it, “untouchable” – beyond the control of any force except the party that gave them the job. From this perspective, there may be a need to refine the “theory of change” in Figure 1 to include some factors such as political consensus on genuine decentralization and/or on a consolidated and internally consistent education policy.

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<sup>27</sup> Chaudhury and Parajuli, 2010. WB 2013: 13.

<sup>28</sup> GoN. 2012. Mid Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform Program. p. 28.

## IV: Outcomes and Program Results

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### A. Introduction

**4.1** This chapter examines the three SSRP outcomes of interest to Norway: learning outcomes, gender equality and equity. The first section focuses on the contributions of GPE through the World Bank's SSRP lending operation. In addition to the World Bank, the SSRP was supported by a number of Development Partners (DPs) using a SWAp approach. During the preparation of the SSRP it emerged that even with all the inputs from the other DPs there would be a funding gap of \$254 million or 9.7 percent of the total estimated costs of the government's 5 year program. GPE (then known as the EFA Fast Track Initiative) helped to close the funding gap by providing a \$120 million grant to be administered by the World Bank along with the Bank's \$130 million credit. At the time no separate appraisal was carried out for the GPE funding and no distinct development objectives were specified beyond those set out in the World Bank's appraisal document. Therefore, this case study assesses GPE outcomes in section B below by looking at the outcomes of interest that were produced by the SSRP as a successful SWAp that was supported by funding from the World Bank, GPE and other DPs. Responsibility for supervision or aid management of the Bank and GPE funding remained with the World Bank – though there were inputs from other DPs through the LEG.

**4.2** Given UNICEF's multiple sources of funding and more flexible aid management practices, a different approach is required to assess UNICEF's contributions. These are summarized in Annex 5 based on UNICEF Annual Reports and other UNICEF documents while Table 9 below traces the results in the three areas of interest to Norway. The outcome of greatest focus for UNICEF was gender equality in education or girls education – outcome 2 in the table. Results in this area are most clearly documented. But there are also linkages between many of UNICEF's education related initiatives – such as the ECED, Child Friendly Schools (in particular, the reading corners), the Learn without Fear campaign, the efforts to reach Out of School Children, and the Consolidated Equity Strategy etc. – and improved learning outcomes and educational equity. Ministry of Education officials and other DPs expressed the view that these UNICEF initiatives provided critical support to improved learning and greater equity. However, neither of these outcomes were explicit objectives for UNICEF, Nepal, and except for annual reports and other occasional reports such as those recorded in Table 9, these were not systematically monitored.

### B. GPE Contributions to Norway's Focus Outcomes for the SSRP

#### i. Improved Efficiency and Learning Outcomes

**4.3** Nepal has made robust gains in improving the efficiency of primary and basic education. Significant progress has been made in reducing student dropout and repetition, and improving promotion (see Table 4 below). The gains in improving internal efficiency are greater at the primary level compared to lower secondary. As a result, more children are surviving in the system and transiting from lower to higher grades as shown by the fact that the survival rate to grade 5 has increased from 77.9 in 2009 to 85.4 in 2009, and for grade 8 from 62.0 to 72.2 in the same period. However, no significant gains have been made in enhancing the regularity of student attendance. During 2009-2013, average student attendance in primary education rose by about 2% points (from 76.3% in 2009 to 78.4% in 2013) and in lower secondary education by 1.8% (from 80.2% in 2009 to 82.0% in 2013). Further, the average attendance rate has been the lowest for grade 1 students. The continuing high dropout and repetition, and low attendance and promotion rates in grade 1 point towards the fact that schooling conditions in the early years remain dismal. This is further supported by evidence from the Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2010 data, which show the most frequently cited reasons that primary school aged children (ages 5-10) give for dropping out of school are poor academic progress (14%) and the need to help at home (16.5%).<sup>29</sup> This indicates that, among other

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<sup>29</sup>Central Bureau of Statistics. 2011. *Nepal Living Standards Survey III 2010/11*. Kathmandu.

interventions, there is a need to improve the quality of classroom instruction, including providing extra academic support to weaker students, to reduce dropout rates.

**Table 4:** Internal Efficiency in Primary and Basic Education, 2009-2013<sup>30</sup>

Indicators	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Percent Change	Percentage Points Change
Repetition rate grade 1	26.5	22.6	21.3	19.9	17.5	34%	9.0
Dropout rate grade 1	9.9	8.3	7.9	7.7	7.1	22%	2.8
Promotion rate grade 1	63.5	69.1	70.7	72.5	75.4	19%	11.9
Repetition rate grade 5	6.7	5.7	5.4	5.3	5.3	21%	1.4
Dropout rate grade 5	7.4	6.5	6.2	6	4.5	39%	2.9
Promotion rate grade 5	85.8	87.8	88.4	88.7	90.2	5%	4.4
<b>Dropout rate Primary Level</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>Promotion rate Primary Level</b>	<b>79.1</b>	<b>81.9</b>	<b>83.1</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>Repetition rate Primary Level</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Repetition rate grade 6	7.8	6.8	5.4	5.4	5.0	36	2.8
Dropout rate grade 6	6.0	5.8	6.3	5.9	5.4	10	0.6
Promotion rate grade 6	86.2	87.4	88.3	88.7	89.6	4	3.4
Repetition rate grade 8	6.5	6.6	6.0	5.7	5.1	27	1.4
Dropout rate grade 8	8.5	7.4	7.1	6.7	6.4	25	2.1
Promotion rate grade 8	85.0	86.0	86.9	87.6	88.5	4	3.5
<b>Repetition rate Lower Secondary Level</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Dropout rate Lower Secondary Level</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>Promotion rate Lower Secondary Level</b>	<b>86.0</b>	<b>87.3</b>	<b>88.1</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>89.4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.4</b>

Source: DOE Status Report- 2013 p49

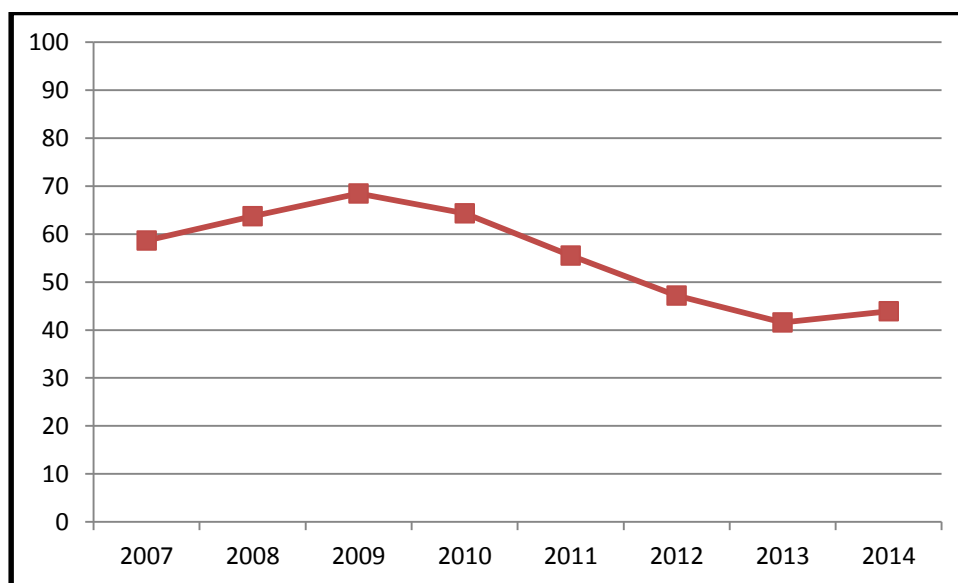
**4.4** However, it is difficult to ascertain if these efficiency gains have translated into improved learning outcomes. Whilst improving quality has been a major objective of the SSRP, it is difficult to measure the outcomes in the area of improved student learning that can be directly attributed to the SSRP. Two major indicators of student learning are the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination results and the periodic National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) conducted on a sample basis for students of grades 3, 5 & 8.

**4.5** The SLC examination is an annual board examination that is conducted nationally by the Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE) but is not standardized across the years so it is difficult to make comparisons of student performance over the years. Nonetheless, the SLC pass rate has been low overall and continued to decline, from 64.3 percent in 2009/10 to 43.9 percent in 2013/14 (Figure 2 below). In addition to the widespread prevalence of poor teaching-learning processes, expert opinion (as reflected in the media) suggests that the adoption of a liberal promotion policy till grade 7 since 2005 (without the concomitant continuous assessment system and remedial education for poorly performing students) and the termination of send-up (qualifying) examinations in grade 10 since 2009 have led to further deterioration of already poor SLC results, although more research is needed to substantiate such claims. Further, there are significant disparities in SLC performance across public and private schools, rural and urban areas and boys and girls, with private schools outperforming their public counterparts, urban areas outperforming rural

<sup>30</sup> Table 4 only presents figures for dropout, repetition and promotion rates while data for survival and attendance rates are presented in paragraph 4.3.

ones and boys doing better than girls. For example, in 2014, 70 percent of all public examinees from public schools failed the SLC compared to only 11 percent from private schools.

**Figure 2: SLC Pass Rate, 2007-2014**



**4.6** The NASAs are learning assessments conducted in grades 3, 5 and 8 in a sample of schools. The first round of NASA for grade 8 was conducted in 2011 followed by the first round of NASA for grades 3 and 5 in 2012. The second round of NASA for grade 8 was completed in 2013, and the second round of NASA for grades 3 and 5 is currently underway. NASA results also show low average achievement in the assessed subjects (Table 5). What is more worrying is that grade 8 student performance has dropped by 8 percentage points in Mathematics and 1 percentage point in Nepali from the first round in 2011 to the second round in 2013. In general, students seem to be doing well in lower order cognitive skills (memory and recall) but poorly in questions requiring higher order skills (application and analysis), pointing to the gross inadequacies in the way classroom teaching-learning processes are structured and practiced.

**Table 5: Average student achievement in NASAs, 2011-2013**

	2011			2012			2013		
	Math	Nepali	Social Studies	Math	Nepali	English	Math	Nepali	Science
Grade 3				59.5	62.6	NA			
Grade 5				53.3	59.7	53.6			
Grade8	43	49	49				35	48	41

NA-Not Applicable

Source: MOE, Education Review Office, Various Years.

**4.7** Like the SLC, in the NASAs too there are significant variations in student performance by school type (private-public), gender, location (rural-urban) and socio-economic status. Further, there is significant variation in performance across the public schools pointing towards an uneven implementation of quality-enhancing policies and practices. In the first round of grade 8 assessment in 2011, students from private schools have performed much better (average achievement 63%) compared to students from public schools (average achievement 44%). Likewise, students from the highest socio-economic group have performed much better (average 64%) compared to students from the lowest socio-economic group (average 41%). This trend has continued unabated in the 2012 and 2013 tests as well, pointing to the fact that the original intention of using NASA findings to inform quality enhancing reforms in the education system have not yet happened.



## ii. Gender Equality

**4.8** Between 1995 and 2008, the Gender parity Index (GPI) for primary enrolment went from 0.66 in 1995 to 0.96 in 2008.<sup>31</sup> During the period of SSRP implementation, gender equality in access to Basic and Secondary Education has continued to improve. Gender parity in enrolments has now been achieved at primary, basic and secondary level.<sup>32</sup> At the ECED level as well, the GPI has risen from 0.89 in 2008 to 0.98 in 2011. Internal efficiency measures have also improved for girls. Their dropout rates after 8<sup>th</sup> class fell quite dramatically between 2008 and 2011 from 20.6% to just 7% and their survival rates to grade 5 and 8 also increased during that period and were actually higher than those for boys.<sup>33</sup>

**4.9** Still, the fact that 16 percent of all boys in school are enrolled in private/ institutional schools compared to only 12 percent of girls reflects the continuing gender bias in society: many parents are willing to invest more in boys' education than in girls'. Girls' enrolment rates also continue to be much lower than boys at the tertiary level with a GPI of 0.70 in 2010/11.<sup>34</sup>

**4.10** In terms of learning outcomes – as far as these can be reliably measured in the current system – girls' performance is significantly below that of boys on the SLC (36.5 % for girls versus 47% for boys in 2013<sup>35</sup>) though it was only slightly below that of boys on the first round of the NASA in 2011 (46 versus 48). But the NASA data reveal some interesting variations in the relative performance of girls and boys by caste/ethnic identity and region. It seems that among the Brahmin/Chhetri, Janajati and Dalit groups, girls did slightly *better* than boys, while among the Madhesi groups the opposite was true.<sup>36</sup> In terms of ecological region, girls in the Kathmandu valley did slightly better than boys in the NASA tests; in the hills girls and boys were equal while in the Mountains and Tarai, boys performed better than girls – though again, by only a small margin.

**4.11** The World Bank Project Appraisal Document (PAD) that governs the GPE grant for SSRP includes a number of components and provisions in support of gender equity such as scholarships for all girls, support to enable schools to build separate toilets for girls as well as provisions for requiring at least one woman teacher per school and one woman on the SMC. Although the goal of having at least one woman teacher per school has not yet been met and neither the PAD nor the School Sector Reform Plan document contain targets or indicators to be monitored on the proportion of women teachers,<sup>37</sup> as noted above, there has indeed been a significant increase in the proportion of female teachers at the primary level in community schools. Between 2008 and 2012 it has gone from 4.5 to 37.5 percent.<sup>38</sup> The increase at the secondary level was not so dramatic but still the proportion almost doubled from 7.8 percent to 14.7 percent. The presence of more women teachers in community schools not only serves as a role model for girl students, but also increases their sense of security at school.

**4.12** Unfortunately, women's representation in administrative and management levels within MOE has not improved much under SSRP.<sup>39</sup> Of the 2188 government employees in the Ministry of Education only 8 percent are women. Caste/ethnic and regional diversity is also low with Hill Brahmins and Chhetris (79.43%) and Newars (8%) disproportionately represented compared to their presence in the population (31% and 5% respectively). In contrast, Janajatis who (not counting the Newars) make up some 34.8 percent of the

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<sup>31</sup> World Bank. 2009. Project Appraisal for SSRP, p.2.

<sup>32</sup> However, the GPI drops off sharply at the tertiary level of education where it is currently 0.70.

<sup>33</sup> GoN. March 2012. Mid Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform Program. P.9

<sup>34</sup> World Bank, 2013, Nepal Report on Human Development: Access, Equity and Quality in the Education, Health and Social Protection Sectors, p.21.

<sup>35</sup> Khati, Ashok Raj. Republica, Sept 3, 2013. Education of Girl Children – The Silent Half.

<sup>36</sup> NASA 2011. Student Achievement in Mathematics, Nepali and Social Studies. Section 4. Deeping Analysis of NASA 2011. DoE. P.195, Figure 4.1a/

<sup>37</sup> The School Sector Reform Program Sector Wide Approach Extension Plan 2014/15-2015/16 does have an explicit target of 50% female teachers at Primary level and 25 % at secondary level. P.4.

<sup>38</sup> DoE Consolidated Flash Report 2011/12. Table 3.28 There was no increase

<sup>39</sup> DOE/UNICEF. 2014. Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector in Nepal. P. 18.

population, accounted for only 6.26 percent of the MOE staff; Dalits and Muslims who make up 13 and 5 percent of the population respectively each had less than 1 percent of their number in the MOE (0.69% and 0.23%).<sup>40</sup>

**4.13** In addition to the components listed above in support of gender equity in the SSRP, there are a number of other UNICEF initiatives for girls' education that are not in the Joint Financing Agreement (JFA) or the School Sector Reform Plan *per se* but have helped to achieve SSRP's goals for girls' education. Some of these initiatives are at the policy level, others take advantage of UNICEF's linkages with NGOs and its grass roots presence in selected districts to pilot solutions to specific implementation problems or to address difficult attitudinal issues that may be blocking SSRP.

### iii. Equity

**4.14** In addition to gender SSRP has sought to address educational barriers due to: 1) disability; 2) poverty; 3) location in remote and lagging regions; 4) not speaking and understanding Nepali well enough to learn when it is used as the medium of instruction; 5) belonging to a traditionally stigmatized caste or low status ethnic group. Progress in these five areas is discussed in the following section.

**4.15** *Disability.* The 2008 EMIS shows only 1.1 percent disabled students at primary level while the NLSS III found that 3.6 percent of Nepalis in the primary school age range were affected by one of 7 categories of disability. Both of these figures are much lower than the international norms that are between 12 and 15 percent.<sup>41</sup> Disabled students are eligible for scholarships and are generally taught in Resource Classes (RC) of which there are 360 in the country – most of which teach primary level classes. Of the total, 165 RCs are for the deaf, 119 for the intellectually challenged and 76 for the visually challenged. That means that in the case of blind children there will be only one center in the entire district while for the other types of disability there may be two. In addition to the RCs there are also 34 Special Needs Schools operating under the Special Education Council. But clearly there are not enough RCs or Special Needs Schools to cater to the various types of disabled students with services anywhere near their homes.

**4.16** For a country at Nepal's level of development even keeping this system operational is a challenge. In fact, neither the results framework in the PAD nor the government's Sector Plan for the SSRP have performance indicators specifically related to disabled students. However, going forward there is a "key result" in the document for the 2014/15-2015/16 extension, that states, "All students with disabilities receiving scholarships". This commits MoE to identifying and classifying according to disability level all the disabled children in its student population and setting up a system to ensure that scholarships appropriate to their level of disability are delivered in a timely manner. The way this indicator is phrased however, means that it would still miss 22 percent of the children with disabilities that, according to NLSS III, have never been to school and thus, would not be part of the student population covered under this result.

**4.17** *Poverty.* Since well-off households tend to send their children to private or institutional schools, the entire SSRP effort to support public/community schools can be seen as broadly pro-poor. Although some community schools do demand small fees of various types, the government's formal abolition of school fees and provision of free text books under the SSRP has contributed to an actual drop in real terms in the average out of pocket expenses incurred by students at all levels of public education.<sup>42</sup>

**4.18** However, as shown in Table 6, school attendance among children from poorer households drops steeply after primary school. Only 1.6 percent of children from the poorest quintile attend higher secondary school compared to 30.5 percent of those in the richest quintile.

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<sup>40</sup> Himal Books. 2012. Sectoral Perspectives on Gender and Social Inclusion: Education, p 46.

<sup>41</sup> World Disabilities Report, 2012

<sup>42</sup> World Bank. 2013. Nepal Report on Human Development: Access, Equity and Quality in the Education, Health and Social Protection Sectors. P.15

**Table 6:** Variation in net attendance rate (NAR) (%) across economic quintiles by level of education, 2010

Quintile	Primary (Grades 1-5)	Lower Secondary (Grades 6-8)	Secondary (Grades 9-10)	Higher Secondary (Grades 11-12)
Poorest Quintile NAR	76.8	24.9	7.6	1.6
Second Quintile NAR	76.9	31.2	19.8	3.2
Third Quintile NAR	77.0	46.1	25.2	7.8
Forth Quintile NAR	79.3	52.0	32.5	17.9
Richest Quintile NAR	82.1	63.1	56.5	30.5
Nepal	78.0	42.0	28.2	12.9

Source: Table 2.7 in Nepal Report on Human Development, 2013, p.21, Author's Estimates using NLSS II Data

**4.19** Although investment in the construction of educational facilities through SSRP (and EFA before it) has reduced the time it takes students to reach school, the top quintile households still have much shorter commutes than the poorest – ranging from an additional 10 minutes to reach an early education center or a primary school to an additional hour and 17 minutes to reach a higher secondary school. (See Table 7) Learning outcomes measured in terms of SLC pass rates for students in the lowest socio-economic group are 23 percentage points lower than those for students in the top group (41% versus 64% in 2013).

**Table 7:** Distance to Educational Facilities by Consumption Quintile:

% of households living within 30 minutes from the nearest education facility and time taken to reach these facilities, 2010

Quintiles	% of households within 30 minutes from				Average time (mins) for household to reach			
	ECD	Primary	Secondary	Higher	ECD	Primary	Secondary	Higher
Poorest	84.5	90.2	56.4	34.9	24	18	52	90
Second	84.7	92.5	59.9	40.6	22	18	45	72
Third	87.9	93.8	65.8	47.5	19	14	42	66
Fourth	89.3	95.9	75.2	59.9	19	12	31	53
Richest	94.9	98.4	89.5	83.5	14	8	16	23

Source: Table 2.9 in Nepal Report on Human Development, 2013, p.24, Author's Estimates using NLSS II Data

**4.10** The major effort to address the poverty barrier through SSRP has been through the numerous scholarship programs – directed to specific groups like conflict affected children, Dalits, girls, endangered Janajati groups or to more diffuse categories like “poor and talented children”. The World Bank analysis of these various programs using NLSS data found some of them to be more pro poor than others. For example, although the scholarship program for girls had previously been targeted to the poorest 50 percent, the line of eligibility was very blurred. Similarly, in the distribution of the scholarships for poor and talented children, the poverty criteria are apparently often overlooked.<sup>43</sup> The Dalit scholarship was found to be the most pro-poor – probably because of the high poverty rate among the Dalits (43.6% and 38.6% respectively among Hill and Tarai Dalits compared to the national average of 25.2%).

**4.11** Overall however, there is a sense that the many scholarship programs are confusing, costly to administer and vulnerable to political manipulation and misuse. Going forward, one of the aims of the UNICEF-led Consolidated Equity Strategy has been to develop Integrated Scholarship Guidelines. The World Bank supports the idea of distributing scholarships only to children from households with a “poverty card” that identifies their household as being below the poverty line in districts where such cards have been issued. However, as part of the Equity Strategy several SSRP Development Partners are also developing a Deprivation Scale that “links the prevalence of the different drivers of inequality to the severity of the deprivation of children with regards to their access, participation and retention to education”. This may also help in rationalizing the distribution of scholarships. (Later in the section on identity-based barriers, concerns about this shift to targeting by poverty only and not by caste or ethnicity will be discussed.) Meanwhile, perhaps because of the lack of confidence in the current distribution process, the value of the

<sup>43</sup> World Bank. 2013. Nepal Report on Human Development: Access, Equity and Quality in the Education, Health and Social Protection Sectors. P.61

scholarships for girls and Dalits has been allowed to deflate to the point where at NRs. 400 per year, they are hardly an incentive for poor families and may not serve to offset the opportunity costs of the child's labor contribution to the household or even the incremental costs incurred in sending a child to school.

**4.12** Another barrier to school attendance that is closely linked to poverty is poor nutrition. In addition to scholarships, poor children have also been attracted to school by the provision of mid-day meals. This has been done in the entire Karnali region and in 14 other food deficit districts. Unfortunately, data from the EMIS show that NERs for primary school have increased in only two out of the five Karnali districts between 2008 and 2011, while in three (Humla, Jumla and Mugu) they have actually gone down.<sup>44</sup>

**4.13** *Location.* Educational outcomes when disaggregated by ecological region show that the Mountain and Tarai regions fare worse than the Hills. The worst performing districts in terms of education are in the Far and Mid-Western Mountains and Hills (which include the Karnali region districts) and in the Central and Eastern Tarai. All these areas correlate closely with districts discussed above where poverty and child under-nutrition are highest. SLC pass rates were only 6.8 in the Far West and 11 percent in the Mid-West compared to 42.5 percent in the Central region.<sup>45</sup> The Tarai especially, is an educationally deprived region. It has the lowest literacy rate (54.4% for population above 6 years) and the largest proportion of children out of school.<sup>46</sup> The census shows that overall 11 percent of children between 5-16 years are out of school; but in the Tarai districts of Kapilvastu, Sapatari, Shiraha, Parsa, Sarlahi, Dhanusa, Motihari and Rautahat, the rate is almost double that. Moreover the Tarai has 50 percent of Nepal's population but only 31 percent of the nation's primary schools – compared to the Hill region with 43 percent of the population but 57 percent of the primary schools.<sup>47</sup> Baseline student teacher ratios (STRs) in the Tarai were much higher than the national average at primary (60.8 versus 45.2), lower secondary (83.5 versus 61.3) and secondary levels (58.1 versus 41.9).<sup>48</sup>

**4.14** The Per Capita Funding mechanism was one way that SSRP sought to ensure that more funds would flow automatically to schools in the densely populated Tarai area. There is evidence that nationwide some schools have inflated their enrolment in order to get more funds. Further, efforts to re-allocate teachers to areas where they are needed have so far had limited success. Nevertheless, the data show that overall STRs have gone down at the primary level from 44 to 41 between 2007/8 and 2012/13 and at the secondary level from 42 to 31 over the same 5 year period.<sup>49</sup> STRs went down in the Tarai as well dropping from 60.8 to 56 between 2007/8 and 2012/13 – though the Tarai STRs remain the highest in the country.

**4.15** *Language.* Less than half of all Nepalis speak Nepali as their mother tongue. Many children in this group learn to understand and speak Nepali in their early years and by school age have no problem beginning school where Nepali is the medium of instruction (MoI). Yet it is estimated that between 20 and 30 percent of students do not have sufficient understanding of Nepali to be able to understand material presented in Nepali.<sup>50</sup> For these children, entering the new environment of school and encountering a completely unfamiliar language at the same time is overwhelming and they learn very little. The data on pass rates from 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class for Dalits, Janajatis and Others in some of the early Flash Reports show that while Dalits and Others did quite well, Janajatis had the lowest pass rates at all three levels.<sup>51</sup> Although far from conclusive, this could point to difficulties with the language of instruction for the Janajatis – most of whom do not speak Nepali as a mother tongue. One of the DPs interviewed for this study reported

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<sup>44</sup> Acharya, S. 2012. School Sector Reform Plan Mid Term Evaluation, Annex III: Equity. P14.

<sup>45</sup> GoN. 2012. Mid Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform program. P15.

<sup>46</sup> DoE/UNICEF. 2014. Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector in Nepal.p 20.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> DoE. Flash Report 1, 2007/8. Table 5.13

<sup>49</sup> DoE, 2013. Status Report 2013. P78.

<sup>50</sup> MoE. 2014. National Early Grade Reading Program (2014/15-2019/20). p.9.

<sup>51</sup> DOE. 2005. Flash Report

visiting classrooms on a field trip where the teacher was teaching in Nepali and non-Nepali speaking students were unable to understand what was being taught.

**4.16** In terms of effective action to reach children who don't speak Nepali, very little has actually been done through the SSRP. Despite the target of having some 7500 multilingual education (MLE) schools operating by 2015,<sup>52</sup> there are only about 25 to 30 such schools operating in Nepal at the moment.<sup>53</sup> The Finnish funded pilot Multilingual Education Program (2007-2009) had varied levels of success in the 6 districts where it was implemented. It seems to have worked fairly well in Rasuwa District where almost all the children did not understand Nepali but spoke a single language, Tamang, and where parents were supportive of using it as the Mol. In other sites the project reported difficulties in finding bilingual teachers, shortage of teaching materials and lack of community interest and support for Mother Tongue (MT) instruction. It also seems that the project became somewhat entangled in the movement for ethnic identity-based federalism. This is a highly politicized issue and part of the reason that the first Constituent Assembly (CA) was disbanded in 2012 and that progress in current CA has been so slow.

**4.17** Given the previously noted dominance of Nepali speaking Hill caste groups in the MOE, it is perhaps not surprising that there has been little focus on developing a coherent approach to Multilingual Education (MLE) and Medium of Instruction (Mol) in SSRP. Under the Panchayat system (1969-1990), the official Mol was Nepali in all public schools reflecting the prevailing approach to nation building through cultural assimilation of Nepal's diverse groups to the Hill Hindu model. "One language, one dress, one country" was the slogan and the policy. This changed after the return of multiparty democracy in 1990 and policies were put in place guaranteeing the right to education in mother tongue. However, under the 1990 constitution, although mother tongue (MT) education was *permitted*, the state took no responsibility to *support* it. And even now, most of the responsibility for mother tongue education is left to the community with only a small portion of the education budget – some Rs. 680,000 from the total budget of Rs 1,493,619,200 in 2009/10 – going to support it. Although pedagogically the global findings on MLE and Mol in primary education are fairly clear, politically the issue is complex and solutions are likely to be expensive when SSRP is already running a deficit. Meanwhile, parents increasingly want to send their children to schools run in "English Medium" as most of the private schools are. They see the ability to speak English as important to their children's future economic prospects. In fact, to compete with private schools for students, more and more community schools are further complicating the language issue by adopting an English Medium policy – even though their students do not understand English and their staff are generally not competent to teach in English.

**4.18** Following the EFA National Plan of action (2001-2015), the Three Year Interim Plan (2007-2010) and the Interim Constitution of 2007, the School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015 supports implementation of mother-tongue-based education. The World Bank PAD also committed to providing "bilingual or multilingual teachers and Mother Tongue medium of support"<sup>54</sup> for children from indigenous groups. While as promised in the government's SSRP Plan document, MOE has developed a comprehensive Guideline to MLE, there is still a great deal of inconsistency in the policy itself and in its implementation. The decision on medium of instruction is left to the SMC in consultation with the local government. Some schools have hired (usually temporary) multilingual teachers who are able to provide informal translation/explanation of lesson content for children who cannot understand Nepali. The 2011-12 Consolidated Flash Report lists some 19,999 primary level classes nationwide where such bilingual teachers use local languages in the teaching learning process.<sup>55</sup> Some 33 local languages are used but the top 10 of these (which include Maithali, Tamang, Doteli, Awadhi, Bojpuri, Tharu, Magar, Limbu, Bijika, and Nepali) account for nearly 87 percent of total. Most of the bilingual teachers have had no formal training in multilingual education though some have received a short orientation training. Some textbooks have also been translated into local languages and some local educational materials have been developed in mother tongues.

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<sup>52</sup> MoE. 2009. School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015, p 107

<sup>53</sup> MoE. 2014. National Early Grade Reading Program 2014/15-2019/20. p.7.

<sup>54</sup> World Bank. 2009. Project Appraisal Document for SSRP. P19.

<sup>55</sup> DOE. 2011-12. Consolidated Flash Report.

**4.19** But these ad hoc activities do not come close to providing a coherent framework for multilingual education. Most importantly, as noted in the program document for the National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP),

some of the policies (in the MoE MLE Guidelines) are not in the best interest of young children. For example, the policy of teaching Nepali and English literacy from grade 1 as well as the option of introducing Mother Tongue (MT) as a subject from grade 1 puts a huge burden on the child. By allowing the schools to take their own decision, the policy has indirectly encouraged the spread of English medium of instruction. Also, there should be greater clarity about the different strategies for the use of MT in primary education (which is used in an overlapping manner right now) like teaching MT as a *subject*, using MT as the foundation to *bridge to other languages*, using MT as a *medium of instruction* for early grades, etc. (emphasis added).<sup>56</sup>

**4.20** Although the NEGRP program came on line only in 2014 after the period covered by this case study (2009-2013), it represents the clearest acknowledgement by the LEG of the seriousness of the language issue, its impact on learning at the primary level and the lack of a coherent approach to addressing it in the SSRP. Yet even the NEGRP program document, after noting that “the current policy and practice of language teaching-learning in Nepal is not in alignment ... with universally recognized principles for use of language in primary education” backs off from the issue saying that, “NEGRP is mainly concerned with the teaching of reading and language development in early grades and this document will not address the issue of Mol (medium of instruction) in detail.”<sup>57</sup> Neither UNICEF nor the World Bank as SE for the GPE have engaged very deeply to insure that SSRP addresses equity issues related to language. The current SSRP Extension Plan 2014/15-2015/16 contains no specific provisions or targets for multilingual education. Perhaps the planned study on the state of multilingual education in Nepal sponsored by Australia will provide some impetus and guidance on how SSRP can give non-Nepali speaking children a more level educational playing field.

**4.21** *Caste/Ethnicity*. Table 8 below presents the Education Domain Index (EDI)<sup>58</sup> and documents the high levels of educational inequality still prevalent in Nepal. The data show clearly that among the 11 major caste/ethnic groups in Nepal, the Madhesi Dalits are at the bottom in this domain (with an EDI of 0.2733), followed by the Muslims (0.3113) and the Hill Dalits (0.4294).

**4.22** A major limitation of SSRP’s efforts to promote equity is that the EMIS continues to disaggregate the school level data into only three categories: Dalits, Janajatis and Other covering all other groups. As can be seen from Table 2 presented earlier in Chapter II, this oversimplified categorization leaves out two other major groups, the Muslims and the Tarai Other Castes, that both have Education Domain Index scores significantly below the Nepal average (0.5086).<sup>59</sup> The three existing EMIS categories are also inadequate to highlight the special attention needed by groups like the Madhesi Dalits who have much lower index scores than even the Hill Dalits. Nor does the current classification scheme permit DoE to focus specifically on the progress of sub-groups with low educational attainment among highly heterogeneous groups such as the Tarai Other Castes, Hill Janajatis or Tarai Janajatis. The most educationally weak sub groups among the Janajati are tracked by EMIS using the 22 ethnic group categories classified by NEFIN as endangered and extremely disadvantaged – though this is primarily done to monitor and document the distribution of special scholarships provided to these groups and no data on their retention, drop-out or pass rates are collected.

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<sup>56</sup> MoE. 2014. National Early Grade Reading Program (2014/15-2019/20). p.6

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 13-14

<sup>58</sup> The EDI is as one of 5 domains contributing the Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index (MSII). Das, Arun et al. 2014. *The Nepal Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index*. Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. p.10.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. See Table 3.2 for the ranked overall EDI scores and the contributing data for each of the 97 sub-groups in the 2001 Census. The scores range from a high of 0.7335 among the Kayasthas to a low of 0.1496 among the Dalit sub-caste of Doms. pp.10-13.

**Table 8:** Education Domain: mean (percent) and index scores by broader social group

Caste/ Ethnicity	Adult Literacy Rate		Net Enrolment Rate		Basic Schooling Completion Rate		Education Domain Index
	Mean	Index	Mean	Index	Mean	Index	Index
Hill Brahmin	78.5	0.7846	84.1	0.8406	42.3	0.4227	0.6826
Hill Chhetri	66.4	0.6635	76.9	0.7687	24.9	0.2488	0.5603
Tarai Brahmin/Chhetri	80.0	0.8005	79.1	0.7913	45.0	0.4499	0.6805
Tarai Other Castes	45.0	0.4502	64.1	0.6408	20.7	0.2068	0.4326
Hill Dalit	51.8	0.5180	67.8	0.6783	9.2	0.0920	0.4294
Tarai Dalit	23.1	0.2312	49.4	0.4939	9.5	0.0948	0.2733
Newari	76.5	0.7649	80.6	0.8065	36.4	0.3637	0.6450
Mountain/Hill Janajati	61.5	0.6152	72.3	0.7232	18.2	0.1817	0.5067
Tarai Janajati	54.1	0.5406	70.8	0.7084	16.6	0.1659	0.4716
Muslim	35.4	0.3543	47.1	0.4711	10.9	0.1087	0.3113
Others	78.0	0.7796	72.1	0.7213	35.3	0.3525	0.6178
Total	56.6	0.5957	71.1	0.7107	21.9	0.2194	0.5086

Source: Calculated by Das et al, 2014, The Nepal Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index. Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. Based on 2011 Census.

**4.23** Table 2 presented earlier shows one possible way that the now 125 subgroups from the 2011 Census could be categorized into 10 main groups (including “other”) to allow more fine-tuned analysis of the progress and problems of the educationally weaker groups. DoE may have been reluctant to use this more comprehensive set of categories because its M&E section relies on schools to collect the data for the twice-yearly Flash Reports. It might have seemed too complicated to explain this more detailed classification system to the schools – and to make sure that student self-identifications remained the same from one round to the next. However, if the M&E section continues its current efforts to provide unique ID numbers for each student, this self-identification of caste/ethnic identity by sub-group would only need to be done once when the child first enters the school system and the ID number is assigned. From that time forward that student’s data could easily be clubbed with the other students from the same sub-group for certain types of analysis.

**4.24** Data on progress for Dalit and Janajati groups in the Flash Reports are extremely thin. In fact, for tracking equity, the current Flash Reports are actually *less* informative now than they were in 2007/08 at the beginning of the SSRP. At that time the Flash Reports presented data on who passed 5<sup>th</sup> class, 8<sup>th</sup> class and 10<sup>th</sup> class by gender and the three different social groups.<sup>60</sup> Now, however the only data on students by caste/ethnic group presented in the Flash Report is on enrolment at different levels. There are no caste/ethnic breakdowns for retention, survival or pass rates – even though the PAD committed to “closely monitor disparities across social groups in enrolment, attendance, dropout, transition and learning outcomes.”<sup>61</sup> However, the NASA does produce data on learning outcomes by social group. First round results showed that overall scores for Dalits were the lowest for any group – 43% compared to 50%, 46, 44 and 44% for Brahmin/ Chhetri, Janajati, Madhesi and others respectively.<sup>62</sup>

**4.25** As noted in the Mid Term Review (MTR), even without data on the performance of Dalits and Janajatis, the enrolment data alone present a worrisome picture. While ECED enrolment has shown an

<sup>60</sup> Flash Report I, 2007/08, MOE, Dept. of Education, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur, Dec 2005, p23 Table 4.13.

<sup>61</sup> World Bank. 2009. Project Assessment Document for SSRP. P. 19.

<sup>62</sup> Acharya, S., Shakya, S. and Metsamuuronen, J. 2011. NSA 2011: Student Achievement in Mathematics, Nepali and Social Sciences, Section 4. Deepening Analysis, Educational Review Office, MoE, Kathmandu, Nepal. P.195.

overall increase of 10 percent, the increase for Dalits has been only 1 percent and for Janajati children enrolments have actually dropped by 2 percent.<sup>63</sup> A similar pattern holds for enrolment at the primary level with Dalit enrolment going up by only 1.5 percent and Janajatis dropping by nearly 3 percent.<sup>64</sup> At higher levels Janajatis seem to be doing well and in 2011/10 they represented 37.8 percent of the students enrolled at secondary level – better than their percentage in the population.<sup>65</sup> But while Dalit enrolments made up a robust 21.7 percent of primary enrolment in 2007/8 (compared to roughly 13% Dalit population overall), they made up only 9.4 percent of students enrolled in Secondary School.<sup>66</sup>

**4.26** Just as having female teachers is believed to give girl students a feeling of belonging and security in school, so having Janajati and Dalit teachers can be seen as a means of making school more welcoming to Janajati and Dalit students. Data from the EMIS show that, as for female teachers, the proportion of Janajati teachers at the primary level has also risen dramatically from 15 to 30 percent over the 2007/8 to 2011/12 period – though neither female nor Janajati teachers have been able to increase their numbers at the higher levels.<sup>67</sup> But the proportion of Dalit teachers even at the primary level is only 4.2 percent.<sup>68</sup>

**4.27** Regarding increasing the diversity of the teaching force, the PAD refers to the Amended Civil Service Act of 2007 that requires 45 percent of the staff and teaching force of MoE to be reserved for women and disadvantaged caste/ethnic groups and notes that “a trigger in this regard has been jointly identified in the Policy Matrix”. The MoE’s School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015 does not have a clearly identified policy matrix so it is not clear what the agreed trigger was. However the Plan does mention, “apply(ing) affirmative actions to increase the number of teachers from disadvantaged groups”,<sup>69</sup> as one of its strategic interventions along with “improving the competencies of 7000 Disadvantaged Group (DAG) candidates”. However, it is not clear what has actually been done under SSRP to increase the proportion of teachers from among the Dalits and other disadvantaged groups.

### **C. UNICEF Contributions to SSRP**

**4.28** UNICEF’s major contributions to Norway’s three outcomes of interest in Nepal during the period under consideration are listed in Table 9 below. In addition, the contribution of UNICEF activities to the key inputs considered necessary for achieving these outcomes under the DPMG’s theory of change are listed in rows 5 through 14 in Annex 5.

#### **i. Learning outcomes**

- **Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED).** Although UNICEF has not documented it for Nepal, ECED is known to be extremely important to ensure that young pre-school children get the nourishment and stimulation they need in their early emotional and intellectual development so that they ready for school and ready to learn. Getting the government and a broad segment of the Nepali public to understand and support the concept of ECED has probably been UNICEF’s most significant contribution in the education sector. During the EFA program, ECED was incorporated into the government’s budget and this has continued under SSRP – though, due to resource constraints, government pays only for children 4 and over, not 3 year olds as per UNICEF’s recommendation.

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<sup>63</sup> GoN. 2012. Mid Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform Program p.8

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. page 10

<sup>65</sup> DOE. 2011-12. Consolidated Flash Report. Tables 3.46

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Table 3.45

<sup>67</sup> DOE. 2007/08 Flash Report 1, Table 5.6 and, DoE. 2011-12. Consolidated Flash Report, Table 3.31.

<sup>68</sup> DoE. 2011-12. Consolidated Flash Report, Table 3.31.

<sup>69</sup> MoE. 2009. School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015. P 108



**Table 9: Results for the UNICEF Country Programme for Nepal<sup>70</sup>**

Outcome of Interest	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
<b>1. Outcome: Improved Learning</b> (disaggregated by gender and disadvantage)	Grade 1 promotion from 54.5% in 2007 to 59% in 2008; Repetition from 29.5% to 28.3%; Dropout 16%--> 12.1% Dropout in SFSI → 8.5% National Gr 1 attendance: 64.2%; Gr1 attendance in CFS: 68.9%; 10% increase in ECED enrolment in 30 UNICEF focus districts (AR)	National NER from 91.9 in 2008 to 93.7; UNICEF districts from 91.4 to 93.2 (AR)			Gr 1 children have 5 % drop in repetition & 2 pp improvement in drop out in 1371 CFS. %age of children moving into secondary education rose from 91.2% to 92.5% (girls 92.1%, boys 92.8%)	Reports on stunting by caste/ethnicity – but not on education outcomes.
<b>2. Outcome: Gender equality</b>	Alliance for Girls' Education strengthened (UNICEF's role is not clarified and this is not mentioned in CPAP). Supported a signature campaign with Alliance & 197 women CA members on Girls Education → basis for Plan of action currently being formulated, <sup>71</sup> (AR)  National Girls NER 87.4% → 90.4%; in UNICEF districts: 86.7% →89.4% Female teachers up by 3% nationally, 4% in UNICEF districts Enrolment of girls in ECED from 56.8% to 61.3% Average GPI in UNICEF Districts in 2008: 0.97; in Child Friendly Schools: 1.05 (AR)  Partnership with WFP to increase access &	GPI from 0.97 to 0,98 (AR)  Female teachers increased from 33.2% to 39.6% Ratio of girls to boys in alternative ed centres dropped from 66:34 in 2008 to 58:42 in 09 but may reflect girls shift to mainstream schools as reflected in enrolment rates. (AR)  DOE prepared Girls Education Strategy Paper & appointed Gender Focal Points in DEOs in all 75 districts. Gender Focal Points trained on Gender sensitive Planning & Monitoring; (MTR) Gender Neutral Primary curriculum (MTR)		Girls Education networks, Child Clubs, and Young Champions are monitoring 220 schools in Central and East Region resulting timely access to books and scholarships; GE network in Eastern Region successful in advocating female head teachers  GPI drops to 90 in secondary schools (AR) MOE constructs 5,472 girls latrines in 2011 and raises the % of schools with adequate WASH from 34% to 45%  UNICEF with Parliamentarian Caucus on Gender/Girls succeeded in increasing equity provisions in draft Ed Act and dr Constitution.  UNICEF supported parliamentarians to lobby for provision for girls' ed. in Education Act (AR)	NER increased to 86.6% in 2011-12 up from baseline of 83.2 (girls went from 82 to 86.1 ) to 86,6% This is not consistent with figures from 2008 Annual Report that gave Girls NER in UNICEF Districts as moving from 86.7 to 89.4 in that year. National figure even higher so 86.1% female NER in 2012 would be a drop.(AR 2008) (Does not report on changes in target districts. Despite years of effort to gather disaggregated statistics in those districts.)  UNICEF advocacy led to GON budget for toilet construction; no of schools with toilets rose from 60 to 80% over 2009-2012 (girls' toilets 26 to 65%).	To improve education access and equity for girls and marginalized children, innovative strategies such as adolescent girl's peer support activities and reading skills strengthening was piloted for future nationwide scale-up. (AR) To reduce gender disparities in enrolment in higher grades schools in Tarai districts implemented sports and peer support tutoring reaching 571 and 735 girls respectively (mainly Dalits, Muslims and other disadvantaged girls). Will be refined and scaled up.

<sup>70</sup> Data in this table are taken from the UNICEF Annual Reports (AR) for 2008-2013, UNICEF's Mid Term Review (MTR) and the UNICEF Country Program Action Plans for 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 (CPAP).

<sup>71</sup> Annual Report 2008, p. 50

Outcome of Interest	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
	retention of girls in 5 districts with low NER (AR)					
<b>3. Outcome: Equity (for marginalized groups)</b>	<p>Progress in enrolling OOSC in 14 districts (not 23) and 7 urban areas through alter-native learning centers – some transited to primary schools but absolute number were given so progress on goal is undermined.</p> <p>Support for Alternative Ed Programs in 9 districts. (AR)</p> <p>Review of CFS showed that the initiative increased teachers' commitment to "inclusion of all children." (AR)</p>	<p>Coverage of NFE pgm expanded from 14 - 18 districts</p> <p>11,773 OOSC were supported In NFE opps in 488 alt ed centers; 94% of outreach program completers transition to formal primary schools.</p> <p>65% of the children in UNICEF supported NFE centers were girls from marginalized groups. 95% of the facilitators are women. (MTR)</p> <p>UNICEF supported development of guidelines for implementing NFE program. (MTR)</p> <p>Dalit teachers increased from 3.2 to 4.2% (AR)</p> <p>NER and GER unavailable for caste/ethnic groups, but case studies show enrolment and completion rates for Dalits and some Janajti groups are disproportionately low and dropout and repetition rates are disproportionately high. (MTR)</p>	<p>Some 8019 OOSC from most disadvantaged Com'ties of 23 Unicef support-ed districts receive BE through alt learning; 48% of boys 43% of girls mainstr'ed to formal schools.</p> <p>"Although SSRP focuses on inclusiveness, policies budget and implementation programs are only partially responsive to these objectives." AR</p> <p>Support to Madhrasa education curricula being finalized by Curriculum Dev. Centre (AR)</p> <p><b>MTR analyzes education data by caste/ethnicity as well as wealth, gender &amp; region for first time. MTR notes that UNICEF has not had a clear definition of social inclusion but needs to do so. P.30</b></p>	<p>5384 OOSC (68% girls) received ed thru alt learning opts.</p> <p>"Welcome to School" 2011 enrolled 100% of children in catchment areas of 45 schools in southern plains.</p> <p>2068 working children in 7 urban municip received NFE</p> <p>First UNICEF AR to present data on caste based differentials (in CMR). But no analysis of education differentials along caste/ethnic lines. Established Real Time Monitoring system with WFP. Need to see an example to see if caste/ethnic and other breakdowns included.</p> <p>Advocacy for more SSRP funds on toilets (see below in row 5) results in more schools with separate toilets for girls. (AR)</p> <p>Still no MOE policy to address OOSC (AR)</p>	<p>8048 children participated in NFE. (68% girls)</p> <p>OOSC mapping used to develop action plans in five districts</p>	<p>National Equity Strategy drafted and consultations held (AR)</p> <p>"Availability of disaggregated data by ethnicity and gender remains a challenge" AR</p> <p>To improve education access and equity for girls and marginalized children, innovative strategies such as adolescent girl's peer support activities and reading skills strengthening was piloted for future nationwide scale-up. AR</p>

UNICEF has been working on developing a cost effective model of ECED since at least 1983 when an early community-based version run by mothers was incorporated into a women's group-based credit project initiated by UNICEF through the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. Since then UNICEF has incorporated ECED into what was for many years its flagship district level program, Decentralized Action for Children and Women (DACAW).<sup>72</sup> DACAW has been going for more than a decade in UNICEF districts in close collaboration with Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and has had a major demonstration effect. UNICEF HQ has assembled the global evidence that ECED improves school performance (though they could do more to document this in the Nepali context). Without UNICEF advocacy and technical support, ECED might have received government attention eventually, but it would have taken decades longer to happen and probably would not be part of SSRP. Many agencies have realized the educational and developmental advantages of ECED, but we think most would say UNICEF was the earliest to support this and has been the leading advocate.

- **Child Friendly Schools (CFS).** This involves looking at the school from a child's perspective and investing in making the school experience a positive and nurturing one with things like reading corners, separate toilets for girls, and a focus on child safety and protection from Gender Based Violence, corporal punishment, bullying and discrimination as well as a shift from teacher-centered to child-centered teaching and learning approaches. The CFS Framework has now been adopted as national policy and five priority minimum enabling conditions (PMEC) to qualify as a CFS school have been established and are used for targeting funds for school improvement under the SSRP. Related to this is the UNICEF sponsored campaign for "Education without Fear" aimed at banning the use of corporal punishment in schools. There is now a policy against use of corporal punishment in community schools. The 2011 UNICEF Annual Report says that in the 30 CFS districts Grade 1 promotion rates rose from 62.8% to 68.2%. However, UNICEF agrees that more rigorous studies are needed to document these impacts.
- **Schools as Zones of Peace (SZOP).** This initiative began during the insurgency as an effort to keep schools open and safe for children – which by and large, Nepal succeeded in doing. Since the end of the war the SZOP has been aimed at de-politicizing the use of the school premises and the teachers (who often owe their appointment to one party or another) for political rallies, etc. The UNICEF Annual Report of 2009 reported that schools in the 9 Districts where the SZOP program had been implemented experienced a drop in school closure days. Schools stayed open an average of 5 days more over the year and the next year the increase in open days went from 70-100 days to 182 to 192 days.

## ii. Gender Equality

- **Attention to the protection and education of girls and adolescent girls.** UNICEF has been very proactive in this area with a range of initiatives. UNICEF worked with DoE to prepare the **Girls' Education Strategy Paper** that envisioned district level **Gender and Equity Networks**. Although they are stronger in some districts than others, these networks now exist in all 75 districts. They are chaired by the DEO and bring together the relevant government sectoral offices and all the I/NGOs working on education at the district level. A Gender Focal Point who reports to the Gender and Equity Development Section of DOE coordinates the network. These networks have supported various UNICEF-led **campaigns against social practices such as Chaupadi,<sup>73</sup> Gender Based Violence and early marriage that limit girls' educational and life options.** These networks have also been active in working with NGOs to identify and map out of school children (OOSC) – many of whom are girls – and organizing various alternative schooling options that better fit the constraints of girls lives.

<sup>72</sup> Norway was a major funder of DACAW and also of the initiative on Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) that sought to ensure that children, women, Dalits and disabled had a say in the use of government funds earmarked for them in the grants to govt DDCs and VDCs .

<sup>73</sup> Practiced in the Mid and Far-Western hill, Chaupadi involves segregating menstruating women and girls by sending them out of the house into shelters or cattle sheds for four days each month while they are considered to be in a state of ritual pollution.

In selected districts where it has programs on the ground, UNICEF has worked with government and NGOs to pilot different approaches to reaching OOSC and helping them to transition back to mainstream education.

- UNICEF has also implemented **special programs in several conservative Tarai districts** to support adolescent girls to stay in school through organizing homework clubs and even involving them in after school team sports. Earlier, in 2006, UNICEF undertook a gender review of the primary curriculum; by 2012 this task had been taken on by the DoE Gender and Equity Development Section who did their own review to ensure the gender neutrality of the current basic education curriculum. UNICEF also supported the Girls Education Alliance Network at the national level that brought in women CA members to lobby for support to girls right to education in the new constitution.
- UNICEF has lobbied for **toilets for girls in all schools** (schools with girls toilets rose from 26% in 2008 to 65% in 2012). Though UNICEF was not necessarily directly responsible for constructing all the toilets (many have been built with WB, ADB and bilateral funding), it did draw attention to the link between having separate girls' toilets and girls' attendance at school that stimulated other donors to earmark funds specifically for this purpose and made it government policy.
- Many donor agencies are interested in adolescent girls and girls' education because both are fairly 'safe' issues with government (compared to other dimensions of identity such as caste/ethnicity or regional identity). Institutions like the World Bank, DFID and other major donors have also pushed this agenda but UNICEF has been very effective at campaigns against culturally embedded practices like *chaupadi* and early marriage that not all donors could carry off. We think UNICEF's persistence and steady work at the grass roots (plus its excellence at communications) make UNICEF at the very least a strong player on this issue. One of the senior MoE managers interviewed for this study believes that this array of UNICEF initiatives is a major force behind Nepal's achievement of gender parity at primary and secondary level education.

### iii. Equity

- **Attention to Out of School Children (OOSC)** and working with government on ways to get them back into the education system (rather than just ignoring them as "outside the system"). UNICEF worked with government to draft its "Strategy and Action Plan on bringing out of school children into basic education"<sup>74</sup> and to lobby for a focus on this issue in the SSRP. They have also supported NGOs to map OOSC in 8 districts that was later scaled up to 14 districts. INGOs like CARE and SAVE are also concerned with child rights and have long had programs to help educate and redirect OOSC – as have many Nepali NGOs. Currently all the DPs in the LEG are concerned with this as well. We believe that UNICEF's taking the lead on the Consolidated Equity Strategy and the extensive consultations that preceded it reveal them to be leaders in this area. (See discussion in last bullet below).

UNICEF seems to prefer to address certain dimensions of inequity in the education indirectly rather than by directly focusing on and attempting to the change attitudes that sustain discriminatory practices like untouchability. As noted in a recent World Bank report, OOSC are over represented among the poor, Muslims and Dalits.<sup>75</sup> Households in the poorest quintile have 14 percent of their children age 5-12 out of school compared to 2 percent for the highest quintile. Muslim and Tarai Dalit households are the worst off with 19 and 26 percent of their children in this age group not in school. From this perspective, the campaign to bring OOSC back into school may be a good tactic to get help to certain social groups in a political context where there is some resistance to "targeting" specific identity groups for any special assistance. However, it might also strengthen the OOSC effort, if there were greater understanding of the economic and especially the social factors that keep some children away or drive them to drop out.

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<sup>74</sup> DoE. 2013.

<sup>75</sup> World Bank, 2013. Nepal Report on Human Development: Access, Equity and Quality in the Education, Health and Social Protection Sectors. p.25.

- **Alignment with Child Rights Perspective and helping government bureaucrats and parents to see the school through a child's eyes.** UNICEF has done this through initiatives like CFS, Learning without Fear, the directive banning corporeal punishment in schools, etc. In 2011 GoN declared all schools as "Zones of Peace" and endorsed the National SZOP Framework and Implementation Guidelines. In 2012 an International Conference on School as Zones of Peace was held to share the Nepali experience globally. UNICEF's position as part of the UN gives its advocacy a special link into the whole human rights framework. Although some INGOs work in this area, there is much less "competition" for leadership on the child's rights agenda among other DPs. Its status as a UN agency gives UNICEF a comparative advantage in this area that is, we believe, widely recognized.
- At present UNICEF's most important contribution is probably its leadership in the **development of the Consolidated Equity Strategy and the Education Equity Index.** This effort is a response to the 2012 MTR's criticism that the SSRP did not have a clear strategy for achieving its equity goal. While the strategy has been in development for the last two years, it has not yet been implemented so, strictly speaking, this effort does not fall into the period being examined by the case study. However, UNICEF staff members have been working hard on it over the last two years and it is a major element of UNICEF's education program in the current Country Program (2013-2017). Going forward, its implementation would appear to be critical in determining whether SSRP meets its equity goals or not.

As the lead of the LEG's Access and Equity Thematic Working Group (ETWG), UNICEF worked with the Gender and Equity Development section of DOE to develop the Consolidated Equity Strategy. Norway, the World Bank, WFPA and Save the Children were also involved. The first version of the strategy was developed by a team of experts with funds from UNICEF, Norway and the WB. After consultations at the regional and national level, the paper was presented to UNICEF in January 2014.

Based on this initial strategy paper, the DOE Gender and Equity Development Section and UNICEF refined the framework.<sup>76</sup> The strategy now defines educational equity in terms of: 1) providing **equity in access** to education that is accommodating the needs of the child in terms of location, acceptance, safety, resources, linguistic and learning needs and the child's ability (special needs); 2) **equity in retention** which is preventing the child from drop out, repetition and irregular attendance that occurs because of lack of child friendly and enabling learning environment at school or supportive environment at home and; 3) **equity in learning outcomes** by ensuring/enabling all children to establish learning outcomes through providing relevant and child centered education as per their needs.

A major challenge was that the strategy had to incorporate and reflect many earlier documents and regulations.<sup>77</sup> In particular, the whole system of scholarship distribution that has 16 different categories of eligible students needed to be rationalized.<sup>78</sup> In addition to aligning the existing interventions, the objectives of the Consolidated Equity Strategy were to: 1) *develop a pro-poor targeting strategy*; 2) *strengthen the EMIS and research on equity*; and 3) *develop equity indicators and measures to effectively and equitably allocate monetary incentives in support of equity.*

The core of the strategy is the development of an Education Equity Index (EEI). The EEI is to be based on empirical data and used to allocate resources to best improve the access, participation and learning outcomes of children facing various types of disadvantage. These dimensions of disadvantage or

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<sup>76</sup> Powerpoint presentation by DOE, Gender & Equity Development Section at May 2014 JAR

<sup>77</sup> These include: 1) Strategy for Gender Equality in Girls Education 2007; 2) Multi-lingual Education Implementation Directive (2009); 3) National Child Friendly School Framework (2010); 4) Schools as Zones of Peace (2011); 5) Child Friendly Local Governance Procedures (2011); 6) Guidelines for Free and Compulsory Education; 7) Making the Teaching Profession Inclusive (Teacher Service Regulation 2002 Fifth Amendment (2010); 8) School Health and Nutrition Strategy (2006); 9) and School Enrollment Campaign Guideline (2011); 10) Strategy to End Child Marriage and 11) Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy.

<sup>78</sup> By the time of the May 2014 JAR a preliminary draft of an integrated scholarship guideline had been prepared for public consultation.

“drivers of inequity” on which data will be collected include: socio-economic status, gender, geographic location, disability, caste/ethnicity, health and nutrition status, language and vulnerable groups.<sup>79</sup> The development of the EEI is at least in part being funded by GPE through a Global and Regional Activity project on District/School Profile Cards (also known as the “Data Must Speak” project) that is being implemented globally by UNICEF.

The “Equity Index Options Paper”, prepared by a UNICEF team for consultation, is still in a very rough draft.<sup>80</sup> But what is emerging is a composite Education Equity Index that brings together three separate indices that measure 1) inequalities in **learning outcomes** across districts; 2) inequalities in the **context** by looking at the prevalence of the various drivers of inequity across districts; and 3) a **resource** equity index to capture and compare resource allocations across districts. Both school level data (from EMIS)<sup>81</sup> and population data (from CBS) will be used to develop the EEI – initially to target the most disadvantaged districts for specific interventions related to reaching out of school children. Later indices could also be developed at the region, VDC and even school level as well. The development of the EEI and its use for providing targeted support to districts is one of the three “stretch indicators” that will determine whether Nepal gets the final 30 percent of the next GPE grant (some \$17.8 million).

Looking at the technical complexity of the EEI and the fact that we already have detailed recent data on various measures of educational attainment at the district level (which could be analyzed to identify regional and geographic disparities), on children at different economic levels and on children belonging to major caste/ethnic groups as well as the sub-groups,<sup>82</sup> it may seem questionable as to whether the major efforts that have gone into the EEI are really necessary to achieve a fair and rational distribution of the available funds in support of the equity goal. However, in the absence of a new constitution representing some sort of “political settlement” in Nepal and, given current tensions surrounding caste and ethnic identity as well as the long standing global debates about categorical versus means-based or economic targeting, it may have been difficult to get buy-in for more straight forward approaches to the targeting or distribution of incentives.

The World Bank is clear on its preference for economic or “pro-poor” targeting, while at least one of the bilateral DPs feels that categorical targeting has been efficient and effective. This ambivalence appears in the School Sector Reform Program/Sector Wide Approach Extension Plan 2014/15-2015/16 which in one place speaks of a consolidated scholarship program delivered “through a one door system using Poverty Card as first criteria regardless of gender or ethnicity”<sup>83</sup> and in another says that “current incentive schemes will be continued ... especially for Dalits, marginalized groups, disabled, girls and children from economically poor households.”<sup>84</sup> Interestingly, the Consolidated Equity Strategy produced by the Gender and Equity Development Section of DoE still retains categorical targeting for scholarships which are to go to “all girls,<sup>85</sup> all Dalits, all children with disabilities, marginalized and endangered Janajatis, all children in the Karnali region in grades 1-8, children of freed bonded laborers and children affected by conflict.”<sup>86</sup> Clearly some debates remain to be held with government and among the members of the LEG on these issues.

Yet it may well be that the complex and rather “technocratic” approach to resource allocation used in the Education Equity Index may offer a compromise by integrating both school level and national level data on learning outcomes, socio-economic and geographic contexts and resource flows – all

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<sup>79</sup> DoE and UNICEF. 2014. Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector in Nepal. P. 7

<sup>80</sup> UNICEF. 2015. Equity Index Options Paper (draft o)

<sup>81</sup> The Education Equity Index aims to be “fully embedded within the EMIS/Flash system and to support the government in targeting equity-based allocations within the ASIP/AWPB from FY 2015/16 onwards.” However, the head of the M&E section of DOE did not seem very involved or up to date on the equity strategy or the index.

<sup>82</sup> See earlier discussion in section on equity and the Multidimensional Inclusion Index on pp. .

<sup>83</sup> School Sector Reform Program/Sector Wide Approach Extension Plan 2014/15-2015/16. P.7

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p 19

<sup>85</sup> The original target was for the poorest 50 % of girls so this seems to have doubled the targeted group.

<sup>86</sup> DoE and UNICEF, 2014. Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Education Sector in Nepal.p33

disaggregated by caste/ethnicity, gender, economic status, location etc. – into the formula so that all feel their concerns have been addressed. In addition, EEI's empirical foundation and its transparency should greatly reduce the scope for corruption or political favoritism in the allocation of resources.

## V: Aid Management, Financial Management, and Enabling Conditions

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### A. Aid Management

#### i. GPE program

**5.1.** Several parties are accountable for the quality of GPE's management of donor aid funneled through GPE. These include the GPE Board and its committees; its executive arm, the Secretariat; the Nepal LEG; and the supervising entity (World Bank) for GPE's grant to the School Sector Reform Program in Nepal (SSRP) (2010-2014). GPE has several unresolved governance problems that muddy accountabilities. Although, the performance of Government obviously affects the parties' opportunities for effectiveness, the issue here is not Government's implementation performance, but how well the GPE players adjusted to the obstacles and possibilities presented by Government.

**5.2. GPE Board.** MOE officials and the development partners who support the SSRP through a SWAp agreed that the most significant contribution of GPE has been the resources that it had been able to mobilize for the SSRP. For the period 2010–2014, GPE provided US\$ 120 million in grants. When SSRP was formulated in 2009, there was already a financing gap of US\$ 293.6 million<sup>87</sup>. GPE contributed to narrowing this gap substantially. GPE's financial contribution early in the program was crucial for addressing the resource constraints faced by the SSRP--it actually stimulated the mobilization of the SSRP SWAp. The support from GPE to Nepal's education sector signaled the credibility of Nepal's education system, and this de facto endorsement encouraged other agencies to join in. For development partners the relative ease with which the GPE contributed to the SSRP was laudable because the GPE did not ask for additional appraisals for its grant and accepted what the development partner group (led by the World Bank) had already appraised in 2009.

**5.3.** Other international agencies such as DFAT and the EU felt that GPE importantly contributed to mobilizing civil society organizations and enhancing participatory planning processes in the development of the national sector development strategy. The Supervising Entity (World Bank) found that it has been relatively easy to administer the GPE funds according to a global umbrella agreement between the two entities. GPE did not ask for additional reporting, although there is separate accounting and reporting of GPE funds.

**5.4.** On the other hand, the MOE and the development partners were critical of changes in the modality of GPE support to the SSRP, including for the SSRP extension years (FY2015-2016). For the MOE, the decline in the absolute grant amount in the new round of grants (starting in 2014) and the addition of 'stretch' indicators in the same has been problematic. Through these instruments the GPE has begun to behave more like the multilaterals and is no longer "Fast Track". In addition, although GPE's goal is to add to the total of donor funding for basic education, it was seen as unintentionally having created a funds substitution problem. Some felt that GPE encouraged donors to channel their funding through GPE instead of providing direct bilateral support to MOE. Giving the example of Denmark (which until 2012 was the biggest bilateral donor to education reforms in Nepal), MOE officials saw the GPE as not generating additional resources on top of what the bilateral were providing directly to the government, but rather as creating an alternative conduit for existing bilateral funds.

**5.5. GPE Secretariat.** The Secretariat plays an important role in the quality assurance for grant applications to GPE, a role that is marred by an incomplete contractual relationship. It is accountable for quality oversight, but can only rely on persuasion to obtain any redesign of the project on the basis of the findings of the quality review.

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<sup>87</sup> *Nepal SSRP Joint Appraisal Document*, 21 August 2009.



**5.6.** For Nepal the Secretariat commissioned an External Quality Review<sup>88</sup> that was high quality. The Review included an excellent annex that evaluated the performance indicators for the operation in detail. For example, for the indicator "Increased percentage of qualified and trained teachers", the Panel noted that "Inputs related to 'quality improvement' are measured through this indicator as well as through indicators related to pre-schooling ratios and student teacher ratios. A more in depth discussion of the rationale behind the quality improvement actions is merited. It should be noted that research around the world does not show a consistent correlation between higher levels of teacher education and training and increased student achievement. It depends on the teacher training schools themselves as well as incentives for active teaching at the classroom level. The SSRP does have a sound discussion on the conditions for quality teacher training, but there is no discussion of what actually happens inside a Nepali primary school classroom."

**5.7.** The Panel was concerned about the program's ambitious Development Objectives, especially for the Basic Education component and the inevitable trade-offs between the objectives of maximizing access, equity, and quality.<sup>89</sup> The tensions between objectives, together with persisting country and sector risks, the highly decentralized nature of program implementation, and uncertainties about the Ministry of Education/ Department of Education's (MOE/DOE) oversight capacity at the national, district and community level, represent possibly significant constraints in terms of their full achievement. However, the reviewers concluded that Nepal's previous track record under difficult country conditions, strong donor support, and the program's detailed implementation guidelines are reasons for optimism that the program can -- and will -- meet its objectives to a reasonable, if not full, degree.

**5.8.** For members of the LEG, the biggest weakness of the GPE was that it was not "on the ground". In contrast to their experiences in other countries, GPE was not strongly represented in the annual joint meetings and missions. As a result, the value add of GPE was not entirely evident. Since donors to GPE and those on its Board often have local representatives that participate in the LEG, respondents were de facto talking about the presence of the GPE Secretariat. The Secretariat's minimal presence is attributable to the Secretariat's skeletal country support staff, especially during the period of 2009-2013 when the GPE membership increased from 44 countries in 2009 to 59 countries in 2013.

**5.9. Local Education Group.** The local Development Partners working on education have functioned as the LEG for more than a decade. The DP group<sup>90</sup> has a focal (currently UNICEF) and a co-focal point that revolves around the pooling DPs on an annual basis, with the co-focal point becoming the focal point in the subsequent year. The DP group meets every month amongst itself, and at least four times annually with the government and other stakeholders including the Community Service Organizations (CSOs). These include the Joint Annual Review Mission in April/May of every year (to discuss the next years plan and budget), the Joint Consultative Meeting in December (to discuss the previous year's progress) and two joint quarterly meetings (shorter, usually in February and September).

**5.10.** The LEG's appraisal of the SSR-Plan was oddly ineffective. A 153 page document called the Joint Appraisal Document exists. It has good analysis and information--including in the annexes. However, this good work is poorly organized to serve the LEG task of appraising the SSR-Plan. This is a good example

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<sup>88</sup> In 2009 the GPE Secretariat proposed and the Board agreed to pilot independent reviews of the quality of the design of projects prior to their being submitted to GPE for funding. These were called External Quality Reviews, conducted by education experts experienced in development.

<sup>89</sup> The Review anticipates tensions as access improves, because reaching children from marginalized groups will be increasingly costly and difficult. Standard setting and quality improvement themselves are inevitably more difficult to implement and measure compared to increased access. They will need to explicitly take into account the significant teaching and learning challenges (physical, linguistic, location, poverty, livelihood imperatives, etc.) of disadvantaged children. The quality and access interventions will thus require nuancing and "balancing."

<sup>90</sup> Current pooling members of the LEG are: the Asian Development Bank ; the Government of Australia represented by the Department for Foreign Aid and Trade (DFAT); the Commission of the European Community; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland; the International Development Association; the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Norway; and UNICEF.

of why the Secretariat needs templates for different types of reports and requirements that the parties involved use these templates.

**5.11.** The quality of the SSR-Plan is mixed. The SSR-Plan that the LEG appraised and endorsed specifies objectives, indicators, baseline from two previous school years, targets by year, data collection sources, and a convincing discussion of M&E. It has a very short, but substantive, section on risks and lists three types: a) institutional, organizational, and individual capacity at all levels; b) political will and readiness for the reform at grassroots level, and c) mobilization of adequate funds for the implementation of the program. Its mitigation measures to address each of the three categories of risk seem plausible.

**5.12.** However, the logic and plausibility of the causal chains from interventions to outputs to outcomes cannot be traced, although the selection of interventions relative to development objectives has a surface plausibility. The SSR-Plan lacks theories of change that reflect diagnostic analyses of topics such as the realities of teacher competence and commitment, time-on-task, the availability and use of teaching and learning materials (including textbooks), the reasons for students' drop-out rates, repetition rates, and poor attendance, and the reasons for students' poor learning achievement to date. The SSR-Plan has a few actions that address equity and social inclusion. However, because it lacks analyses of the factors that are driving different kinds of social exclusion, the likely effects of its planned activities that target exclusion are impossible to judge. The documents contain revealing statistics: 30% drop out in primary grades; nearly 16% drop out after grade 1; and 30% repeat the grade. The grade 5 survival rate is less than 60%, and many who complete Grade 5 do not transition to Grade 6. However, the strategy does not present the "story" that explains these numbers. Thus, it cannot be judged whether the planned interventions are necessary and sufficient to attain the development objectives.

**5.13. Supervising entity (World Bank).** The quality of the design of the SSRP that GPE helps to fund is rated moderately satisfactory, primarily because of concerns about the complexity of the operation relative to Government's capacities and unresolved problems with its results framework. The SSRP--both the strategy and program--address multiple sub-sectors, have multiple "moving parts", and entail demanding capacity requirements. This complexity is somewhat offset by the use of pilots and bipartisan and strong political commitment to inclusion and basic education. Strong political support for education cuts across party lines; this program is the final program in a 14 year EFA push that started in the early 1990s and that achieved significant results in terms of NERs and gender.

**5.14.** That said, this program is expected to make progress on two problems that are much more difficult: a) inclusion of several categories of marginalized children that pose physical, linguistic, location, poverty, and social identity challenges and that are thus harder to enroll, harder to retain, and harder to educate; and b) learning outcomes.

**5.15.** The results framework for the program has strengths, such as very good M&E. However, it fails to remedy the strategy's lack of a theory of change. The development objective is to increase access to and improve quality of school education, particularly basic education (grades 1-8), and especially for children from marginalized groups. However, the four key performance indicators are not sufficient to monitor achievements, especially for reaching marginalized groups and for evaluating quality improvements. For example, the key performance indicators measure gender equity. However, in the SSRP and Joint Appraisal Document "marginalized groups" are defined to include "the poor, the vulnerable and those excluded on the basis of disabilities, gender, caste/ethnicity, religion, language and geography." The MoE's Flash Report should measure enrolment rates for at least some of these groups, but the PAD does not have baselines or targets by subgroup.

**5.16.** Project supervision has been fully satisfactory. The development partners that participate in the SWAp and the World Bank jointly supervise the SSRP. Government and the Development Partners conduct joint meetings two times a year: the Joint Annual Review in April and for the Joint Consultative Meeting in December. In addition, the MOE/DOE and the Partners hold quarterly meetings and other periodic meetings as and when the need arises. The supervising entity files biannual implementation status reports that update all indicators as the data become available. The donors and Government contracted for an independent midterm review which replaced the Joint Annual Review for 2012 and the normal World Bank

midterm review. It was a solid evaluation that included several specialized studies, such as a comprehensive analysis of the educational status of marginalized children and an analysis of a pilot study of how SSRP policies and practices were being understood and implemented at the school level.

**5.17.** The Partners have been very proactive in flagging problems, providing technical assistance to Government to help them address problems, and, where needed, "pulling the plug". For example, although the SSRP became effective in December 2009, disbursements were withheld during the initial 11 months because of fiduciary issues related to the SSRP and the previous EFA operation. In 2013 when Government delayed in taking promised actions on textbook printing and distribution, the development partners decided not to support textbook grants requested under that year's annual work plan and budget, amounting to about US \$ 18 million. The Partners persisted in trying to increase the focus on marginalized children.

## ii. UNICEF program

**5.18.** UNICEF's project cycle, the quality of which partly defines the quality of UNICEF's aid management for Nepal, starts with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Nepal. The UNDAF structures aid activities by the large number of UN agencies active in Nepal. UNDAF priorities for 2008-2010 relate to basic education and gender equality, but somewhat obliquely. UNICEF's Country Program Document (CPD) for 2008-2010 includes support to basic education, and UNICEF's Country Program Action Plan (CPAP) for 2008-2010 elaborates on themes in the CPD. These three documents were extended to 2012 with modifications in the results matrix. UNICEF reports on progress against the CPAP annually.

**5.19.** The CPD sought one result directly related to basic education: half of the bottom 20 per cent lowest performing primary schools in 15 districts are child friendly. This goal was ultimately defined as meeting five criteria. The baseline was zero. The modified results matrix changed this goal somewhat: "Children have increased equitable access to child-friendly learning opportunities that are sensitive to conflict, gender and social diversity." The indicators for this objective were a higher percent of boys, girls and marginalized: a) enrolled in ECD; b) enrolled in basic education; and c) transiting from basic education to secondary education (grade 9). The revised results framework has plausible targets and excellent baselines for all children, boys, and girls. "Marginalized" is undefined and has neither baselines nor targets. The mechanisms by which creating child-friendly learning opportunities are expected to contribute to the targets for these indicators are not specified and are not immediately obvious.

**5.20.** In-depth interviews with the MoE, donor partners on the LEG, the World Bank, and UNICEF itself indicate that UNICEF evidenced great strengths in Nepal. These do not include: a) well developed designs of interventions; b) designs of results frameworks that define the causal structure of UNICEF's program or the theory of change that underlies the framework; c) consistency in the indicators that are measured; or d) the completion of interventions that are started.

**5.21.** On the positive side of the ledger, the **MoE** greatly appreciated UNICEF's work on the SSRP, noting that UNICEF works well with government. UNICEF is seen as primarily involved in advocacy – both at the level of public policy and at the level of individual attitude and value change. In the latter area, UNICEF is considered especially effective. It is seen as "good at messaging, networking and able to mobilize communities and set agendas." UNICEF is seen as bringing in the child's perspective and standing for child rights, child protection and gender equality. These issues are not necessarily the top priorities of the MoE, but the Ministry recognizes them as important for the government of Nepal to understand and respond to.

**5.22.** UNICEF is also appreciated for working at two levels: 1) at the district level through NGOs and local government and; 2) at the policy level in dialogue with the central office of MOE. UNICEF's policy work was seen as more credible because it is connected to their work and experience at the grassroots. For some in the MOE it was sometimes difficult to see the impact of UNICEF's district level work, but even these comments came with the acknowledgement that UNICEF's advocacy work was making an important difference. As noted in the previous chapter, one MOE official gave UNICEF's advocacy work credit for Nepal's excellent progress on improving the Gender Parity Index in education. (See Annex 6 for a list of

the specific UNICCF initiatives mentioned by different MOE staff members -- along with their occasional concerns – usually about lack of continuity and insufficient follow-up.)

**5.23.** The main concerns or critiques of UNICEF among MoE staff were related to the frequent shifts in UNICEF's priorities and their failure to follow through on some initiatives. One senior MoE manager noted that, "What UNICEF does is good, but they always have a crowd of activities. And they don't focus long on any one subject." Another observed that "UNICEF lacks continuity. They are spread over too many areas. People get confused and can't absorb it all." In a similar observation, another MOE officer said, "UNICEF is dynamic. But it is difficult to capture the gains because some of the positive initiatives are not institutionalized in government."

**5.24.** It was also noted that "sometimes UNICEF's 'parallel system' in the districts can create problems"<sup>91</sup>. However, another senior officer involved in planning said he appreciated UNICEF's way of working with the districts because, "most UNICEF funds go through the District Development Fund (DDF) that is controlled by the District Education Committee. UNICEF funds are more flexible than government's and they can work with District Development Committee and NGOs."

**5.25.** Many felt that UNICEF needs a "stable core agenda". At the same time, across the board there was an appreciation for UNICEF's agility and willingness to try new ideas and to pilot things like ECED and the Welcome to School Campaign that have now been integrated into mainstream government programs.

**5.26.** Like the government, the **World Bank** values UNICEF for its comparative advantage in addressing the attitudinal and deeper socio-cultural issues that influence education. The Bank works mainly with the government, and the Bank's staff members realize that it is difficult for the state to affect factors important for education such as the child's home environment. However, UNICEF, NGOs and INGO's are well-positioned to target these factors. UNICEF was appreciated for "doing a good job with very few resources" and for their 'on the ground' experience

**5.27.** The Bank's only critique of UNICEF is that they are "not strategic". For example, in their Child Friendly School program UNICEF initially insisted on having some 250 different criteria that needed to be met before a school could be judged as Child Friendly. This allowed UNICEF to communicate its vision of an ideal school, but was discouraging for the schools that have very few resources and little hope of meeting all these criteria. Later they reduced the long list to 25 "Minimum Enabling Conditions" and finally, after considerable dialogue within the LEG, UNICEF was convinced to develop a list of 5 "Prioritized Minimum Enabling Conditions" (PMEC). These are now a part of the SSRP and funds have been budgeted to help schools reach at least these five benchmarks.

**5.28.** Bank staff also felt that UNICEF had done a good job as convener of the JFA/LEG and that the experience of convening (which UNICEF has done for the last two years) had helped them see the SSRP from a wider perspective.

**5.29.** Other **LEG/JFA members** involved with SSRP were interviewed: Norway, Finland, Australia and ADB staff members. All valued UNICEF for its advocacy for children and other vulnerable groups, its strong field based work and ability to work with NGOs and government at the district level. But concerns were also expressed about the inability of some UNICEF staff to see the education sector as a whole rather than just focus on UNICEF projects. Many expressed the wish for UNICEF to be more "strategic" about what it does and to carry its good work through. (See Annex 7 for a more detailed discussion of the DP's views of UNICEF's work in the education sector.)

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<sup>91</sup> UNICEF works at the field level through NGOs and local government in selected districts. It also maintains regional field offices.

**5.30.** The views of **UNICEF staff members** about the agency's main contributions to basic education in Nepal are very much in line with the views of government and other development partners on the LEG. The current Education Program Manager stated that:

UNICEF has always tried to ensure that government policies and DP initiatives are aligned with child rights. We have done a lot to table core equity issues – especially through the OOSC [Out of School Children] initiatives – and also worked a lot on girls' education. There is a whole list of programs that UNICEF has piloted like Child Friendly Schools, Child Friendly Local Governance (that works to lobby for women's, children's and marginalized groups priorities in the use of local body grants that are earmarked for them but often captured by other interests), Schools as Zones of Peace, the Learn Without Fear campaign, etc. that look at educational development from the child's perspective. One of UNICEF's biggest policy successes is ECED that was incorporated into the EFA and now into the SSRP and has now become part of the government funded school system. UNICEF also does a lot of work at the grass roots piloting things, testing them and then offering them to government for incorporation into the government system.

**5.31.** For the UNICEF Education Program Manager, equity is the biggest issue. In her words,

[T]he biggest current challenge for basic education in Nepal is the *equity issue* that manifests itself most strongly in the unacceptably high number of OOSCs in certain districts (in Mid and Far West mountains and hills and in Eastern Tarai) and among certain groups (disabled, Dalits, some Janajati groups and among girls from these groups and especially Madhesi girls). Government has realized that its previous blanket approach is inadequate and that targeting is needed.

**5.32.** Even though UNICEF puts equity as the core challenge for education, it does not seem to have addressed all aspects of equity with the same level of effort. Like the rest of the SSRP, UNICEF has placed much greater emphasis on attracting and keeping girls in school, (e.g., *girls education networks, alliance for girls' education*, etc.) than on efforts to reach disabled children, address caste discrimination in schools or develop and implement coherent language policies.

**5.33.** Although UNICEF has done a great deal to improve the health and schooling of Dalit children, most of this work has been indirect. Probably for sound tactical reasons, UNICEF has not taken up the issue of untouchability and caste-based discrimination with the same fervor that they have devoted to equity for girls or children with HIV/AIDs. The revealed preference in both UNICEF and GoN has been to deal with caste-based discrimination indirectly, using more generalized terms like "marginalized" or "disadvantaged" groups instead of Dalit.<sup>92</sup> In the discussion of social equity in the education program, the 2013-17 Country Program Action Plan notes that UNICEF will address these types of inequities: gender, socio-economic disparities, geography, language, disability, ethnicity, and HIV/AIDs. No mention is made of caste.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, the Multi Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) that UNICEF commissions to track key indicators on children, do not collect or analyze data on caste/ethnicity.

**5.34.** When asked about this anomaly – and the larger issue of UNICEF's approach to dealing with caste as a barrier, staff members were surprised and seem not to have realized this gap. They said that UNICEF purposefully tries to work with groups that face discrimination, pointing out their work with Muslims to try to get traditional Madrassa schools linked with government.<sup>94</sup> It should be noted that the preference to downplay the issue of caste-based discrimination is also evident in the World Bank's work on SSRP. One

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<sup>92</sup> "Dalit" means "down-trodden or crushed". It was chosen by the group themselves and conveys a message of protest against the traditional caste hierarchy.

<sup>93</sup> UNICEF & GoN, 2013. Country Programme Action Plan 2013-2017, para 4.23

<sup>94</sup> UNICEF has worked with about 100 Madrassas to help them with their SIPs and encourage them to incorporate the government's required subjects along with their religious teaching so they become eligible for government support. They also mentioned that they had encountered resistance from one DEO who tried to change the name of a Madrassa to some government name and also refused to give funds for extra teachers that had been approved by the center.

of the major analytic sources for guidance on the management of SSRP (and the design of the extension) has been the excellent “Nepal Report on Human Development: Access Equity and Quality in the Education, Health and Social Protection Sectors”<sup>95</sup> prepared by the Bank. In fact, this report *does* analyze data by caste/ethnic group (see for example, Tables 2.10 and 2.13); but instead of using the usual category of caste/ethnicity,<sup>96</sup> the Bank has chosen to use only “ethnicity”.<sup>97</sup> This apparent reluctance to name the caste variable or, in UNICEF’s case with the MICS, to monitor caste-based differentials in outcomes for children is counter-productive and does not contribute to the kind of analysis needed to deliver on SSRP’s goal of equity in education.

**5.35.** Although during the period of review (2008-2013) UNICEF seems to have paid less attention to some dimensions of inequity than others, the discussion of UNICEF’s contributions in chapter IV shows a fuller picture of UNICEF’s more recent leading role in helping the SSRP to better address its equity goal in the current Nepali context.

**5.36.** In terms of where UNICEF staff members thought that their agency needed to improve, the Education Program Manager said that she thought UNICEF could and should do more to document and assemble evidence on what works and what does not through more rigorous and systematic research on some of its grass roots efforts. For example, to what extent does CFS or ECED contribute to improved school retention and performance outcomes for different disadvantaged groups?

## **B. Financial management**

**5.37. Public financial management.** The 2014 assessment of Nepal’s public expenditure and financial accountability indicates that Nepal has made substantial progress in deepening the structures and processes of public financial management. The commitment to change and reform of public financial management systems and processes by the Government has produced results. Compared to 2008, 16 of the 28 performance indicators improved, 10 indicators remained unchanged and only 2 indicators deteriorated. Investment efficiency gains have been achieved despite the political transition period (2006-2010), a period when reform was not a priority.

**5.38. Budget credibility.** At the aggregate level, the budget, both expenditure and revenue, is credible and that credibility has become internalized. Budget variance, although declining with the return of political stability, has reflected poorly formulated budgets where execution requires re-allocation during the year, and some budget indiscipline. The rating for the credibility of the budget increased from a C+ in 2008 to a B+ in 2014.

**5.39. Predictability and control in budget execution.** The legal and process framework for determining tax liabilities is clear and minimizes the discretionary power of tax officers. This is reinforced by a transparent tax appeals mechanism. Taxpayer registration and assessments have also improved. However, there are issues in the accounting for assessments and collections, and tax arrears that have continued to mount as there is insufficient attention being given to clearing old arrears. New programs and projects are delayed and subject to political interference outside of the formal budget approval process. Information technology has been used to reach out to taxpayers on the revenue side, and to resource users on the expenditure side. This has increased the efficiency in tax collection and budget management.

**5.40.** The Treasury surplus of the past years has eased cash and debt management. The payroll is still managed largely manually, and it is not linked digitally to personnel records. Since 2007, the legal and regulatory framework for procurement has been based on international standards. Most procurement is

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<sup>95</sup> World Bank. 2013.

<sup>96</sup> In Nepal ethnic groups were treated as castes by the Shah Rana regime in the Muliki Ain or National code. Thus Brahman’s, Chhetris and Dalits are all of the same *ethnic* group and yet very distinct in the caste hierarchy. The current Nepali census contains ethnic, caste and one religious minority group (Muslims) in its classification of caste/ethnicity.

<sup>97</sup> Caste and Ethnicity are very distinct social constructs and using Ethnicity in this way implies among other things that Brahmins, Chhetris and Dalits are distinct ethnic groups which they are not.

through open and competitive bidding, but there is lack of central data for justifying non-competitive methods of procurement and for monitoring compliance with rules. The developmental impact of spending has been reduced by widespread irregularities and non-enforcement of rules. Commitment control is weak despite the existence of rules and regulations. The rating for the predictability and Control in Budget Execution increased from a C in 2008 to a C+ in 2014.

**5.41. Fungibility and/or additionality.** The issue of fungibility is not as much of an issue in Nepal where the fund utilization rate is quite high. A review of the public spending analysis shows that 96% of the total budget has been spent in the sector during the five year period (2005/06-2009/10). In the FY11, FY12 and FY13, the actual expenditures went above the threshold of a 5% variance only once in FY13 where the deviation was 5.9%. The deviations for FY12 and FY11 were at 1.9% and 4.05% respectively.

**5.42. Ratio and trend analysis.** Table 10 shows that Nepal’s expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has decreased steadily from 2009/10 to 2012/13, with some recovery in 2013/14 to about 4.2%, below the average for developing countries of 4.9% of GDP (in 2012). The table also indicates that the education sector has been receiving a declining percentage of the national budget; the 15.6% that it received in 2013/14 is well below the average level of expenditures for developing countries of 17.3% (in 2012) and the SSRP-agreed fiscal framework that sought to gradually increase Government allocation to education to 20% of the national budget.

**5.43.** Although Government’s policy was presumably to increase the proportion of the education budget allocated to basic education, basic education has seen a dramatic decline in its share of the education budget from 71% in 2009/10 to 60% in 2013/14. Thus, basic education is receiving a smaller share of the sector’s smaller share. At the same time, budget releases to the local entities (District Education Offices, Resource Centers and Schools) have been regular and predictable, facilitating the effective use of the funds that are provided.

**Table 10: Ratio and Trend Analysis**

Year	Education Budgets as % of GDP	Education Budgets % of total Budget	% of Education Budget Allocated to Basic
2009/10	3.6%	16.3%	71%
2010/11	4.5%	17.1%	64%
2011/12	4.3%	16.6%	69%
2012/13	3.7%	15.7%	65%
2013/14	4.2%	15.7%	60%

**Source:** MOE. 2014. Annual Strategic Implementation Plan/Annual Work Plan and Budget, 2014-15. Kathmandu: Ministry of Education.

### C. Enabling conditions

**5.44.** The Theory of Change postulated that the following conditions would have an effect on the “ability” of the interventions to make a difference on the desired educational outcomes, grouped by **System-Level Enabling Conditions** and **Basic Education Enabling Conditions** as show in Table 11.

**Table 11: Enabling Conditions**

System-Level Enabling Conditions	Basic Education Enabling Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National/political commitment to improved quality and equity in BE, including ECE</li> <li>• High share of national budget for education</li> <li>• Conflict/disaster sensitive mechanisms in place</li> <li>• Functioning Local Education Group</li> <li>• Appropriate multi-lingual policy in place &amp; funded</li> <li>• Disaggregated EMIS &amp; learning assessments in Place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community/ parental involvement and supports especially for girls/ disadvantaged</li> <li>• Fee free policy, school feeding, scholarships for Disadvantaged</li> <li>• Institutional capacity at national and local level (for planning and implementation)</li> <li>• Strong budgetary support for BE, including ECE</li> </ul>

**5.45.** The team examined the current status of each one of these conditions and roughly determined how strong each was, using a three point hierarchy, **strong, moderate, weaker**. The results are summarized here shading the above list as follows: strong: **green**; medium: **blue**, and weaker, **yellow**.

**5.46.** Most of the *system level enabling conditions* specified in the theory of change (See Figure 1) are in place in Nepal. One missing element has been “an appropriate MLE policy in place and funded”. Although a policy has been drafted, it does not seem to have been adequately funded or implemented. There are also weaknesses in the EMIS system that have keep it from being able to adequately track equity and efficiency outcomes along caste/ethnic lines and from being able to verify and systematically cross check data generated by the schools.

**5.47.** In terms of the *enabling conditions for basic education*, things are a bit more complex. There is “strong budgetary support for BE including ECED” and most of the other enabling conditions listed are “in place”; however except for budgetary support, all have critical hollow spots that weaken their ability to ensure that the necessary ingredients are there and that expected causal sequence shown in the inner box actually happens. “Institutional capacity for planning and implementation” at the national and especially at the local level, is thin. The scholarship distribution and governance system needs (and will be getting) serious revision. And, while communities and parents are “involved” in basic education, in the sense that

**5.48.** Some 42 percent of all the government schools have requested to be community managed, broad-based, informed participation of parents and communities in the management of their schools seems to be the exception, not the rule.

**5.49.** Part of what is missing in Figure 1 is any reference to the power relations that operate at the school level, the ministry level and the broader societal level. What is not shown here is the *undue power that the teachers have because of their links to party structures*. Because of the strength of the Teachers Unions, MOE has not actually been able to give community schools power over their teachers. Even if there are enough teachers and even if they are trained, too many are not “committed”. So even though there are enough classrooms, toilets and at least basic teaching/learning materials, teachers are not “adequately supervised” to insure that they spend “adequate time on task with students”. Similarly, because MOE is run by the dominant Nepali-speaking group, it has not seen the urgency of actually funding and implementing its MLE policy.



## VI: Conclusions and Recommendations

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### A. Conclusions

- **SSRP has not focused sufficiently on quality and the factors that affect learning outcomes.**

A major concern related to Nepal's education reforms in recent years has been that they are **overly guided by the EFA and MDG goals, focusing only on universal access and gender parity**. Following on the premise that you get what you measure, these are the only two areas where the country has made significant progress. While the rhetoric on quality was always there, specific interventions aimed at improving the quality of education beyond the traditional focus on supply of better inputs was lacking. As also noted by the SSRP mid-term review in 2012, the **mechanisms to monitor student learning outcomes through NASAs were delayed** until 2012. Further, according to the same review, the SSRP design paid **inadequate attention to the curriculum and textbooks**.<sup>98</sup> Curricular and textbook revisions followed the normal cycle of minor revisions every five years and major revisions every 10 years. Further, even after the revision were made in lower secondary curriculum and textbooks during the first five years of SSRP, **no significant efforts were made to orient all teachers to the revised curriculum or to develop and supply teachers guides**.

Related to this is the **lack of adequate mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of activities aimed at enhancing teaching-learning processes**, thereby contributing to increased learning outcomes. It was assumed that the conventional mechanisms would work to translate quality related inputs (teacher training, school physical infrastructure, grants for learning materials, etc.) into improved practices and usages at the school level.

- **The 'Capability Trap.'** A major concern related to the reforms in the education sector in Nepal is the issue of system capabilities to implement large-scale reforms such as the SSRP with the intended outcomes. **Inadequate focus on systemic capacity building** (related both to the adequacy of personnel as well the right people in the right places) has been noted in previous studies as well.<sup>99</sup> This is also closely related to the issues of capability trap, wherein the system is expected to deliver results for which it is not ready or adequately prepared.
  - **One of the major constraints on educational quality – disengaged, unmotivated teachers – is essentially political and thus, beyond the control of MoE.** The fact that permanent teacher positions are widely used as political patronage creates a systemic disincentive for teachers to respond to MoE's efforts to improve their performance. This is the "moose on the dinner table" that no one discusses directly but everyone on the LEG knows to be the reason for teachers' high (but undocumented) absenteeism and low interest in learning and practicing more child-centered teaching methods. It is at least part of what has kept community management of schools from working and foiled the World Bank's theory of change. The failure of the SSRP and the LEG to address this problem more directly has allowed the status quo to continue. Yet DPs have only very limited influence on political processes. This kind of impasse requires a national champion willing to put a spotlight on the situation and generate broad public support for change to greater teacher accountability. Such a campaign would need to be part of a much broader movement towards accountability across government. In the absence of such a movement or champion to support, perhaps all the LEG can do is insist on being more open about the true nature of the problem.

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<sup>98</sup> Government of Nepal, Mid-Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform program, March 2012.

<sup>99</sup> Moriani, Farrukh, Bhuban B. Bajracharya, Pramod Bhatta and Sreyasa Mainali. 2013. *School Sector Reform Plan Nepal: Institutional Analysis and Capacity Development Plan*. Kathmandu: Asian Development Bank, Nepal resident Mission.

- **An Effective LEG.** As noted above, the Local Education Group (LEG) in Nepal brings together diverse perspectives on and priorities for the basic education sector. While this makes the reporting and documentation processes surrounding the two annual meetings in April and December of each year a major task for MoE, it also creates a forum where all these perspectives are shared, priorities negotiated and action coordinated. **It is our view that the LEG in Nepal works very well.** Evidence for this is the seriousness and creativity with which the LEG responded to the recommendations of the MTR by developing the Consolidated Equity Strategy and also the formulation and implementation of the NERP program. These two initiatives show that the LEG can identify weaknesses in SSRP and that its members – sometime collectively and sometimes with one member taking the lead – can develop and find funding for new activities and interventions aimed at addressing these weaknesses.

## B. Recommendations

- 1) **Using the newly developed Consolidated Equity Strategy and Equity Index, broaden the equity focus of SSRP and strengthen the emphasis on improving learning outcomes for all children and reducing disparities between groups.** Align SSRP with the new Sustainable Development Goals – especially Sustainable Development Goal 1: Leave no one behind. Set explicit goals for *reducing disparities*, especially in learning outcomes, based on region, language, caste/ethnicity and, of course, gender. The SSRP has made real **progress on gender equity, but much less progress on other dimensions of equity – especially on addressing barriers related to language and caste discrimination.** The issue of language affects not only Janajatis or Indigenous Peoples. Millions of Nepalis from the Madhes/Tarai speak languages like Maithli, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Hindi, etc. that are from the same Indo-Aryan language family as Nepali but are not mutually intelligible. While many Janajati and Madhesi children are able to speak and understand Nepal when they reach school, there are also many who cannot – though precise data on this are not available.

One of the reasons that the language issue has been avoided may be because it would be costly to set up a system to provide quality mother-tongue instruction in the early years and then transition to Nepali. But the inertia among mainstream (Nepali-speaking) policy makers and managers in MoE may also be because they have not understood the impact that their failure to deal with the language issue is having on learning outcomes for the affected students.

- 2) **Improve the ability of the education management information system to better identify social groups where children's access, participation and learning outcomes are lagging.** The education management information system is already serving as an important 'dashboard' for the SSRP, but it could do much more. The Department of Education **needs to make better use of the data to steer the SSRP implementation and stimulate policy change.** The Monitoring and Evaluation section is understaffed to fully analyze the data and learn from it and yet it is difficult for non-Ministry of Education staff to get access to the data of the education management information system.

The major limitation of the education management information system in terms of its ability to track and promote equity is that its **framework for disaggregation of social groups is completely inadequate.** All students are classified into one of just three groups: Other, Dalits, and Janajatis. This oversimplified categorization leaves out two other major groups with low educational outcomes, the Muslims and the Tarai Other Castes. However, members of even generally disadvantaged subgroups vary on dimensions of disadvantage, with perhaps most but not all being disadvantaged. The Equity Index could be an effective way to monitor equity.

- 3) **Focus more attention on building local level capacity for school management and on improving the school governance systems to ensure adequate checks and balances.** School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations need continued support and oversight to perform their functions related to management, and the transparency and accountability in the use of funds. Part of this should be setting up guidelines for greater gender, social and economic diversity on the School Management Committee. Efforts to **develop specific Terms of Reference for Head Teachers and**

**enter into clear performance contracts between School Management Committees and Head Teachers** should also be continued and documented to see if they help build accountability.

- 4) **The Development Partners Group should look for ways to open dialogue with government on how to address the underlying problem of the politicization of teacher recruitment and deployment.** This is extremely delicate but it needs to be discussed. One way to approach it is by drawing together the results of global research in this area and by undertaking research in Nepal to document the negative impact of the current system on student learning outcomes (and hence future earnings potential).
- 5) **Provide more stable funding to UNICEF in return for greater accountability for its (jointly agreed) outcomes within the overall SSRP.** One way to make better use of UNICEF's acknowledged comparative advantages would be for the Local Education Group (including UNICEF) to agree on certain key UNICEF initiatives that seek to bring attitudinal change and support greater equity within the overall framework of the SSRP. Funds could be earmarked for mainstreaming these selected initiatives more fully into the Ministry of Education's program as part of the SSRP. This would relieve UNICEF's education program of its current funding insecurity and allow it to focus on a longer time horizon within the framework of the SSRP.
- 6) **More Policy Research Needed.** In the absence of a political settlement, getting traction on the policy issues that are stalling SSRP is especially challenging. However, compelling research can stimulate new thinking and sometimes break the logjam. The SSRP needs to use research to find the best way forward on implementation and to influence key technical and political decision makers. Much more use could be made of the rich EMIS data – and perhaps the development of the Education Equity Index will stimulate greater effort in this area.

There are a number of assumptions in the SSRP model that need to be tested. Some of these questions of course would need data beyond what the EMIS collects. Some examples include:

- **Does ECED lead to improved learning** in grade 1? Does the impact vary by region, economic status, gender or social identity of the child? Where is the impact greatest?
- What is the **impact of scholarships** on student retention and performance – again looking at variations by region, economic status, gender and social identity?
- What has been the impact of the various **alternative schooling options**? Do some options work better in urban areas? What seems to work best for students of different ages, genders, etc.?
- There is a whole range of questions about the **medium of instruction, use of mother tongue**, etc. that need to be answered. Some of these will hopefully be dealt with in the Australian report but that will be just a beginning. If pilots are developed and implemented on the basis of the report, funds should be ear marked for rigorous impact monitoring. This was not done in the earlier Finland supported MLE project so few lessons could be drawn from that investment. It will also be especially important to study the **impact of switching to English Medium** and which socio-economic groups of students are able to adapt and which are not.
- Could one of the DPs sponsor action research to assess the **impact of training teachers on CFS and more child-centered teaching learning methods on learning outcomes**? Such research would need to combine quantitative approaches with in-depth qualitative methods and would involve spending time in classrooms and with teachers and students. The NEGRP would be an ideal site for such a study. One of the objectives of this kind of research would be to draw the attention of the Nepal teaching profession, MoE and the LEG to *what goes on in the classroom* and documenting the difference it can make.

- What is the **origin and history of the 85 schools in Nepal that have only Dalit students?** Are these schools informally “segregated” as in America’s Old South because other caste groups do not wish to have their children study with Dalits? Or did these schools arise because Dalits often live in segregated communities and it made sense for them to have their own schools nearby? In other words, are these schools a product of discrimination or social geography? How do they perform in terms of student learning outcomes compared to other schools around them with more diverse student bodies? What do teachers and students in these school feel about being Dalit-only?

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## Annex 1. Terms of Reference

### Evaluation of Norwegian Multilateral Support to Basic Education Terms of Reference

#### 1. Background

##### 1.1 Global trends in education aid over the past decade

The overarching goals for education aid globally are the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and 3. We are half a year from 2015, the year when the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved. A lot of progress has been made since the start of the millennium. The global pre-primary education gross enrolment ratio increased from 33% in 1999 to 50% in 2011, equivalent to almost 60 million more children enrolled<sup>100</sup>. The number of children out of school fell almost by half by 2011 but has since stagnated.

Yet we will not meet the global education goals. 58 million children are still out of school, and poor quality schooling is a major obstacle to ensuring that adequate learning is taking place. Inequality in access and learning impede the achievement of quality education for all. One major reason for this is inadequate funding. Basic education is underfunded by USD26 billion per year<sup>101</sup>. The cost of such underfunding to the individual and to society includes lost well-being, productivity and health.

Domestic spending on education globally has on average increased from 4.6% to 5.1% of GNP from 1999 to 2011<sup>102</sup>. A suggested goal post-2015 is that countries should spend between 4 and 6% of their GNP on education<sup>103</sup>. Another international benchmark is that education should be allocated between 15 and 20% of the national budget, which for various reasons is the case in very few countries. Widening the tax base could help some countries meet the education goals, but especially the poorest countries will need external funding in addition<sup>104</sup>.

Globally, the volume of financial aid for education has increased considerably since 2000, though it decreased by 10% from 2010 to 2012 (OECD). The education sector has a narrow donor base and is as such vulnerable to low aid predictability and delivery. In 2011, the top five funders of basic education<sup>105</sup> were the World Bank, the United Kingdom, The United States, EU Institutions and Germany<sup>106</sup>. UNICEF is one of the five most important multilateral channels in terms of total financing to education<sup>107</sup>, and together, the multilateral agencies contributed 25% of total ODA to education over the past decade. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) does not report to the OECD, but would be the fifth largest multilateral donor based on its

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<sup>100</sup> Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 "Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all".

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> The OECD average was 6.3% of GDP (GNP and GDP are not directly comparable. Information taken from [http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20\(eng\)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2013%20(eng)--FINAL%2020%20June%202013.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> Rose, P. and L. Steer (2013): "Financing for Global Education. Opportunities for multilateral action. A report prepared for the UN Special Envoy for Global Education for the High-Level Roundtable on Learning for All: Coordinating the financing and delivery of education".

<sup>105</sup> Percentage share of donor's aid to basic education as a share of all donor's aid to basic education, source OECD/DAC.

<sup>106</sup> Rose, P. and L. Stee, op.cit.

<sup>107</sup> The largest multilateral donors as reported by the OECD-DAC in terms of total financing to education are the Asian Development Bank, The African Development Bank, The European Union Institutions, the World Bank and UNICEF.

own financial data<sup>108</sup>. Even so, the share that these agencies contribute to basic education has declined over the last decade relative to that of bilateral donors.

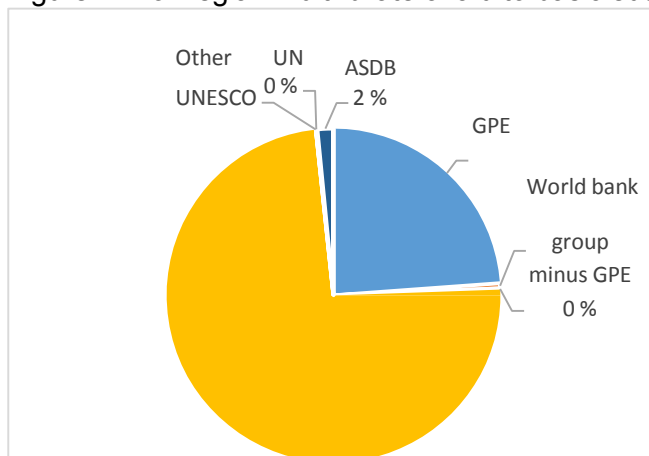
## 1.2 Trends in Norwegian aid to education over the past decade

The EFA goals and the MDGs 2 and 3 also guide Norwegian aid to education. Basic education is a priority, and two of the main goals for Norway are enhanced access to education and improved quality of the education provided<sup>109</sup>. There is a particular focus on girls' education and on provision of education in a safe learning environment, both during peace, and during war and conflict. Norwegian development cooperation is guided by the principle of a human rights-based approach.

Norwegian bilateral and multi-bilateral<sup>110</sup> aid to education increased from NOK 1293 million in 2004 to NOK 1690 million in 2013. Aid to education as a share of total aid peaked at 13.5% in 2006 and has since gradually decreased to reach 7.2% in 2013<sup>111</sup>. During the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the channelling of Norwegian aid to education from the bilateral to the multilateral channel. Of Norwegian bilateral and multi-bilateral aid to basic education, the latter increased from 30% in 2000, to 73% in 2013.

Most of the aid to education goes to the basic education sub-sector (86% in 2013). The total Norwegian multi-bilateral funds to basic education over the last five years amounts to NOK 3.79 billion. As illustrated in Figure 1, nearly three quarters (74%) of this has gone to UNICEF. Almost a quarter (24%) of the funds have gone to the GPE. For this reason, UNICEF/BEGE and GPE have been chosen as evaluation objects for this evaluation.

Figure 1: Norwegian Multi-bilateral aid to basic education by partner, 2009-2013<sup>112</sup>



Source: Norad's Database

Allocations to UNICEF for basic education increased steadily in the beginning of the decade,

<sup>108</sup> Rose, P. and L.Stee, op.cit. (footnote 3)

<sup>109</sup> Key document: [http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/35167823/PDFS/PRP201120120001\\_UDDDDPDFS.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/35167823/PDFS/PRP201120120001_UDDDDPDFS.pdf)

<sup>110</sup> Bilateral aid here includes both government-to-government funds as well as funds from the Norwegian aid administration to/through NGOs and CSOs. Multi-bilateral aid includes both earmarked funds from the Norwegian administration to multilateral organisations (MO) centrally and funds from Norwegian embassies to the MO's local country offices. Pure multilateral funds (i.e. core funding) is not included in this evaluation.

<sup>111</sup> The share to education does not include core funding to multilateral organisations, of which some is used to support education, or expenses for administration in Norway.

<sup>112</sup> The two largest recipients in the "other UN" category up to and including 2009 are ILO (NOK 87 million) and the International Institute for Education Planning (NOK 83 million).



and have stabilised around NOK 480-560 million per year during the latter half of the decade. Norwegian support to GPE started in 2003, and stabilised around NOK 100 million per year but doubled in 2011 to reach NOK 200 million.

Norway is actively engaged in GPE as member of the Board, and participating in the constituency group as well as in one of the four committees advisory to the Board of Directors, namely the Country Grants and Performance Committee. Norway has bilateral annual meetings with UNICEF and participates in UNICEF's Executive Board and in working groups as relevant (e.g. the working group on Results Framework, 2014-2017).

### **1.3 UNICEF's Thematic Focus Area Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE)**

In the period under review, UNICEF was guided by the second Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2006-2013<sup>113</sup>. According to the UNICEF Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic Report for 2013, UNICEF aims to play a significant global leadership and advocacy role across the education sector, as well as working with key partners at the country level. UNICEF is committed to working for an evidence-based equity focus in education systems analysis and policymaking, for expanding coverage of basic education for the marginalised and for improving the quality of education.

UNICEF identifies five focus areas<sup>114</sup> that all receive "thematic funding"<sup>115</sup>. This evaluation concentrates on one of these; "Basic Education and Gender Equality (BEGE)".

The 2013 expenditure for BEGE was almost USD 713 million, with USD 112 coming from thematic contributions. Norway contributed almost 76% of the thematic funding for BEGE. Learning outcomes and equity including gender equality (the key focus areas in the current evaluation) accounted for the majority (72.2%) of expenditure for BEGE<sup>116</sup>. The contributions from Norway to UNICEF's Basic Education and Gender Equality for 2006–2013 have varied between USD 72 and 91 million per year<sup>117</sup>.

### **1.4 The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)<sup>118</sup> is a global partnership of developing and donor countries, multilateral agencies, civil society organisations, the teaching profession, and private sector actors supporting the education sector in developing countries. It currently has 59 developing country partners. Focusing on coordinating action at country level, GPE does not operate as a traditional global fund. While it allocates funds to countries based on an agreed-on formula, it puts primary responsibility on national governments and in-country partners to mobilise and deliver support for education sector plans endorsed by the Local Education Group (LEG) and provides a global platform for mobilising additional resources nationally and internationally.

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<sup>113</sup> A new Strategic Plan (2014-2017) has just been instituted.

<sup>114</sup> The thematic focus areas as outlined in UNICEF's Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) for 2006-2013 are: Young Child Survival and Development; Basic Education and Gender Equality; HIV/AIDS and Children; Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse; Policy Advocacy and Partnership for Children's Rights; and Humanitarian Response.

<sup>115</sup> This is an alternative funding modality created to support the goals and objectives of the MTSP. It is more flexible than traditional earmarked funds (sometimes referred to as softly earmarked), and allows for longer term planning and sustainability of the programmes.

<sup>116</sup> The other two focus areas are "early learning" and "education in emergencies".

<sup>117</sup> UNICEF Thematic Report 2013, table page 48. Note that figures before and after 2012 cannot be compared.

<sup>118</sup> GPE started as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative in 2002, but was renamed the Global Partnership for Education in 2011 to reflect key changes in the governance structure.

The LEG, intended to include all actors involved in the education sector, lies at the heart of the GPE as a collaborative forum for policy dialogue, alignment and harmonisation of donor support to the national education plan. It seeks to keep all parties fully informed of progress and challenges, and collates and disseminates information, including on GPE partner and non-partner funding. The specific composition, title, and working arrangements of LEGs vary from country to country. When a program implementation grant is requested from the GPE, a supervising entity (SE) or a managing entity (ME) must be designated by the LEG<sup>119</sup>. The SE or ME will play a key role in the LEG, and in supporting implementation.

Following an evaluation published in 2010<sup>120</sup>, the partnership was restructured and its mandate broadened. The largest donors to the partnership in terms of cumulative contributions by May 2014 are the UK (USD 857 million), the Netherlands (649 mill), Spain (353 mill), Australia (307 mill), Denmark (288 mill) and Norway (USD 285 mill)<sup>121</sup>. This year, the GPE's independent evaluation committee is commissioning an interim evaluation of the partnership. This evaluation will to the extent possible be coordinated with the GPE evaluation so that the two evaluations can complement, inform and support each other.

### **1.5 The difference between UNICEF and GPE**

There are important differences between UNICEF and GPE, and how they engage in the education sector, which warrant some clarification. At the country level, UNICEF is involved from the national through to the school level contributing to both upstream policy and on-the-ground programme activities and outcomes. While UNICEF participates in the national policy dialogue, UNICEF's funding is often channelled outside the national education budget and targeted to specific groups and/or regions. UNICEF implements some projects directly, some through government and some through civil society. UNICEF has significant presence nationally and sub-nationally, and actively collaborate with government offices at all levels. GPE on the other hand has no direct in-country presence and builds on its partners, including UNICEF in certain countries, for implementation. The GPE Secretariat engages remotely or through periodic in-country short-term visits by secretariat staff or consultants.

## **2. Rationale, Purpose and Objectives**

The current Norwegian government places education on top of the development agenda, and has recently launched a White Paper on Global Education<sup>122</sup>. Much of the funding for basic education is channelled through multilateral actors – notably through UNICEF and GPE. More knowledge on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency<sup>123</sup> of these institutions will be important for future allocations of aid. The White Paper explicitly states that better results reporting and delivery is expected, and both UNICEF and GPE are potential candidates for substantial scaling

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<sup>119</sup> The SE or ME are a bilateral or multilateral development agency. The SE will transfer grant funds to the developing country government, who will implement the programme, whereas the ME will manage programme activities directly.

<sup>120</sup> See <http://www.government.nl/documents-and-publications/reports/2010/02/01/mid-term-evaluation-of-the-efa-fast-track-initiative-final-synthesis-report-volume-5-appendices-vi-viii.html>.

<sup>121</sup> See <http://www.government.nl/documents-and-publications/reports/2010/02/01/mid-term-evaluation-of-the-efa-fast-track-initiative-final-synthesis-report-volume-5-appendices-vi-viii.html>.

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2013-2014/Meld-St-25--20132014.html?id=762554>.

<sup>123</sup> As defined by the OECD-DAC, see <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

up of Norwegian support to education. This is the rationale for assessing the degree to which Norwegian support to basic education through UNICEF and GPE provides quality results in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

*The purpose* of the evaluation is to facilitate more evidence based policy and programming decisions both in Norway and in UNICEF and GPE, with a dual focus on accountability and learning. This will be achieved through generating evaluation evidence on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of Norwegian aid to basic education through UNICEF and GPE, focusing particularly on the achievement of Norway's policy objectives quality of learning<sup>124</sup>, gender equality and equity<sup>125</sup>, and through increasing the knowledge base of basic education.

*The objectives* of the evaluation are to:

- a) Assess the relevance and coherence of Norway's, UNICEF's, GPE's and selected national government's development objectives. Because a rights-based approach is a key principle for Norwegian development cooperation, the evaluation shall assess if and how this principle is followed by UNICEF, GPE and governments in the selected case countries.
- b) Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of financial and technical inputs provided by UNICEF and GPE in generating results at the country level, with a particular focus on quality of learning, equity and gender equality.
- c) Identify the added value, or comparative advantage, of GPE and UNICEF respectively. 'Added value' is defined as the degree to which UNICEF and GPE make a difference, positively or negatively, beyond the sheer volume of aid<sup>126</sup>.
- d) Identify good practices and lessons learned.
- e) Provide evidence-based operational recommendations for consideration and action by decision makers and practitioners in Norway, in UNICEF and in GPE, and to the sector more generally.

### **3. Scope and Evaluation Questions**

#### **3.1 Scope**

The evaluation covers all of GPE's and UNICEF's support to basic education during the period 2009-2013<sup>127</sup>. It will assess contributions of GPE and UNICEF to achieving results at national

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<sup>124</sup> Quality is defined here in line with UNICEF who sets out the desirable characteristics of learners, processes, content and systems. See [http://www.unicef.org/education/index\\_quality.html](http://www.unicef.org/education/index_quality.html). The aspect of learner achievement should carry particular weight.

<sup>125</sup> Equity is defined here as "all children hav[ing] an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination, bias or favouritism.", ref. UNICEF and consistent with the Convention of the Rights of the child. See [http://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/index\\_60239.html](http://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/index_60239.html). This goes beyond equitable access to include equity in the quality of learning.

<sup>126</sup> This includes the way in which UNICEF and GPE interact with each other and with national governments, the quality of their technical inputs, additionality of funds, as well as other factors influencing whether results are achieved in an efficient and effective manner.

<sup>127</sup> To the extent that it is seen as relevant, activities spanning 2014 might also be included. Similarly, the evaluation team can argue for going further back in time.

level, focusing on outputs and outcomes rather than impact<sup>128</sup>, and emphasising the quality of learning, equity and gender equality dimensions of the basic education sector (pre-primary, primary, lower level secondary and including teachers' education and non-formal education<sup>129</sup>). Vocational-, adult- and informal education have been excluded as these areas do not constitute a substantial part of what is supported by either UNICEF or GPE.

GPE prioritises support to fragile states. Quality education for all is no less important in such contexts, and the evaluation will therefore assess how basic education sector plans cover allocation of resources to children who live in conflict- or disaster affected areas, and how they cover disaster risk reduction, conflict sensitivity and other measures relevant to such contexts. Beyond this, humanitarian aid is excluded from this evaluation.

As outlined below, the evaluation is planned with three separate but related parts: A Financial Assessment, a Results Assessment, and a Scoping Exercise for a potential Impact Evaluation. Each part is specified in detail under approach and methodology (Section 4). The Impact Evaluation might be commissioned in a separate tender following the Scoping Exercise.

The evaluation will include in-depth study in four pre-selected countries, and a desk review of 10 countries based on available documentation. Selection of countries for the desk review will be made during the inception phase.

The countries selected for in-depth studies are Malawi, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Nepal. The selection criteria were: the main geographical focus should be Africa; GPE and UNICEF had been present in the countries for some time and preferably since 2009; quality, equity and gender are important areas in national education plans and interventions; potential candidates for future increase in Norwegian development aid to education; at least one country is a fragile state.

### **3.2 Evaluation Questions**

In response to the purpose and objectives of this evaluation, the team should design the evaluation to answer the questions outlined in this section. The questions are organised according to the different parts of the evaluation outlined below, although some may overlap.

1. What results<sup>130</sup> (outputs and outcomes) of basic education interventions have been achieved at the country level? What are the contextual and other factors contributing to or impeding progress on each goal? Have the interventions resulted in any unintended effects?
2. Given the different roles and mandates of UNICEF and GPE; how and to what extent do they complement each other?
3. To what extent are UNICEF and GPE working in ways that support national efforts towards fulfilling the relevant EFA goals in terms of 1) Quality of learning, 2) Gender equality and 3) Equity? This includes assessment of the quality of the technical inputs<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> "Impact evaluation" here refers to rigorous evaluation design to identify the causal effect of an intervention or a policy/reform, including the use of a counterfactual comparison group.

<sup>129</sup> Non-formal education should only be included to the extent that it is included in national education budgets.

<sup>130</sup> The focus should be on measures of quality (e.g. learner achievements, drop-out and repetition rates), equity (e.g. Benefit Incidence Analysis, Equity Gap) and gender, but general measures such as enrolment, completion and survival rates should also be included

<sup>131</sup> "Impact evaluation" here refers to rigorous evaluation design to identify the causal effect of an intervention or a policy/reform, including the use of a counterfactual comparison group.

and the extent to which the inputs are in accordance with the principles of aid effectiveness<sup>132</sup> and serve to strengthen the ability of governments to achieve their goals. The role of UNICEF and GPE vis-à-vis the education sector group in each country is key to answering these questions.

4. What have been the global patterns of financial allocations to basic education over the past five years? This is further specified in the methodology section.
5. To what degree is there stability and predictability of funding for education from national governments, UNICEF (and within UNICEF), GPE and other relevant actors, and in what ways does the degree of stability and predictability affect the ability to deliver results?
6. To what extent have resources been allocated and utilized in an efficient manner? This should include a minimum assessment of value-for-money, i.e. the extent to which the programme has obtained the maximum benefit from the outputs and outcomes it has produced within the resources available to it.

## **4. Approach and Methodology**

### **4.1 Specific methodological considerations**

The evaluation will consist of three parts:

1. A Results Assessment.
2. A Financial Assessment.
3. A Scoping Exercise: Preparation for a potential future Impact Evaluation<sup>133</sup>.

All three parts are expected to inform and build upon each other.

For data collection purposes, visits to UNICEF and GPE headquarters are needed in addition to country visits to the four pre-selected countries.

#### Results Assessment

The evaluation shall document and assess results of the national basic education<sup>134</sup> interventions directly or indirectly supported by UNICEF and GPE at the country level, in relation to prevailing national policies.

In addition to in-depth country studies, this part of the evaluation shall include a desk study of 10 countries. The selection criteria will be similar to the criteria for the four in-depth case countries (see 3.1), and the countries will be selected during the inception phase. The desk review shall include results reporting from the relevant agency offices and/or governments, as well as review and analysis of relevant strategies, expenditure data, programme documentation, any reviews or evaluations, and a rapid review of available census or survey results to provide a general socioeconomic setting and a sense of educational status. The desk reviews should also include phone interviews with key personnel to allow for a deeper understanding of country processes.

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<sup>132</sup> The focus should be on measures of quality (e.g. learner achievements, drop-out and repetition rates), equity (e.g. Benefit Incidence Analysis, Equity Gap) and gender, but general measures such as enrolment, completion and survival rates should also be included.

<sup>133</sup> The Impact Evaluation itself will be commissioned in a separate tender.

<sup>134</sup> As defined above.

The results assessment shall focus on three key areas in the basic education sector: Quality, Gender and Equity. These areas represent major obstacles to achieving the EFA goals<sup>135</sup>, and it is important to assess the extent to which the relevant actors deliver results that make a difference on the ground. At the same time it is important to be aware of possible trade-offs between equity on the one hand and quality of learning on the other. Improving equity by including marginalised and poor students could potentially reduce the average level of learning in the short-term, unless extra resources are spent to counteract this, even though increased equity will pay off in the longer term. This perspective should be included in the analysis.

The education sector group in each country, be it a local education group (LEG) or its equivalent, plays a key role both in UNICEF's and in GPE's work at the country level. The focus in this evaluation should be to assess the value added of UNICEF and GPE to the group, or if relevant, in any other forum for dialogue with national government. This includes assessing how UNICEF and GPE contribute to the effectiveness of the education sector group and its role in achieving country results. Particular priority should be given to assessing the extent to which the national government takes leadership in the group including if and how it is supported to do so, and the role of any Joint Financing Agreement between donors. The role of GPE Supervising Entities and Managing Entities is also key.

GPE is currently formulating a new financing model, which could have implications for its work on statistics and results. The mentioned GPE evaluation will focus at the global level in addition to the country level, but it is important that the evaluation team is aware of these and other reform processes taking place at the global level.

### Financial Assessment

A Financial Assessment study shall collect and analyse available statistics to establish the patterns of financial allocations to basic education, i.e. allocations to and from UNICEF and GPE and allocations to and within the selected countries. The Financial Assessment should be limited to the following:

- Characteristics of, and trends in Norwegian ODA funding to education, compared to ODA funding as a whole.
- For national education budgets: Provide an overview over the case countries' share of GDP allocated to education, the share of the national budget allocated to education, and the education budget going to basic education, for the period 2009-2013. This analysis should be related to availability of external funding, including but not limited to funding from UNICEF and GPE.
- For UNICEF and GPE:
  - o Provide a simple overview of characteristics of, and trends in total funds received by the agency from donors (in general and for education), and in the agencies' allocations to education in different geographical areas. For UNICEF this should also include a specification of key focus areas<sup>136</sup> including BEGE and any further specification of BEGE funds.
  - o Provide an overview of criteria for allocations of funds within UNICEF and to UNICEF's partners and to GPE-endorsed countries.
  - o Provide an overview of flow of funds and identify any bottlenecks, e.g. caused by the timing of allocations to recipients (NGOs, national governments or others) or other factors.

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<sup>135</sup> Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 "Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all".

<sup>136</sup> Key focus areas are specified by the Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2006-2013.

- Assess the fungibility and/or additionality of domestic and international funds (e.g. for UNICEF how thematic funding influences thematic allocations of core funding and its relationship to non-thematic funding).

The Financial Assessment study shall base its findings on available statistics from each entity and country administrative data.

All data shall be cross-referenced in tables, graphs and text, analysing patterns within and between the categories over the past decade. Relevant categories for cross-referencing shall be identified by the evaluation team, and include as a minimum themes, sectors and countries.

The findings from the financial mapping shall be used as background data for the evaluation's wider analysis, especially with regard to assessment of the programme theories of change.

#### Scoping Exercise: Preparation for a potential future Impact Evaluation<sup>137</sup>

Given the recent reforms in GPE, and with reference to scoping study undertaken by White (2010) as part of the mid-term evaluation of EFA-FTI, the Evaluation Department does not foresee an impact evaluation of GPE at this point. In any case, an impact evaluation of GPE is planned by GPE for the years 2017 and 2018.

The scoping exercise should rather aim to identify what possibilities exist in terms of an Impact Evaluation preferably of a) a UNICEF intervention or alternatively of b) a reform or policy change in the basic education sector in one or more of the four selected case countries. If option b) is chosen, the reform or policy change should be one where UNICEF and/or GPE have played a major role, so that the Impact Evaluation can be combined with a contribution analysis. The Evaluation Department plans to use the information from the scoping exercise in the Terms of Reference for the Impact Evaluation. The scoping exercise should include information about any impact evaluations undertaken of the UNICEF interventions under review.

For potential candidates for a future Impact Evaluation, the scoping exercise could address questions and tasks such as;

- Mapping UNICEF basic education interventions including their duration. For each intervention: Has there been any major changes during the intervention period; what was the baseline situation?
- Which basic education sector reforms and/or major policy changes have taken place in the selected countries since 2009? How and to what extent have these reforms or policy changes been supported by UNICEF and/or GPE?
- What is the data needs and availability for analysing these changes, and what is the quality of the data, and needs for collection of primary data? Note that the Evaluation Department foresees that the main source of data will be secondary, and that primary data collection will be limited.

#### **4.2 General methodological principles to be adhered to**

The tender shall follow the OCED Development Assistance Committee's quality standards for development evaluation.

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<sup>137</sup> "Impact Evaluation" here refers to rigorous evaluation design to identify the causal effect of an intervention or a policy/reform, ideally including the use of a counterfactual comparison group.

Details on evaluation methodology will be developed by tenderers in their proposals. The methodology should take cognisance of the data routinely collected (by GPE and/or UNICEF and/or other relevant actors), any previous evaluations and studies from the basic education sub-sector including literature on multilateral aid effectiveness, and relevant progress and other results reports at the global and country levels.

Proposals should include the appropriate treatment of gender and other equity considerations, both in terms of assessing the relevant DAC criteria, and in the data collection and analytical approaches of proposed methodologies.

The evaluation should be based on a theory /theories of change approach, explicitly linking inputs, activities and results, and identifying factors influencing successful outputs and outcomes within a range of contexts and factors that inhibit achievement of stated objectives. This will provide a framework for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness at the country level (and at the global level as relevant, for example when assessing technical inputs). Within the overall analytical framework, mapping of financial flows will be conducted both at the global and country levels. The GPE is currently establishing their own theories of change at the country level. UNICEF has developed a theory of change for BEGE<sup>138</sup>.

The informants shall include a broad range of key representatives in the Norwegian aid administration, UNICEF and GPE as well as National Government representatives, donor representatives and other participants in the Local Education Group (especially those taking the role of Supervising Entity or Managing Entity for GPE, as defined in section 1.4), in addition to relevant education staff (district officers, head teachers, teachers, etc.), parent-teachers associations and students.

The evaluation team shall develop an appropriate methodology that can respond to these Terms of Reference. The evaluation should draw on mixed methods. The methods adopted shall be described in detail in the tender, such as the following suggestive list (not exhaustive):

- a) Document search and reviews.
- b) Analysis of relevant databases and statistics for UNICEF, GPE and case countries.
- c) Interviews with key staff at Headquarters (Oslo, New York and Washington D.C).
- d) Interviews with key representatives of LEGs (or similar sector group if a LEG does not exist) in the selected countries, including government staff.
- e) Field visits to relevant intervention sites in the selected countries, including interviews with key officials, head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils.
- f) Document reviews including research.
- g) Surveys.
- h) Sampling.

The tender should describe the planned approach for the field studies, including how relevant

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<sup>138</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/parmo/files/FA2\\_Basic\\_Education\\_and\\_Gender\\_Equality.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/parmo/files/FA2_Basic_Education_and_Gender_Equality.pdf), page 17.



beneficiaries/stakeholders will be selected for participation in groups and how groups will be organised (e.g. women only? children only? without authority figures?)

The evaluation shall demonstrate how triangulation of methods and multiple information sources are used to substantiate findings and assessments.

## **5. Deliverables**

The deliverables are:

- Inception report not exceeding 20 pages to be approved by the Evaluation department
- Country reports for each pre-selected case country, including financial assessment and results assessment.
- Brief report presenting results of the scoping exercise for impact evaluation.
- Draft report.
- Final report not exceeding 60 pages excluding summary and annexes.
- Two policy briefs not exceeding 2 pages each, one targeting a wider audience and one targeting relevant personnel involved in development cooperation.
- Dissemination in Oslo.

All reports shall follow the Evaluation department's guidelines. All written material will be submitted electronically, and all supporting data will be made available to Norad. Norad retains all rights with respect to distribution, dissemination and publication of the deliverables.

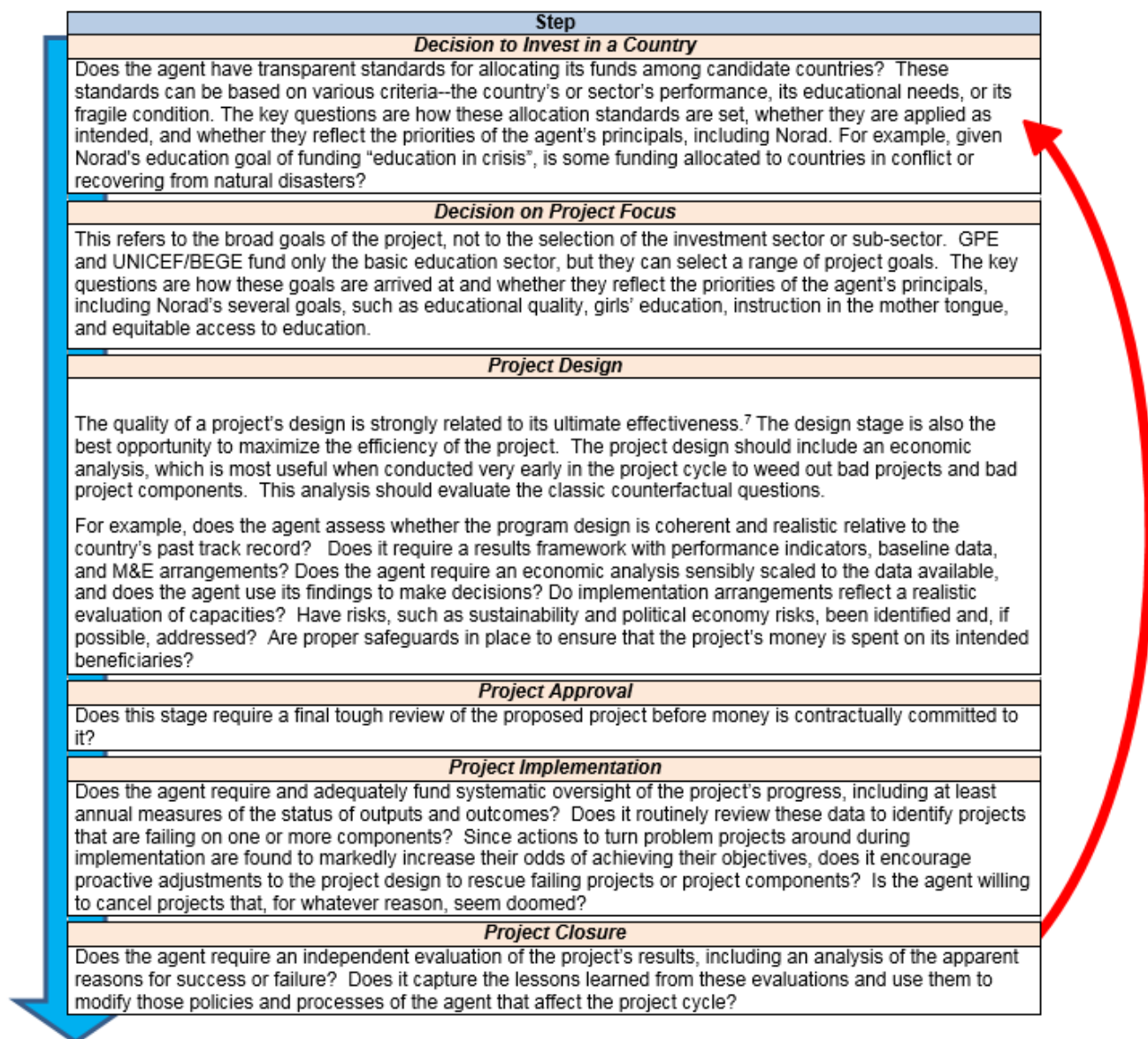
## **6. Organisation**

The evaluation will be commissioned and managed by Norad's evaluation department. Norad will be responsible for the final decisions concerning the Terms of Reference and the evaluation outputs.

A Reference Group will be constituted with separate Terms of Reference. It will include relevant staff from Norad, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, GPE as well as other relevant stakeholders. Reference Group members will be invited to comment on all evaluation outputs before finalisation.

The evaluation will be carried out by an independent team of consultants contracted by Norad's Evaluation department. The evaluation team is entitled to consult stakeholders pertinent to the assignment but it is not permitted to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Norway, UNICEF or GPE. The evaluation team leader will report directly to Norad's Evaluation department.

**Annex 2: Schematic of the project cycle and questions that reveal the quality with which it is implemented**



### **Annex 3: List of those interviewed in the field**

Saurav Bhatt, World Bank Education Economist and Task Manager for SSRP

Rajendra Joshi, Former World Bank Education Specialists and currently Education Consultant for World Bank

Smita Gyawali, Project Officer, Asian Development Bank, Nepal Resident Mission, Kathmandu.

Sarah Boddington, First Secretary, Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy, Kathmandu.

Krishna Lamsal, Program Manager, Education, Australian Embassy, Kathmandu

Lena Hasle, Counselor, Embassy of Norway, Kathmandu

Mariann Kujala-Garcia, Counsellor, Development, Embassy of Finland Kathmandu

Indra Gurung, Special Advisor, Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu

Wendy, , European Union, Resident Mission, Kathmandu

Sumon Tuladar, Senior Program Officer, Education UNICEF

Marilyn Hoar, Education Program Chief, UNICEF

Dr. Awasthi, Joint Secretary, Basic Education, MoE, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

Shankar Bahadur Thapa, Chief, Monitoring & Evaluation Section, DOE, Sano Thimi,

Megh Nath Sharma, Under Secretary, Planning, DOE, Sano Thimi, Kathmandu, Nepal

Deepak Sharma, Chief of Foreign Aid Coordination, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

Durga Basula, Head, Gender and Equity Development Section, DOE, Sano Thimi, Kathmandu, Nepal

## A. Education Statistics Office (of Education Management Information System office or Statistical Report)

1. Many development agencies, active in support of Education for All and educational research (e.g., UNICEF), have assisted the Government of Nepal in recent years in strengthening its Education Management Information System, especially its ability to produce disaggregated data in support of equity programs.

- What have these efforts yielded in terms of stronger, more decentralized data?
- Is there a strengthened database in the Ministry that can be used for obtaining disaggregated data on indicators such as Net Enrollment Ratios and Primary Completion Rates (e.g., breakdowns by gender, economic group, caste, urban-rural, and region)? If so, please use it to supply the breakdowns asked for in other questions.

2. System parameters

- |  | 2009  | 2013  |             |
|--|-------|-------|-------------|
| • The average primary student-teacher ratio        | _____ | _____ | urban _____ |
|  |       |       | rural _____ |
| • The average primary student-classroom ratio      |       |       | urban _____ |
|  |       |       | rural _____ |
| • The average primary school teacher absentee rate |       |       | urban _____ |
|  |       |       | rural _____ |
| • The average expenditure per student (primary)    | _____ |       | urban _____ |

## B. Ministry of Education Officials (for example, the Director General for Primary and Secondary Education or the Directorate of Primary Education or whatever office is most connected to programs supported by GPE and UNICEF)

3. General Questions (*these will be repeated for the other groups of respondents*)

- What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE have had the biggest positive effect on basic education in Nepal?
- What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE could be more effective in promoting basic education in Nepal?
- If you could re-allocate UNICEF and GPE funds spent on basic education in Nepal but had to stay in the same budget limit, where would you add funding and where would you reduce it?
- Are there ways in which UNICEF and GPE need to adapt better to Nepal's history and culture regarding education?

4. Social outreach programmes

- Nepal allegedly has a policy of using local languages in reading instruction.
  - Has this policy been pursued and further developed during 2009-2013? In what ways?
  - What has any research demonstrated about changes in student learning outcomes under the policy?

- Is primary school fee free in Nepal? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no. If yes, how burdensome are any remaining indirect costs like school uniforms and learning materials?
  - Is there a school feeding program in Nepal? If so, describe, including source of funds for it.
  - Same for scholarships for girls and or disadvantaged?
  - What assistance is provided for children with disabilities?
5. **Capacity development.** To what extent is institutional and staff capacity development in the education system an important part of GPE and UNICEF support? What is the evidence?
6. Who else should I talk to, in the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, or GPE, who knows a lot about these programs in Nepal from 2009 to 2013?

**C. Ministry of Education Finance Office (or Ministry of Planning or Finance)** (whatever government agency tracks government expenditures in education).

7. Budgetary and expenditure data for the education sector
- 7.1 For FY11, FY12, and FY13,
- What percent of the GDP has been allocated to the education sector?
  - What percent of the national budget has been allocated to education?
  - What percent of the education budget has been allocated to primary education?
- 7.2 Budgetary releases.
- Over the past 5 fiscal years, have the budgetary releases to local entities been regular and predictable?
  - What percentage of the total budget was released in each of the first three quarters of the fiscal year?

**D. School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) 2010-2016 (Project Management Unit or equivalent).**

8. **General Questions**
- What are the biggest current challenges for basic education in Nepal?
  - What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE have had the biggest positive effect on basic education in Nepal?
  - What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE could be more effective in promoting basic education in Nepal?
  - If you could re-allocate UNICEF and GPE funds spent on basic education in Nepal but had to stay in the same budget limit, where would you add funding and where would you reduce it?
  - Are there ways in which UNICEF and GPE need to adapt better to Nepal's history and culture regarding education
9. **Questions about project development outcomes**

- 9.1 The SLC (?) (SLA?) pass rate went from 62% in 2009 to 48% in 2013. (Target was 67%).
- Was it also low in the intervening years (or up and down)? How to explain the severe decline?
  - Are any SLA results available (e.g., those to have been released in 2014)? What do they show?
  - Why were learning outcomes (average student test scores) NOT used as indicators of quality in the project?
- 9.2 Net enrollment ratio (NER) (primary) and Primary Completion Rate (PCR).
- Why were NER and PCR NOT broken down by gender, ethnicity, caste, and economic status?
  - Can such information be obtained? What about at the school level?
  - If so, would it be possible to visit a couple of district offices and 3-4 schools to examine this?
  - What about use of data from the UNICEF supported DPMAS (District Poverty Monitoring and Analysis System)?
- 9.3 Primary Completion Rate (PCR):
- How to explain 3 versions of same statistic: PCR '13:
    - 77.6 (Implementation Status and Results Report)
    - 88 (Project Appraisal Document/Additional Funding)
    - 100 (World Development Indicator)?
  - How to explain the strong showing for PCR improvement? Could interventions by GPE or UNICEF have played a part?
- 9.4 Out of School Children (OOSC) Plan.
- Need a brief description of that plan, what it contains and how it was produced and approved, how effective it has been.
- 9.5 Teachers trained at the basic education level.
- The proportion is nearing 100% (from a baseline of 66%). What accounts for such improvement? Did support by GPE and UNICEF play a part?
- 9.6. Social audits. Many schools completed "social audits" under the SSRP.
- What are they and how have the results been used?
  - Any good examples of school improvements?
10. Who else should I talk to, in the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, or GPE, who knows a lot about these programs in Nepal from 2009 to 2013?

## **E. UNICEF Country Office staff (in particular those involved in CP 2008-2011)**

### 11. General Questions

- What are the biggest current challenges for basic education in Nepal?
- What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE have had the biggest positive effect on basic education in Nepal?
- What are the ways in which UNICEF and GPE could be more effective in promoting basic education in Nepal?
- If you could re-allocate UNICEF and GPE funds spent on basic education in Nepal but had to stay in the same budget limit, where would you add funding and where would you reduce it?

- **Are there ways in which UNICEF and GPE need to adapt better to Nepal's history and culture regarding education?**

12. Social outreach programs.

12.1 UNICEF helped to pioneer lots of community mobilization efforts to attract girls to school, e.g., *girls education networks, alliance for girls' education, etc.*

- **What about mobilizing other marginalized groups (low caste, disabled, etc.)?**

12.2 **Alternative learning centres (ALCs).**

- **It would be good to have more information about these centers (their curriculum, locations/timing, learning materials, facilitators, assessments, and enrollments),**
- **When children are said to transition from them to regular school, does that usually mean they complete the equivalent of gr 5 in the ALCs and then do gr 6-8 in the regular school? Or what?**

12.3 **District Education Management Information Systems (DEMIS).**

- **To what extent has the improvement in EMIS at the district level made better data available for planning and decision making?**
- **Can databases now be mined for disaggregated data?**

12.4 **Child Friendly School Approach.**

- **Is there any evidence that widespread adoption of CFS approaches has led to improved student learning outcomes in the places where they are used?**

12.5 **The indicator on the percent of parents in marginalized communities receiving orientations on ECD and importance of primary education was not tracked after 2009 (by then it was at 39% -- target 80%).**

- **Why was this the case?**
- **Was the indicator dropped after the MTR?**
- **Was there a formal document describing the extension (rationale, etc).**
- **Were there any formal changes to the results framework (the set of expected results and indicators)?**

12.6 **After the mid-term report (2009) the Nepal Country Office began tracking only 1 or 2 (of 8) expected results using original indicators, but in the Annual Report 2009 it did so for 6 and during the MTR for 7. Instead many new results were reported on (in 2012 there were 13).**

- **Did the Nepal Country Office decide to monitor a new set of indicators after the MTR?**
- **Is that documented anywhere?**
- **What are other explanations?**

13. **What were UNICEF's major upstream contributions during the 2007-2011 Country Programme period to factors like education policy, regulations, laws and sector plans (or particular sections of them), and support for vulnerable children?**

a. List the main ones, putting the 3 most significant ones first:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Etc.

b. For each upstream contribution answer the following questions:

- What evidence is there that UNICEF was a moving force?
- Without UNICEF would the policy/program/upstream breakthrough have come to fruition?
- Were there other agencies involved in the same upstream cause?
- To what extent was UNICEF considered the lead agency for the upstream program breakthrough?

14. What are the most important UNICEF upstream contributions or planned contributions in the current Country Programme (2013-2017)?

15. Who else should I talk to, in the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, or GPE, who knows a lot about these programs in Nepal from 2009 to 2013?

## F. Aid Management Questions

Please use these questions when interviewing officials about aid-management. Three groups of officials should be interviewed:

- a. Government officials (the same as under section C above)
- b. Members of the Local Education Group or equivalently named coordinating body (more details will be supplied by DPMG core group);
- c. Officials from the Supervising Entity for GPE (located at the country World Bank office or in Washington, in which case they will be interviewed by our US-based staff)

16. The Local Education Group (LEG) (or equivalent coordinating body led by the Government) and its role in furthering sector planning, harmonization of donor support around Government's sector plan and use of Government systems, supervision, and policy dialogue in education.

### a. Sector Planning and Coordination

- Does the LEG engage in sector planning and inter-agency coordination of sector programs? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- If yes, how frequently:

\_\_\_ At least once a month

\_\_\_ Once every two months

\_\_\_ Once every six months or less

\_\_\_ Varies with the stage of sector planning and

implementation

- How satisfied are the parties with the quality of this planning and coordination?

\_\_\_ 1. Satisfied

\_\_\_ 2. Moderately Satisfied

\_\_\_ 3. Moderately Unsatisfied

\_\_\_ 4. Unsatisfied

\_\_\_ NA



- If you could change how the LEG undertakes joint planning and interagency coordination, what would be the most important changes that you would like to make?

**b. Does the LEG use its platform to:**

- Harmonize donor support around Government's sector plan?  
Yes \_\_\_ To some extent \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- Pool funding? Yes \_\_\_ To some extent \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.  
Agree on common processes and procedures to reduce the burden on Government? Yes \_\_\_ To some extent \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.  
Rely increasingly on Government systems for implementation, financial management, and procurement? Yes \_\_\_ To some extent \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.
- If you could change how the LEG approaches these issues, what would be the most important changes that you would like to make?

**c. Supervision**

- Does the LEG engage in the supervision of sector programs, including GPE projects? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- If yes, how frequently  
\_\_\_ Biannually  
\_\_\_ Annually  
\_\_\_ Every 2 years  
\_\_\_ Less often than every 2 years
- How satisfied are the parties with the quality of the supervision?  
\_\_\_ 1. Satisfied  
\_\_\_ 2. Moderately Satisfied  
\_\_\_ 3 Moderately Unsatisfied  
\_\_\_ 4 Unsatisfied  
\_\_\_ NA
- If you could change how the LEG undertakes supervision, what would be the most important changes that you would like to make?

**d. Policy dialogue and consensus building**

- Does the LEG act as a forum for sector dialogue and consensus building among partners? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.  
• If yes, how frequently:  
\_\_\_ At least once a month  
\_\_\_ Once every two months  
\_\_\_ Once every six months or less  
\_\_\_ Varies with the stage of program/sector  
planning & Implementation.
- How satisfied are the parties with the quality of this dialogue?  
\_\_\_ 1. Satisfied  
\_\_\_ 2. Moderately Satisfied

\_\_\_4. Unsatisfied

\_\_\_3. Moderately Unsatisfied

\_\_\_ NA

- If you could change how the LEG conducts policy dialogue and consensus building, what would be the most important changes that you would like to make?

**e. Collaboration among members of the LEG**

- In your view, how effectively do members of the LEG work together to do their joint programs?

\_\_\_1. Effectively

\_\_\_2. Moderately effectively

\_\_\_3. Moderately ineffectively

\_\_\_4. Ineffectively

\_\_\_ NA

- If you could change how the LEG operates internally, what would be the most important changes that you would like to make?

**17. Assessment of the Supervising Entity's effectiveness (Supervising Entity is the organization that supervises a Global Partnership for Education Grant)**

- How satisfied are you with how the Supervising Entity is doing its work?

Project preparation	Project supervision
1 = Satisfactory	1 = Satisfactory
2 = Moderately Satisfactory	2 = Moderately Satisfactory
3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory	3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory
4 = Unsatisfactory	4 = Unsatisfactory
NA	NA

- If you could change how the Supervising Entity operates, what would be the most important changes that you would like to make?

**18. Assessment of Government's implementing units**

a. In your view, which units at the central government level and sub-national government levels have been important for implementing the GPE project? Please list them here.

Central government units	Sub-national government units

b. How satisfied were you with the performance of each of those Government units that you think were important to the implementation of the GPE project? In rating each unit, please use this scale:

- 1 = Satisfactory
- 2 = Moderately Satisfactory
- 3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory
- 4 = Unsatisfactory
- NA = unable to judge unit's effectiveness

*(Note to interviewers: the units listed in this table should be the same as those in the table for question 14.a.)*

Central government units		Sub-national government units	
Unit	Rating	Unit	Rating

c. If you could change how the implementing agencies operate, what would be the most important changes that you would like to make?

**Annex 5: Project/Program Assessment Instrument**  
Results for the UNICEF Country Programme for Nepal (2008-2010 extended to 2012)

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
<b>Development Objectives of Interest to Norway</b>							
<p><b>1. Outcome: Improved Learning</b>  (ideally disaggregated by gender and disadvantage)</p>	<p>Many rows here and below do not seem to have indicators or program design elements.</p>	<p>Grade 1 promotion from 54.5% in 2007 to 59% in 2008; Repetition from 29.5% to 28.3%; Dropout 16%--&gt; 12.1% Dropout in SFSI → 8.5% National Gr 1 attendance: 64.2%; Gr1 attendance in CFSI: 68.9%;  10% increase in ECD enrolment in 30 UNICEF focus districts (AR)</p>	<p>National NER from 91.9 in 2008 to 93.7; UNICEF districts from 91.4 to 93.2 (AR)</p>			<p>Gr 1 children have 5 % drop in repetition &amp; 2 pp improvement in drop out in 1371 CFS.  %age of children moving into secondary education rose from 91.2% (girls 90.7% and boys 91.7%) to 92.5% (girls 92.1%, boys 92.8%)</p>	<p>Reports on stunting by caste/ethnicity – but not on education outcomes.</p>
<p><b>2. Outcome: Gender equality</b></p>		<p>Alliance for Girls' Education strengthened (UNICEF's role is not clarified and this is not mentioned in CPAP). Supported a signature campaign with Alliance &amp; 197 women CA members on Girls Education → basis for Plan of action currently being formulated, (AR p.50)  National Girls NER 87.4% → 90.4%; in UNICEF districts: 86.7% →89.4% Female teachers up by 3% nationally, 4% in UNICEF districts</p>	<p>GPI from 0.97 to 0.98 (AR) Female teachers increased from 33.2% to 39.6% Ratio of girls to boys in alternative ed. centres dropped from 66:34 in 2008 to 58:42 in 09 but may reflect girls shift to mainstream schools as reflected in enrolment rates. (AR)  DOE prepared Girls Education Strategy Paper &amp; appointed Gender Focal Points in DEOs in all 75 districts. Gender Focal Points trained on Gender sensitive Planning &amp; Monitoring; (MTR) Gender Neutral Primary curriculum (MTR)</p>		<p>Girls Education networks, Child Clubs, and Young Champions are monitoring 220 schools in Central and East Region resulting timely access to books and scholarships; GE network in Eastern Region successful in advocating female head teachers. GPI drops to 90 in secondary schools (AR)  MOE constructs 5,472 girls latrines in 2011 and raises the % of schools with adequate WASH from 34% to 45%</p>	<p>NER increased to 86.6% in 2011-12 up from baseline of 83.2 to 86.6%; girls went from 82 to 86.1 This is not consistent with figures from 2008 Annual Report that gave Girls NER in UNICEF Districts as moving from 86.7 to 89.4 in that year. National figure even higher so 86.1% female NER in 2012 would be a drop.(AR 2008) <b>(Does not report on changes in target districts. Despite years of effort to gather disaggregated</b></p>	<p>To improve education access and equity for girls and marginalized children, innovative strategies such as adolescent girl's peer support activities and reading skills strengthening was piloted for future nationwide scale-up. (AR) To reduce gender disparities in enrolment in higher grades schools in Tarai districts implemented sports and peer support tutoring reaching 571 and 735 girls respectively (mainly Dalits, Muslims and other disadvantaged girls). Will be refined and scaled up.</p>

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
		Enrolment of girls in ECD from 56.8% to 61.3% Average GPI in UNICEF Districts in 2008: 0.97; in Child Friendly Schools: 1.05 (AR) Partnership with WFP to increase access & retention of girls in 5 districts with low NER (AR)			UNICEF with Parliamentarian Caucus on Gender/Girls succeeded in increasing equity provisions in draft Ed Act and dr Constitution.  UNICEF supported parliamentarians to lobby for provision for girls' ed. in Education Act (AR)	<b>statistics in those districts.)</b> .  UNICEF advocacy led to GON budget for toilet construction; no of schools with toilets rose from 60 to 80% over 2009-2012 (girls' toilets 26 to 65%) .	
<b>3. Outcome: Equity (for marginalized groups)</b> See footnotes 1, 2,3 & 4 on final page	An increased 40 per cent of the out-of-school children aged 6-14 years in school catchments areas in 23 districts will have access to it (to alt. learning opp'ties)(CPAP )  - The urban out-of-school programme in at least three urban areas will receive support to accommodate 50 per cent of the out-of-school working children aged 10-14. (CPAP)	Progress in enrolling OOSC in 14 districts (not 23) and 7 urban areas through alternative learning centers – some transitioned to primary schools but absolute number were given so progress on goal is undermined.  Support for Alternative Ed Programs in 9 districts. (AR)  Review of CFS showed that the initiative increased teachers' commitment to "inclusion of all children." (AR)	Coverage of NFE pgm expanded from 14 - 18 districts  11,773 OOSC were supported In NFE opps in 488 alt ed centers; 94% of outreach program completers transition to formal primary schools.  65% of the children in UNICEF supported NFE centers were girls from marginalized groups. 95% of the facilitators are women. (MTR) UNICEF supported development of guidelines for implementing NFE program. (MTR) Dalit teachers increased from 3.2 to 4.2% (AR)  NER and GER unavailable for caste/ethnic groups, but case studies show enrolment and completion rates for Dalits and some Janajiti groups are	Some 8019 OOSC from most disadvantaged Com'ties of 23 Unicef support-ed districts receive BE through alt learning; 48% of boys 43% of girls mainstr'ed to formal schools.  "Although SSRP focuses on inclusiveness, policies budget and implementation programs are only partially responsive to these objectives." AR  Support to Madhrasa education curricula being finalized by	5384 OOSC (68% girls) received ed thru alt learning opts.  "Welcome to School" 2011 enrolled 100% of children in catchment areas of 45 schools in southern plains.  2068 working children in 7 urban municip received NFE  First UNICEF AR to present data on caste based differentials (in CMR). But no analysis of education differentials along caste/ethnic lines. Established Real Time Monitoring system with WFP. Need to see an example to see if caste/ethnic and other breakdowns included.	8048 children participated in NFE. (68% girls)  OOSC mapping used to develop action plans in five districts	National Equity Strategy drafted and consultations held (AR) "Availability of disaggregated data by ethnicity and gender remains a challenge" AR  To improve education access and equity for girls and marginalized children, innovative strategies such as adolescent girl's peer support activities and reading skills strengthening was piloted for future nationwide scale-up. AR

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
			disproportionately low and dropout and repetition rates are disproportionately high. (MTR)	Curriculum Dev. Centre (AR)  <b>MTR analyzes education data by caste/ethnicity as well as wealth, gender &amp; region for first time. MTR notes that UNICEF has not had a clear definition of social inclusion but needs to do so. P.30</b>	Advocacy for more SSRP funds on toilets (see below in row 5) results in more schools with separate toilets for girls. (AR)  Still no MOE policy to address OOSC (AR)		
<b>4. Others: specify</b>	<b>Support to sector-wide reform programme that will make basic free and education compulsory</b>						
	Don't see evidence that free and compulsory ed. is one of the policy concerns of SSRP		Continues to lobby for free and compulsory ed. (AR)				
<b>Necessary Inputs for Inclusive Quality Education according to DPMG Theory of Change in Figure 1</b>							
<b>5. Schools and classrooms</b> (e.g., building new or renovating, accommodations for special needs, placement so as to reduce distances, including m/f sanitary facilities)					UNICEF advocacy contributed to MOE decision to increase budget for building toilets in schools by \$15 mill in SSRP.	Number of schools with toilets rose from 60% in 2009-2010 to 80% in 2011-12. Girls Toilets from 26% to 65% of schools	
<b>6. Teachers</b> (e.g., supply meeting demand; balance of male and		Girls Education Alliance lobbied for female head teachers. (Results? Did not see this reported.)	Primary student teacher ratio: 1:33; Lower secondary: 1/40; 1:27 at secondary for all schools but lower for community		Successfully lobbied for amendment to Teachers' Regulation to provide 45% reservation for women and disadvantaged		

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
<i>female; training and certification; in-service support; improved incentives, attitudes/commitment.)</i>			<p>schools. 20% untrained; 15% partially trained (AR)</p> <p>Equity gains in enrolment have not been matched by profile of teachers. E.g. 20,2% Dalit students in primary grades but only 3.2% of teachers are Dalit. Janajati is better with 40.3% students and 22.9% teachers in Primary, but drops to only 7,2% Janajati teachers to 40.7% Janajati students at Secondary level. (MTR)</p>		populations. 33% increase in pay for ECE instructors (2011 AR)		
<p><b>7. Curriculum</b> (e.g., any special emphasis on basic (reading/math) skills; instances of removing stereotypes of prejudicial depictions of girls/social groups.)</p>	<p>By 2010, peace education will be integrated into the primary/ secondary curriculum and developed for the non-formal education sector. (CPAP)</p> <p>-At the school level support to the dev't of codes of conduct for schools as zones of peace will continue, nat'l endorsement of these should follow (Not in CPAP)</p>	<p>In 2008 UNICEF supported the Curr Devt Cnt in putting relevant content &amp; skills in SS curriculum for gr 1-10 &amp; NFE.</p> <p>UNICEF supported DOE Curriculum Development Dept. to include content relevant to Peace building in the Social Studies Curriculum (AR)</p>	<p>Further progress in integrating content on peace, human rights, and CE into nat'l curricuc; analysis of lessons for NFE</p> <p>Schools as zones of peace expanded and codes of conducted development; signed by 67% with more in process; training given to SMCs/PTAs; no sign of natl endorsement yet.</p> <p>Curric and textbooks for Urban out of school children revised in 2009 to be more activity-based and to include skills-based information (geared to increased nos of working children. Content on HR, Peace and civic ed. integrated into national curriculum (AR)</p> <p>Curriculum Reform committee includes representatives of Dalit Organizations. (MTR)</p>	<p>MOE w/suppt from UNICEF et al, drafted standards for ECD for age 4-5.</p> <p>Schools as Zones of Peace increases its coverage from 524 to 614 schools</p>	<p>Early Learning and Dev't stan-dards are ready for MOE's endorsement</p> <p>GON declare all schools as "Zones of Peace and endorse the Nat'l Framewk and Implementing guidelines.</p>	<p>Peace, Human Rights, and CE curricular materials (gr 7 textbook) drafted and is being piloted</p> <p>International School Zones of Peace conference held to share Nepali experience</p>	<p>Social studies curriculum made more relevant with local materials introduced in 48 schools in Bajura and Jumla (AR)</p>

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
<b>8. Learning materials</b> (e.g., girl/diversity friendly textbooks/ reading books and their timely distribution and use, library materials and their use, computers & software.)			Only 45% of primary students got full set of textbooks within 2 weeks of beginning of school; decline from last year (AR)				Reading support materials (flash cards, word games, books) provided to 40 schools in UNICEF districts. (AR)
<b>9. Language of instruction</b> (e.g., use of mother tongue and/or other, bilingual programs.)	<b>Does not seem to be a concern for UNICEF</b>	<b>No mention of MT-MLE</b>			First mention of UNICEF policy support to Multilingual education. MOE guideline to promote Mother Tongue education in primary. (Not clear what UNICEF's role was) (AR).		
<b>10. Teacher/school/ system supervision</b> (e.g., by head teachers/supervisors; instructional management; accountability?)	Education offices in 30 dists will be trained on the EMIS for evidence-based & participatory planning. <b>(CPAP)</b>		10% Discrepancy between enrolment recorded in EMIS (reported by schools) and survey based enrolment suggests inflation by schools. A WFP study found a 50% discrepancy in girls' enrolment in Tarai. Social Audit from 63% to 67%; SIP from 64.5 to 77% (AR)  UNICEF supported revised District Education Plans in the 15 lowest performing districts where it works – of these 5 districts were able to produce participatory, evidence based DEPs; Developed Guidelines for DEP				



Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
			<p>preparation; Also piloted individual student tracking. (MTR)</p> <p>UNICEF SZOP efforts attempt to respond to the problem of political interference in schools by bringing the issue of school closure, etc. out into the open (through public hearings) and getting public commitments from politicians to follow code of conduct. SZOP orientations/public hearings targeted to 325 schools in 9 conflict prone districts</p>				
<p><b>11. Changes in learning environment</b> (e.g., elimination of punishment, threats, joyful learning program or elements, time on task)</p>	<p>Half of the bottom 20 per cent lowest performing primary schools in 15 districts are child friendly. (CPAP)</p>	<p>Quality improvement through CFS mentioned but no reference to CPAP expected results.</p> <p>Lobbied with GoN for policy against corporal punishment as part of "Lean without Fear" campaign (AR)</p>	<p>Continued efforts to expand adoption of CFS approach thru the policy work (nat'l framwk and minimum standards)</p> <p>Gr 1 attendance rts of UNICEF supported (CF) schools higher than by more than 10% compared to nat'l ave.</p> <p>45% of targeted teachers use CF teaching apps</p> <p>In 9 districts SZOP efforts have kept schools open longer (91 days compared to 86 in 2008) and less political interference in school governance (AR)</p> <p>In 30 UNICEF districts the CFS set of interventions has reduced the Gr 1 drop out to 8.5% compared to the national rate of</p>	<p>In 30 districts, 1,200 schools were suppt'd to create child-friendly envirmnts, resulting in impressive changes in attendance rate, tchrs' motivation &amp; learning environment in gr1.</p> <p>MOE has endorsed the Nat'l Framework on CFS and Minimum Standards for QE</p> <p>SZOP open 182-192 days up from 70-100 days before program</p>	<p>UNICEF supported DOE Guidelines on WASH that are child, gender and disability friendly.</p> <p>Gov declared all schools as Zones of Peace"</p> <p>CFS in 30 districts, 1200 schools scaled up to Gr 3. Gr 1 promotion rates in these schools rose from 62.8% to 68.2% and gender gap closed</p>	<p>1371 schools were supported to improve ed. quality through CFS. (AR)</p> <p>UNICEF to revise CFS to make it more easily implementable (a more "scalable model") AR</p> <p>In 9 monitored districts schools opened for 210 days compared to 180 in 2011. (AR for 2013)</p>	<p>National Education Code of Conduct guarantees children's right to uninterrupted access to education. During the election political parties did not use schools as venues for speeches and meetings. (AR)</p>

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
			12.1%; attendance 68.9 vs 64.2%. (MTR) Not consistent with statement above				
<b>12. Child's background and resources</b> (e.g., family SES, parental support, health and nutrition, mental and physical state; readiness to learn (ECE received, etc.)	See item 13 also.  -By 2010 there will be ECD centres in each of the category 3 and 4 VDC settlements in 15 DACAW districts. (In CPAP/not CPD)	By the end of 2008 there were ECD in 43% (a 10% increase since 2007) but quality falling behind  UNICEF lobbied for funds for ECD in SSRP to maintain quality; did ECDE costing exercise (AR) Between 2007 and 2008 the total number of children enrolled in ECDs increased by 9.8% for girls, 4.7% for boys and 7.0% overall  Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2006 found GER for children 3-4 years was 53% in urban and 18.8% in rural areas. (150% in Ktm) (MTR) 62.8% at top wealth quintile—11.5% at bottom.	By end of 2009 ECD centers present n 63% of the most disadvantaged wards in UNICEF supported districts c]  While GER in ECD went from 57.4 to 60.2 in UNICEFs 30 districts, in most disadvantaged VDCs it went from 35% to 46% (AR)  More than 3000 ECD centers supported by UNICEF are serving 12000 children – a 2% increase over 2007; (MTR) Enrolment in 30 UNICEF districts is now 35%. (MTR) – but this contradicts report from 2009 AR)	The %age of new enrollment in grade 1 with ECD increased from 7.7% in 2003 to 49.9% in 2009  ECD has expanded rapidly but evaluation reveals compromise on quality. (AR)	In 26 targeted districts ECD centers increased from 5,713 to 10,943	UNICEF contributed to increasing ECD coverage by two fold in target districts  % enrolled in ECD nation-wide increased in 2011-12 to 72.9% up from baseline of 66.2.	56% (gender parity) of ECD children enter grade 1, but access to ECD for children for lower quintile remains a challenge (MOE status report). In Jumla and Rautahat only 31 and 39% of children. More emphasis on detecting and helping children with disabilities.  Parental education package revised to include info on how to address harmful social practices (abuse, corporal punishment and poor sanitation.
<b>13. Community and Parents</b> (e.g., the extent of their involvement & support to school, especially for girls & in	In the most marginalized communities in 15 districts, 80% of parents/ guardians of children aged 3-5 years will receive orientation on early childhood dev't and	By the end of 2008 39% of parents received orientation. (Besides that parenting classes in 30 dist reaching 14000 parents (59% women)plus radio programs.	Some 49% of parents received parenting classes (a 25% increase over previous year – on the way to the 80% target.  In UNICEF supported districts 83% of schools have formed SMCs; in 86% SMCs active in		Com'ty leaders participate in school management; 1200 schools supported by CFS initiative has SIPS  Participation and social inclusion, especially of women	1371 schools support'd in governance through SIPS and Social Audits  Com'ty leaders participate in school management; 600+ schools supported	Review of CFS

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
disadvantaged areas)	on the importance of primary educ. (CPAP)	<p>UNICEF TOT contributed to reaching 60% of national total of SMCs with training on development of SIP. (AR)</p> <p>“The concept of Schools as Zones of Peace is challenged by lack of democratic school governance which makes schools more vulnerable to political interference” (AR 2008:50)</p>	<p>drafting SIPs; women make up 18% of SMC members. Same as national average for women and still very low (AR)</p> <p>14,000 parents (66% women) in 30 districts completed an intense 3-month parenting training. ECD related radio programs in various languages in 15 low literacy districts where UNICEF is working. KAP study found 100% good attitudes but only 25% knowledge and only 7% demonstrated practice so program targets are to increase knowledge to 50% and practice to 20%. (MTR)</p>		<p>and disadvantaged populations, while improving is still not substantive, both within the teacher population and among SMCs. (AR)</p>	<p>by CFS initiative have SIPs. 100% have social audits. But Parajuli et al report shows that Social Audit is only a ritual and is not understood or used for accountability.</p> <p>Journalists and radio programs provide public info about the School Sector Reform Plan. <b>(Role of UNICEF unclear)</b></p> <p>Joint monitor'g visits &amp; mobilization of youth (Young Champions &amp; Child Clubs) contribute to improved learning enviro in some target schools. <b>(Role of Unicef unclear.)</b></p>	
<b>14. Other:</b> UNICEF will increase its capacity to lead the emergency education cluster and continue to maintain a stock of emergency supplies and support disaster-response preparedness activities. (In CPAP but expanded		<p>All targets for stockpiling and training were met.</p> <p>School management TOT for nine new districts covering QERP training package (Quality Educ Resource Pack)</p> <p>Strategic player in SWAp, strengthening equity focus</p> <p>Temporary schooling spaces arranged for 27,000 children after</p>	<p>Updated national contingency plan for emergencies adopted; dist level contingency plans devtd incl preparing for ed rel emergencies. (not clear what UNICEF role is); further stockpiling of ed in emergencies materials</p> <p>School Sector Reform Prog endorsed having UNICEF advocated inclusion in equity, ECD, emergency, etc.</p>	<p>Advocacy by UNICEF et al. resulted in ed in emergencies being included in School Sector Reform Pln.</p>	<p>Partner support to School Sector Reform Plan w/ UNICEF influencing a number of provisions.</p> <p>UNICEF was lead donor focal point in 2011/2011</p> <p>GoN has allocated resources for Education in Emergencies (EIE) to 23 disaster prone districts (AR)</p>	<p>UNICEF influences Disaster Risk Reduction/Ed in Emerg'cies such that 100% of 23 disaster-prone districts have incorporated educ in their district level Disaster Prep and Response plans.</p> <p>Prepositioning materials in case of emergencies continued, used in Siraha District.</p> <p>Earthquake preparedness and training also</p>	

Theory of Change DOMAIN	Project/ Program design elements (indicators)	Results obtained 2008	Results obtained 2009	Results obtained 2010	Results obtained 2011	Results obtained 2012	Results obtained 2013
compared to CPD).		Koshi floods. And 25 flood damaged schools repaired.				provided in 11 districts (not clear if UNICEF led or facilitated this).	

1. Big problem with DAG mapping process and assumptions, at household level. VDC DAG targeting may be less problematic—though process is clearly open to political influence. Nevertheless, DAG mapping has been adopted by GoN (with UNDP assistance) for VDC ranking (from 1 – 4 in terms of poverty) in all 75 districts. The most disadvantaged VDCCS (ranked 4) become eligible for 25% additional resources. (Find out if it is still being used by LGCDP and UNICEF)
  - a. 2004 UNICEF mid term review found that there was no definition of “disadvantaged groups and lack of clear policies and strategies to promote inclusion” and this was a major bottleneck for UNICEF in reaching disadvantaged groups. UNICEF committed to cover 80% of DAG households in the communities where they worked in their Community Action programs by 2006.
2. Annual Report for 2008 says UNICEF has “in house capacity for M&E and its own database to capture information from fieldtrips”.
3. The 2011 AR mentions UNICEF & CBS collaborating on the Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). “Key Findings” report I have seen so far does not disaggregate by gender or caste/ethnicity/region. Some data by Urban/Rural. Will check for final report. Another MICS was just done in 2014 but only undisaggregated Key Findings available at present. AR 2011 also mentions Real Time Monitoring (RTM) in collaboration with WFP Vulnerable Analysis Mapping. Data are disaggregated by gender, ethnicity/caste, geography, age and wealth.
4. UNICEF also provides support to EMIS where it seeks to “improve level of disaggregation to improve the equity focus”.
5. AR 2013 mentions that DPMAS “provided information for the situation analysis and is being used for district and annual periodic planning. The revised DPMAS guideline was finalized by government with UNICEF technical input”. “The DPMAS review was comprehensive, but delays in finalizing the guideline and training prolonged the transition period. Web-based data entry based on DEV INFO is being developed and a training programme is being planned to roll out the new DPMAS”

## Annex 6: MOE list of positive UNICEF contributions to basic education

This annex present some of the positive UNICEF initiatives cited by MoE officials along with their occasional concerns – usually about lack of continuity and insufficient follow-up:

- *Early Childhood Development and Education (ECED)* which UNICEF has consistently pursued for many years, mainstreamed into national policy<sup>139</sup> and continues to follow up;
- *The Gender Audit of MoE*<sup>140</sup> – and the wish that UNICEF had continued this initiative and worked with the whole sector, the schools and the ministry;
- *Learner Generated Materials (LGM)*. The results of this initiative were “very inspiring” at both the school and the ministry level – but they disappeared after two years and never got institutionalized;
- *The Whole School Program*. This involved bringing the whole community including mothers groups, children’s clubs, etc. into running and caring about the school. However, there was a sense that the focus had been lost and now only the SMC remains from this initiative;
- *Welcome to School* and the *Global Campaign for Education*. These have both had lasting impact and been institutionalized;
- *Student Clubs*. The idea of bringing children together to raise their voices and help to make teachers more regular was radical for Nepal but has had a positive impact in areas where it was implemented;
- *Child Friendly Schools (CFS)*. This involves looking at the school from a child’s perspective and investing in making the school experience a positive and nurturing one with things like reading corners, separate toilets for girls, and a focus on child safety and protection from Gender Based Violence, corporal punishment, bullying and discrimination as well as a shift from teacher-centered to child-centered teaching and learning approaches. The CFS Framework has now been adopted as national policy and five priority minimum enabling conditions (PMEC) to qualify as a CFS school have been established and are used for targeting funds for school improvement under the SSRP. Related to this is the UNICEF sponsored campaign for “Education without Fear” aimed at banning the use of corporal punishment in schools. There is now a policy against use of corporal punishment in community schools. The 2011 UNICEF Annual Report says that in the 30 CFS districts Grade 1 promotion rates rose from 62.8% to 68.2%. However, UNICEF agrees that more rigorous studies are needed to document these impacts.
- *Schools as Zones of Peace (SZOP)*. This initiative began during the insurgency as an effort to keep schools open and safe for children – which by and large, Nepal succeeded in doing. Since the end of the war the SZOP has been aimed at de-politicizing the use of the school premises and the teachers (who often owe their appointment to one party or another) for political rallies, etc. The UNICEF Annual Report of 2009 reported that schools in the 9 Districts where the SZOP program had been implemented experienced a drop in school closure days. Schools stayed open an average of 5 days more over the year and the next year the increase in open days went from 70-100 days to 182 to 192 days.

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<sup>139</sup> After many years when only UNICEF and NGOs were working in this area, ECED for children after 4 years of age is now part of the government budget and hence covered by SSRP.

<sup>140</sup> This initiative produced the Gender Strategy for Education and lead to the formation of district level Gender Education Networks, training for Gender Focal Points and strengthening of the Gender and Equity Development Section in MoE.

## **Annex 7: Views of members of the LEG on UNICEF strengths and weaknesses**

*Norway*. UNICEF is known for support for equity and for promoting and protecting girls. UNICEF's advocacy voice and its grassroots work are appreciated by government and by other DPs. However, UNICEF needs to be more strategic. The UNICEF team sometimes seems to be "implementing UNICEF Projects rather than thinking about the education sector as a whole" which is required for a successful SWAp. While the World Bank team works for the SSRP, the UNICEF team just works for their own projects. The UNICEF education team needs to get more involved in JFA because the JFA needs UNICEF human resources.

Another concern about UNICEF is that some of what they do is really NGO territory. They may be crowding out NGOs, especially their watchdog and advocacy functions. As part of the UN, UNICEF supports the Right to Education (and Rights of the Child). The UN is good at supporting the duty bearers but it should not try to substitute for NGOs in their role of speaking up for and supporting the rights holders.

*Finland* Along with Norway, UNICEF is the agency that always raises the issue of equity. UNICEF has led on the Equity Strategy that is critical to the SSRP – though as of yet, no one is sure what result will be.

UNICEF helps by bringing in CSOs. Their biggest impact has been on advocating for:

- Child Friendly Schools. In grade 1-3; they are training teachers how to teach in a more child centered way, though it is not clear how this is being monitored.
- ECED
- Girl's Education
- OPCS
- WASH

*ADB* UNICEF does good work at grassroots but is not strategic. For example, ADB had to work hard to convince UNICEF to reduce the 25 Minimum Conditions for Child Friendly Schools to the 5 Priority Conditions. UNICEF pilots are valuable, but they should be part of the SWAp and fit into the overall sector strategy.

*Australia* UNICEF's "energy" and its willingness to follow up on areas where government shows less interest are appreciated. The Equity Index on which they have taken the lead, could be important in helping to reform the distribution of scholarships. UNICEF has also been very good on supporting adolescent girls. The UNICEF Education Manager has expressed her interest in having UNICEF do more to consciously influence government through evidence based advocacy and research.