

# Partnerships for Equity in Education in South Asia

## Prospects and Challenges



### Executive Summary

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We hope that the recommendations from this study will provide a useful way forward.

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# Executive Summary

## Background

The right to education, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is affirmed as a fundamental right within the national constitutions of South Asian countries. This right is commonly backed by law and reinforced by international rights-based instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989 and EFA Declaration (1990/2000). The global compacts of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) are set as time-bound targets to be reached by 2015 for poverty reduction and gender equality.

According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) nearly 68 million children are not in school worldwide, more than half of whom are girls and, of those, 25 per cent reside in South Asia trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty and extreme disadvantage (Huebler, 2010). Globally 795 million adults, 64% of whom are women, still lack basic literacy skills (UNESCO, *GMR* 2011). Most countries of South Asia are struggling to achieve the targets of the MDGs and EFA as they are constrained by a number of variables, such as a lack of resources, governance gaps, uneven capacities and unpredictable emergencies (e.g. natural disasters, conflicts and post-conflicts).

In order to help countries reach the MDGs, UNICEF is focusing on an equity based approach, where the most marginalized groups are targeted. An equity based approach will likely have the most significant impact on the hardest to reach communities and reduce disparities within a country. However, reaching the most educationally disadvantaged groups has been, and will be, a major challenge for national governments. As such, cultivating creative partnerships among the government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and international donors could potentially aid in the provision of education for the hardest to reach populations.

In response to supply side bottlenecks in education service delivery, the governments in South Asia are invoking partnerships for improved resource mobilization, efficiency and quality. Partnerships such as these are not a new approach in South Asia and resonate within a wider historical context of private engagement for the public good (Chahoud *et al.*, 2007). Such forms of giving and collaboration are established traditions that could potentially build upon strategies to meet the challenges of EFA and MDGs. The traditions of partnerships, however, must be considered within the current institutional discourse on rights-based education for all.

## Objectives of the Study

This study, 'Partnerships for Equity in Education in South Asia: Prospects and Challenges', commissioned by the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), was undertaken: (a) to understand the current roles and possible benefits of the varying partnerships in education equity;(b) to examine the possible role Public Private Partnerships and Corporate Social Responsibility can play in addressing gaps in gender and equity and;(c) in response to a call for guidelines on promoting PPPs and enhancing resources for realization of EFA goals by 2015 through an internal collaborative fund, development partners and the corporate sector (Dhaka Declaration, Ministerial South Asia EFA Forum Meeting December 2009 – see Annex C).

The countries selected as case studies were Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan. In each country, the policies, laws, strategies and evidence on PPPs and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and innovative financing were examined within local contexts, juxtaposed against challenges of Education for All/MDGs.

The study elaborates core working concepts of: giving/philanthropy; foundations; non-state providers such as the private sector, corporations and non-governmental organizations in education management and finance; and innovative financing tools and their use in reaching the most marginalized groups.

### Critical Approaches

**An equity-focused approach:** Key defining features of equity are fairness without discrimination to personal and social circumstance and inclusion for basic entitlements that are outcomes driven.

1. **'Equity-focused approach'** to reach groups that suffer critical disparities is based on evidence examined in depth for 60 countries (low to middle income levels). A fundamental finding was that children from the poorest quintile were around 1.5 times less likely to receive measles immunizations or to attend primary school, than the children from the richest quintile, and girls were more likely to be excluded due to cultural and traditional barriers. The equity-focused approach thus targets those children who are facing multiple vectors of exclusion that are widening the gaps for meeting MDGs 2 and 3 and the EFA goals.
2. **Frames of exclusion:** An equity-focused approach must also identify zones of exclusion for the bottom quintile. This group is likely to suffer persistent education poverty and discrimination, both visible and invisible (UNESCO, *GMR 2010, 2011*; see also Annex A). This group often includes a high proportion of girls. The out-of-school children (OOSC) include: children never enrolled; dropouts; and those at risk of poor learning and dropping out without completing early childhood, primary or lower secondary education. Gender, geography, customary traditions, poverty and emergency and displacements are the distinctive characteristics of such groups. Any initiative for mobilizing partnerships must address these frames of exclusion likely to affect girls disproportionately in South Asia.

### Shifting Role of the State – Expanding Potential for Partnerships

1. **Role of the state:** As a right and public good, education is often considered a state responsibility. With mounting financial, management and service delivery gaps to meet the challenges of EFA goals, arguments have been forcefully put forward to revisit the traditional role of the modern state as the sole financier, provider and manager of services. The new interpretations suggest that the state should be viewed not only as a financier, provider and manager, but also an enabler and regulator. Its new role calls for creating 'enabling provisions' and financing options for many more to participate. The changing role of the state has created the possibility of new partnerships for equity focused, outcomes-based targets.
2. **Non-state providers (NSPs):** NSPs represent a diaspora: from for-profit/commercial to non-profit institutions; from secular to faith-based organizations such as mission schools and madrasas; philanthropic groups; community-based initiatives through formal or non-formal mechanisms and many others. Non-state Providers can be providers of education from early

childhood to post-secondary and technical and/or special/non-formal education. They can also be providers of teacher training, research, textbook development, school feeding programmes, supervisory oversight and other ancillary services to the sector. NSPs in education can also be categorized under the broader umbrella of the private sector.

3. **Private education:** Private education has many definitions but is generally defined as ‘all formal schools that are *not* public, and may be founded, owned, managed and financed by actors other than the state, even in cases when the state provides most of the funding and has considerable control over these schools (teachers, curriculum, accreditations etc.)’ (Kitaev, 1999, p.43, cited in Rose, 2007b). In other words, what is defined as private may vary. For example, a private school can be a) funded by the government but managed by a NSP, b) funded fully and managed by the NSP or c) any combination thereof. Private sector partnerships can complement or supplement the government’s role in education provision and delivery.

## Concepts and Terminology

### Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs)

**Characteristics of PPPs:** PPPs or 3Ps, as defined by the Asian Development Bank, are “a range of possible relationships among public and private entities in the context of infrastructure and other services” (ADB, 2008). PPPs are also referred to as PSPs or privatization, although the three have different meanings<sup>1</sup>. PPPs are normally a partnership between a government entity and a private partner which possess technical capacity or financial backing. “The structure of the partnership should be designed to allocate risks to partners who are best able to manage those risks and thus minimize costs while improving performance” (Ibid).

As PPPs are still an evolving construct, when used in the context of education, the definition can be quite wide-ranging. This means that PPPs can be defined, and will be in this paper, as both the private management of government resources/finances and the private financing of public services. In practice this could look like educational institutions that are

1. run by a private entity but funded by the government, such as an NGO run school;
2. funded by the private sector but open to the public, such as a technical or vocational programme run by private company;
3. privately funded and privately managed, such as a traditional private school.

This list is not exhaustive and many variations exist.

### Multi-stakeholder Partnerships(MSPs)

Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Education are another emergent concept. They are distinguished from PPPs to mean a broader coalition of partners that brings together different stakeholders from different sectors (government, the private/corporate sector, Civil Society Organizations, international organizations and others).

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<sup>1</sup> PSPs are normally a transfer of service to the private sector through contracts while privatization is the sale of operating assets or services to the private sector (ADB, 2008).

## Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

**An evolving concept:** CSR is a broad and evolving concept with no consistent definition. CSR can be seen as a comprehensive set of policies, practices, and programmes to be integrated throughout business operations and processes. CSR can manifest in corporate giving/philanthropy or socially conscience behaviours, such as enforcing environmental standards or good labour practices. There is now growing acceptance of the role of private and corporate sectors in developing and transition economies, providing wider societal goals that go beyond the horizon of their traditional economic activities.

CSR has traditionally been a voluntary practice for industry. However, CSR today is becoming mandatory in countries for which annual public reporting is required. CSR is guided by both government laws and self-regulation in compliance with voluntary business codes (ISO Standards) to achieve a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives that address the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders.

## Innovative Financing Tools

Innovative Financing Tools have been pursued by a number of governments and international agencies in an attempt to meet the resource gap to achieve EFA targets and the MDGs. In 2002 at Monterrey, a call was made for exploring innovative sources of financing for MDGs (para. 44). In 2006 the Leading Group for Innovative Financing for Development was formed 'with 63 member countries with different levels of development alongside international organizations and NGOs'. The Leading Group 'seeks to promote the implementation and definition of innovative financing mechanisms around the world' ([www.leadinggroup.org/rubrique69.html](http://www.leadinggroup.org/rubrique69.html)).

The Leading Group's Task Force on Innovative Financing for Education is charged with exploring mechanisms that can bring additional resources to the sector to meet the MDGs and EFA targets. The Task Force is expected to generate actionable ideas for the education sector (Meeting 18 February 2011, cited at [www.leadinggroup.org/rubrique265.html](http://www.leadinggroup.org/rubrique265.html)).

### Innovative mechanisms tested and under review are:

- a. **Education tax or cess** is a special tax that is levied to generate funds for the education sector. Cess may be used to mobilize additional revenue for a particular head of expenditure when the budgetary allocation is inadequate. A cess can be an expedient political tool, but a major challenge is to ensure that its collection and use are transparent, for the public and time-bound. India has implemented this tool in South Asia, whilst the Philippines in South East Asia has been implementing a 1% real estate tax to finance education.
- b. **Rural Education Development Fund.** For example, both rural and urban private schools in Nepal are required to contribute 1.5% of their gross income [except income from transportation and food] for the preceding academic year to the Rural Education Development Fund (Government of Nepal, 2001).
- c. **Debt-for-education swaps** refer to the 'the cancellation of external debt in exchange for the debtor government's commitment to mobilize domestic resources for education spending' (UNESCO, 2009a).
- d. **Diaspora bonds** are bonds issued by a country to its own diaspora to tap into their wealth in the adopted developed countries. Examples include Israel, India, Lebanon and Sri Lanka.

However, these have so far not been tested in education (Leading Group, [www.leadinggroup.org/rubrique265.html](http://www.leadinggroup.org/rubrique265.html)).

- e. **Cash on delivery (COD)** is a proposal developed by the Centre for Global Development in Washington to provide additional funding to developing countries in return for achieving progress against pre-agreed targets.

There are many other innovative mechanisms under consideration by the Leading Group, such as Global/Humanitarian Lotteries, Education Venture Funds etc., elaborated in section 2.4.

### Regional Overview and Recommendations

Specific recommendations for each country in the study are given separately below. However, the case studies generated multiple common ideas for both the region and for South–South cooperation in the emergent areas of PPPs, CSR and innovative financing of the education sector for timely gains to meet EFA targets and the MDGs:

- In all South Asian countries, the tradition of generous philanthropy and direct giving should be well acknowledged and further encouraged.
- The current discourse on shifting roles of state and society to shared responsibilities can be useful given the recurrent problems of governance and accountability. However, a risk is that it will lead to the shifting of the state’s fundamental obligation on to its citizens, which could exacerbate the challenges of equity, discriminatory practices, unmet basic needs and poor service delivery.
- The traditional grant in aid instrument, in place in South Asia since 1854, for improving access and quality through the private sector was examined in three out of four countries. It needs both a country-specific and regional overhaul for its potential to become more equity and gender focused in the run-up to the MDGs/EFA targets. A regional consultation should be organized for a thorough review of current practices of grant in aid through an equity lens and to redesign the plan accordingly.
- Each country would benefit by developing its own toolkit on the mechanisms, directory of policies/laws, best practices and key players for equity-focused PPPs and CSR by all key stakeholders, consistent with the aims of EFA and the MDGs.
- The story of Bangladesh should be further studied and examined. With virtually all education at the secondary level, and a majority at the primary level, being provided through multiple variations of partnerships, the case of Bangladesh could provide a number of lessons learned and innovative approaches for the rest of South Asia, especially in regard to the global discourse on public and private providers for equity and entitlements backed by state responsibility. This further study could provide, for all concerned, a better understanding of the possibilities and impact of public–private provision in the run-up to the EFA/MDGs.
- Key donors (bilaterals and multi-laterals) within each country context need to devise a well aligned strategy and policy on PPPs and CSR within the framework of an equity-focused approach, concern for children and aid effectiveness. This must be done both independently and jointly with key stakeholders. Whilst PPPs have been acknowledged and understood as an increasing phenomenon, CSR is still met with ‘mixed feelings’ for programming purposes in the

education sector. CSR needs to be explored as a two-way process for closer alignment of the challenges of human development, providing data-driven options for industry to support equity-focused programmes for children and youth with high impact.

## COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

The four country case studies below, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka, examine the level and means in which the government interacts with external partners in order to provide education. The country studies provide an in depth look at these partnerships, which vary considerably. Each partnership has a different role and attempts to mitigate the multiple pressures placed on the governments to deliver accessible, quality and equitable education. However, the system of PPPs is needs to be further developed for greater impact; below are the major findings, issues and recommendations for each country.

### Bangladesh

Bangladesh allocates a mere 2.2 per cent of GDP for education. Bangladesh does present successful indicators on gender parity index (GPI) in primary and secondary enrolment; however, gaps in the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels do still exist.

Bangladesh has substantial private sector engagement in education. In Bangladesh, 97 per cent of secondary and 54 per cent of primary education provision is through private providers in some form or another. Mostly, the partnerships exist in the framework of government provision of financial support through Monthly Payment Orders (MPOs/grant in aid) and stipends for girls up to grade X. It is argued, however, that this blanket approach to PPPs may lead to bleeding of precious resources to groups who can well afford private education. Conversely, education is mandated as a fundamental right under the constitution, which can be seen as a delegation of the responsibility of provision to the government.

Bangladesh has been using an integrated approach in order to fill gaps in education and reach the most marginalized populations. Bangladesh also has a policy on PPPs in place which was endorsed by the recently approved National Education Policy 2010, particularly for vocational technical and ECE. There is now room to explore further an expanded and institutionalized approach to PPPs for addressing the disadvantaged groups through a sector-wide approach. The civil society organizations have played a complementary role in addressing issues of access and quality.

### Findings, Issues and Recommendations

#### *Policy and Frameworks*

- **Integration and Engagement:** Bangladesh has an engaged and integrated private sector in education. However, the discourse on PPPs is neither popularly articulated in the public domain nor is it fully embedded in policy and operational levels.
- **CSR Policy:** The government also has no explicit policy on CSR, but there are encouraging trends by some ministries (Commerce and Information) urging private industry to engage in CSR activities that are tax deductible to ensure more and predictable financial support.
- **Defining PPPs in Bangladesh:** There is an urgent need to deconstruct what is public and private in Bangladesh in order to determine best practices and develop comprehensive frameworks. Especially considering the broad definition of PPPs, and that the vast majority of primary and

secondary education is provided by non-state actors, it is difficult to determine what level and type of relationships between government and the private sector exist. Most provision is by non-state providers, financed by stipends and MPOs. There is room to explore the partnership options within a wider and innovative paradigm for an equity-focused approach

#### *Transparency and Coordination*

- **Regulatory regimes:** A trust deficit exists between the government and CSOs. This can lead to inefficient partnerships, and may impede service delivery if the government regulates actions too closely. At the same time, it is important to be transparent to ensure equitable service delivery.
- **Institutional presence: The establishment of** a full-fledged PPP/CSR unit within the Ministry of Education would be beneficial to ensure that all partners understand the scope and limits of partnerships, offer complete information on the practices and regulations that may be associated with each scheme.
- **CSR Centre Bangladesh**, set up with patronage from the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), requires specific support along with a group of CSOs to: a) develop CSR policy guidelines for education support; b) work with industry to address gender equity-focused options; c) develop tracking/documentation systems; and d) generate case studies/best practices for equity-focused programmes addressing gender equality.
- **Other interpretations of PPPs:** As the definition of PPPs is quite broad, there is concern that all initiatives are not being factored in the debate. These include: NSPs' engagement in policy dialogues and contribution to policy-making, budgeting and programming/design for large-scale sector-wide education programmes; and financing of education through MNAs/MPAs grants. The latter are technically not a PPP as they are government financed schemes allocated through elected representatives.

#### *Predictability*

- **Revisiting the grant in aid/MPO programme:** Currently financial support from the government to private schools through MPOs is not performance-based, which can lead to inefficiency. For example, once an institution is registered under the MPO system, it is difficult to stop the support or to withhold registration. There is an urgency to review the MPO system of grant in aid, as in India, in order to implement a more outcomes-based accountability and quality-focused programme. There is also a need to re-examine the role of non-state providers and the government for a more targeted equity focus. Currently it is only access-focused, not quality-focused.
- **National Education Policy 2010 – widening the scope for PPPs:** This policy may aid in formally engaging CSR and formal PPPs. Formal engagement may lead to predictability in funding. Predictable funding can lead to better planning in the education sector, including implementing programmes to reach the most marginalized.
- **Charity and philanthropy abound at all levels:** Communities also contribute to financing education and discussion of their participation is not fully integrated into public dialogues. Often the value addition through philanthropy is not factored in the debate on PPPs. Innovative partners who reach out to the most vulnerable with measured impact should be publicly acknowledged. At the same time, the risk of counting their participation and an integral part of service delivery could be a concern for equity and predictability.

### Capacity

- **PPPs/CSR in education toolkit, directory and communications strategy:** There is a major need for producing a toolkit/leaflet about PPPs/CSR in education with frequently asked questions (FAQs). This must be accompanied by a communication strategy on PPPs/CSR in Bangladesh, as there is little understanding on the topic with several misconceptions.
- **Upgrade PPPs to performance-based partnerships:** The government may consider a school audit system linking MPO support with performance. Whilst on the one hand this may hold schools accountable for quality there is a concern that it may lead to punitive action if the ratings are low. To avoid such a fall-out, it is important that the spirit of school auditing must be for capacity building and support of interventions designed with technical partners that have capacity, such as BRAC, CAMPE, Plan Bangladesh and others with proven skills for improving quality and equity.

### India

India has sustained a robust economic growth rate of 8 per cent over the past decade, and allocates 3.2 per cent of GDP to education. The country presents an engaged presence of private sector and PPPs. Policies on PPPs are addressed in the 10th and 11th Five Year Plans. These argue for a reduced role of the state in education management, acknowledging the potential of non-state providers to manage equity-focused schemes, such as the 2500 schools in targeted districts for the poorest and most disadvantaged.

The Right to Education (RTE) 2009 has made education compulsory and free for children between the ages of 6 and 14. With the RTE firmly in the implementation phase, India is challenged by more than 8 million children out of school and 90 million children dropping out before they reach Class 8. The growing number of aided and unaided private schools may crowd out the public education options. There are concerns that the aided schools may not be targeting the poorest (Kumar, 2008; Srivastava, 2010). There are calls for revisiting the grant in aid scheme, the oldest form of PPP, which is neither accountable nor equity driven. As a result fewer resources are allocated for the purpose of improving quality in government schools.

There are successful scaled-up PPPs/CSR good practices in place as multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Toolbook on PPPs/CSR and best practices produced by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and UNICEF (2010) in education is well timed. However, there is currently no official CSR policy in place, which could contribute to more efficient partnerships.

In regard to innovative financing, the education cess/tax has been successful to mobilize resources for the school feeding programme across India in an attempt reach every child without discrimination. However, there are concerns that the cess will become a permanent, substitutive arrangement instead of an enhancement of the GDP allocation to education.

### Findings, Issues and Recommendations

#### *Policy and Frameworks*

- **Need for a policy and framework:** After the RTE Act 2009, there is an urgent need for an official policy and legal framework for PPPs and CSR that will provide easy access by all concerned to ensure predictability of: Who is being targeted through this strategy? How? With what resources from the public sector and/or private sector? And with what outcomes?

Although addressed in the 10th and 11th Five Year Plans of the Planning Commission, there is still no formal policy on PPPs. Formal integration of the PPP/CSR strategy into public policy is needed urgently rather than just 'one-off' schemes.

- **Regulatory framework for CSR/PPPs:** There is no formal regulatory body that manages PPPs/CSR initiatives. A formal body may aid in better transparency and efficiency. The regulation mechanism for impact and suitable modalities is yet to emerge.

#### *Coordination and Transparency*

- **An engaged and integral PPP context:** India displays many engaged forms of partnerships across non-state providers, government and the corporate sector. There is sufficient evidence of grants, schemes/contracts, private management and vouchers for private sector engagement. However, whether or not this approach is equity focused is yet to be seen, which is true for all four countries in the study.
- **A critical discourse:** There is an on-going critical discourse about PPPs/CSR being illustrative of state withdrawal from its core responsibilities, i.e. delivery of education. It is necessary to ensure that the government and other stakeholders engaged in PPPs remain vigilant about the equity-focused approach and to ensure that these partnerships do not trigger further inequities.
- **Low public awareness:** There is little awareness about the potential for partnerships through PPPs/CSR in spite of a long history of partnerships and pioneering work in India. Emerging schemes which do bring value added for the disadvantaged need to be widely disseminated. CSR/PPPs need to become a part of the popular public discourse on education in general and within the context of the right to education (RTE) in particular.
- **Trust deficit:** Government initiatives in PPPs are taking off but the trust deficit remains a problem with respect to partnerships (government/state versus non-state) and the view that the public sector approach is fickle and slow-paced. This needs to be addressed through regular dialogue, and a permanent department/cell to manage and track PPPs.
- **Directory of CSR/PPPs – Proactive transparent partnerships:** With the proliferation of state sponsored or private initiated PPPs/CSR there is an urgent need for a database for tracking the value added in term of resources and reaching the unreached. The Toolbook finalized in December 2010 is an important contribution, which can be replicated in each state through the local chambers of commerce and industry.
- **Revisit grant in aid/aided schemes:** There is an urgency to revisit the biggest government-initiated PPP in India, the grant in aid or the aided schools programme. The programme is poised to become larger, and perhaps controversial with the implementation of the RTE 2009 provision of 25 per cent of seats for disadvantaged groups. This provision will be funded by government support to private-sector schools, but it is not known who will interpret the disadvantaged groups. This review must have a specific focus on the target groups from an equity-focused approach.

#### *Predictability*

- Other emerging options for innovative financing need to be actively debated and critically examined by think tanks, CSOs and ministries of finance, planning and education in South Asia.
- **Impact assessment and tracking of state-sponsored PPPs:** The innovative schemes, such as 2500 model schools and state schemes of Adarsh and Gyanodaya, need to be tracked independently. They should be measuring impact on equity and the appropriate mix of public and private provision in terms of financing, enrolment and beneficiaries to ensure further predictability.

- **Innovative financing through the education cess/tax – a temporary or permanent feature?** Cess by nature is temporary. However, in the case of education cess no deadline has been given. In spite of government assurances to the contrary there are concerns that the cess will cease to be a subsidy and may replace core budgets for education programmes and campaigns, such as the SSA and RTE. Although this would contribute to predictability, it may cause some public discontent.

#### *Capacity*

- **Marginal institutional presence and questions of capacity:** Like other countries of South Asia, there is little institutional presence and capacity to manage PPPs/CSR and multi-stakeholder partnerships in education. There is an urgent need for continuous capacity building for all partners (on policies/strategies, types of PPPs/CSR arrangements, government initiatives) at central and state level.
- There is a need for a step-by-step toolkit and a directory of best practices on PPPs/CSR both at the national and state levels. Furthermore, with no formalized focal officer or dedicated section on partnerships in the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) or the Planning Commission, a toolkit is urgently needed for awareness, capacity and trust building.

#### **Maldives**

The Maldives allocates 8.1% of GDP to education and has made substantial progress in achieving the EFA goals and the MDGs. The Presidential Office and the Ministry of Education have implemented a number of policies concerning PPPs. For example, the country has experimented with PPPs through a special arm, 'edinvest Maldives,' an initiative directly under the Presidency. The focus is on efficiency and compliance in corporatization through PPPs.

No gap and/or equity analysis, in the education sector has been conducted in order to assess the areas that PPPs might have the greatest and most significant impact. It is important for key stakeholders to explore various dimensions of PPPs and CSR in a more targeted manner for gains in quality and equity, particularly for ECE, teacher training and post-secondary levels of education. At this time, CSR is driven by ad hoc corporate philanthropy, rather than organized company-embedded CSR, which can lead to very little predictability in terms of funding. Maldives urgently needs a stakeholder dialogue on PPPs/CSR for clarity of key terms, purpose and options as well as a need to re-visit the 'corporatization' notion of PPPs in education and other social sectors.

It has an innovative fund for education, 'Taleemi Fund', that has been in a dormant state. The fund is being reviewed for revival linked to strategic education needs.

#### **Findings, Issues and Recommendations**

##### *Policy and Frameworks*

- **An engaged and integral PPP context:** The Maldives has a growing number of PPPs, with few private schools at primary and secondary levels. There is significant presence of the private sector, however, at post-secondary levels for college and technical vocational education.
- **Elusive focus on equity:** The government, in its first phase of PPPs, has targeted a handful of efficiently run public sector schools for partnerships with in-country and out-of-country partners. It is important to assess the benefits and if it is the best way forward for addressing equity and out-of-school children (OOSC).

- **Lack of sectoral gap analysis for targeted PPPs:** The more critical issue at hand is that a sectoral gap analysis is needed. The critical priorities of the government, where a well-defined PPP strategy could clearly result in offsetting challenges, need to be identified. For example, the benefits of giving existing successful public sector schools in Maldives to overseas or local investors needs to be assessed.

#### *Transparency and Coordination*

- **Protocol for sharing public information:** As the system grows, it is imperative to share information publicly and disclose all critical documents. This will be important for the legitimacy of the initiative.
- **A stakeholders' roundtable is needed on PPPs in education:** The Education Ministry is deeply cognizant of the need for reflection on the PPP strategy; it is an opportune time as PPPs are at a very early stage of implementation. It is recommended that an early stakeholders' roundtable meeting on evidence-based PPPs/CSR needs to be held in the Maldives for a public debate on critical needs and best PPP options to address equity, quality and higher rates of transition at lower and upper secondary levels for optimum gender equality and prospects for socio-economic stability.

#### *Predictability*

- **Financing instruments such as the Taleemi or Trust Fund:** The revised Fund needs to be monitored and evaluated. Once it is revamped, it needs to be integrated within the sector-wide Education Policy for addressing access, quality and equity at different levels of the education system.

## **Pakistan**

With policies and laws on PPPs/CSR in place, it has a number of PPPs/CSR and multi-stakeholder partnerships for education (MSPE). However, its impact is not always quantifiable or of scale amidst challenges of gender equality and equity. Seemingly, the most successful PPPs are those initiated and funded by the government through parastatal institutions such as the Education Foundations and the rural support programmes (RSPs). These are large government financed and private sector managed programmes for education, addressing access, equity and quality. RSPs are extended a preferential treatment over other CSOs due to their outreach and public sector association in governance arrangements.

The two arms of the public sector are namely departments of education and education foundations, which reach out to government schools and low-cost private schools respectively. They rarely plan in cooperation or communicate best practices for optimum outreach to the most disadvantaged groups. The support to low-cost private schools, through per-child costing grants, is severely underfunded, which can lead to exploitation of mainly female teachers with lowest salaries.

Under the devolved system of education planning and policy in the post-18th Amendment scenario and RTE Article 25-A, it is imperative that the provinces undertake a serious gap analysis to finalize a strategy for achieving EFA/MDGs with an equity focused quintile framework and concrete financing options. PPPs cannot become a substitute for high quality government schools as public sector schools are the only option for two out of three children.

PPPs and CSR, in spite of a robust presence, continue to be little understood with no focal officer/section in place. The Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) has been engaged in creating frameworks for CSR and PPPs with extensive documentation of CSR through a consultative process since 2003 including publication of a directory of best practices. A toolkit for PPPs/CSR needs to be prepared with regular updates for wider awareness. Debt swaps for education have been a success in Pakistan, and can be explored further for innovative financing.

## Findings, Issues and Recommendations

### *Policy and Frameworks*

- **Policy and legal framework:** For PPPs and CSR, this needs to be revisited for each province in light of the 18th Amendment. Once finalized, for each province it can be made available with the provincial governments, line departments, education foundations and all chambers of commerce and industry.
- **National Education Policy 2009 – overhaul in light of the 18th Amendment:** The NEP 2009, finalized after four years of consultative national debates, has to undergo review due to the abolition of the concurrent jurisdiction of education. This is an opportune time for integrating the official position on the role of PPPs and CSR in education development for gender equality and poverty reduction. Each province should host a stakeholders’ meeting on NEP 2009 and/or sector plan review. There must be focused stakeholders’ sessions on the current status of PPPs and CSR in the provinces, their potential role and procedures for meeting the EFA/MDG challenges.
- **Regulation of PPPs:** Whilst some of the public sector programmes have a third party validation of performance, overall, there is little discussion on the regulation of PPPs. The regulation arrangement for private sector institutions is ad hoc with undercurrents of poor governance at times, when managed by the public sector. The regulatory mechanisms need a wider debate as they are being settled in the post-18th Amendment scenario at the provincial/federal levels.

### *Transparency and Coordination*

- **Dual delivery modes of public financed education system:** Basic education, financed by the public sector, is delivered through: (a) departments of education; and (b) Education Foundations. The former is the large-scale provider of education compared with the latter, but there is little communication between the two about PPP modalities: ‘what works and why.’ There needs to be a mechanism for sharing best practices and complementary strategies by the two sets of institutions to optimize outreach, especially in locations where the challenges of gender and other disadvantages are highest in access and quality. This can be done through regular sharing meetings coinciding with annual planning and budgetary cycles.
- **Charity and philanthropy abound at all levels:** The community continues to give, as it is an essential part of its ‘spiritual capital’. Like Bangladesh, the stakeholders feel that this is not integrated into the discussions on resources/philanthropy for the social sectors. It is important to ask how general philanthropy be accessed for the equity-focused agenda for girls’ education and disadvantaged groups in Pakistan.

*Predictability*

- **Public–Private Partnerships – not a substitute for addressing fundamental challenges:** PPPs in education are highly prevalent in Pakistan. However, as argued by Bano (2008), it cannot become a substitute for “addressing fundamental challenges of provision of education for all. Most PPP programmes remain ad hoc, have little systemic impact in addressing the fundamental challenges of access, quality or equity, and because of often being reliant on NGOs or donor funds rather than the state resources face problems of financial sustainability.”
- **Education taxes in Pakistan:** In 1985, Pakistan levied a specific education tax called Iqra (to Read) contained in the 1985 Finance Act as a 5 per cent levy ad valorem on all imports. However, its proceeds were never used for education purposes, unlike the Education Cess in India. In 1994 under the Finance Act (Section 10), this was omitted.
- **Education foundations and grant in aid programmes:** All education foundations are currently engaged in promoting education through funding low-cost private schools through per-child cost grants (usually up to US\$5 per month) that is supposed to cover access and quality challenges of education in Pakistan. From its previous multi-level support, grant in aid is now a lump sum amount. Although education foundations currently do run capacity building programmes for teachers/head teachers etc., the per-child cost grant greatly undermines minimum salary levels of teachers and support for other quality interventions. It is a concern that the low-cost private schools may become factories of exploitive sub-contracted labour, where most of the staff comprises female teachers.

*Capacity*

- **Toolkits and Directory of PPPs/CSR in Pakistan:** Pakistan, too, must invest in a comprehensive toolkit on PPPs and CSR with laws, policies, strategies, best practices by province/areas, agreements and other procedural tools. This must become a knowledge repository for each province which is to be updated annually. The toolkit, in order to be beneficial, must be easily accessible to the public, possibly through an interactive website.
- **CSR and PPPs – under-utilized and little understood:** In spite of some robust experiments in tapping corporate philanthropy and PPPs as simple or multi-stakeholder partnerships, these are not widely understood by the public, private sector and the government. A major institutional effort is required by all partners (PCP, RBI, Education Foundations, PPAF and FPCCI) for a series of regular awareness, capacity and trust building sessions for all stakeholders to grasp the core concepts and actions for maximum impact on gender equality and EFA targets and MDGs.

Overall, it seems that all countries are facing an increasing volume of PPPs in the education sector, whether through private management or finance. One major gap, among all four countries, is the lack of coordination and communication, formally and informally, among the government and the multitude of partners. If governments were able to build strong relationships and monitoring mechanisms for PPPs, it could lead to transparent and efficient partnerships. If partnerships are indeed transparent and efficient, they could potentially offer more equitable service delivery and aid in the provision of education to the most marginalized groups.

For the full report please contact SAFED at [safedafed@gmail.com](mailto:safedafed@gmail.com), [baelajamil04@gmail.com](mailto:baelajamil04@gmail.com). The report includes the four country case studies for Bangladesh, India, The Maldives and Pakistan.

