

# **DECENTRALIZATION AND PRIMARY EDUCATION:**

A SURVEY OF EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and the Pacific

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## Executive Summary

Most governments of countries in the East Asia and Pacific Region are decentralizing their political, fiscal, and administrative processes, responsibilities and authorities. Often, national decentralization processes have ignored differences between sectors and focused only on the macro political and managerial aspects of decentralization. But sectors are different. Decentralizing an education system is quite different from decentralizing a health system.

So many of the issues involved in decentralization are sectorally specific that generic national guidelines are often insufficiently specific. Uncertainties regarding decentralization of specific functions the education sector include relocation of levels for some decision making (perhaps decentralization of hiring and firing of teachers, but not of responsibilities for defining core curricula or setting examinations). Decentralization of financial responsibilities might include those for constructing schools, but not for management of teacher's pension funds, or for deciding how to allocate resources between regions (by numbers of children, or children in school, perhaps also by level of poverty, and what should be done about user fees?).

Ministries of Education are typically ill-equipped to respond adequately to national policy imperatives on decentralization. But education is often the largest major sectoral area of government expenditure. It is a sector that is very much in the public view. Future economic performance and poverty alleviation are both closely linked to equitable provision of education. So a high quality implementation by the Ministry of Education (MoE) of a sometimes ambiguous national decentralization policy is important.

The purpose of this regional initiative is to help UNICEF Education Officers offer useful assistance to Ministries of Education on this issue, in collaboration with other partners. UNICEF is in a good position to help ministries identify nationally rooted approaches that respect children's rights and also ensure improvements in quality and other important characteristics of education. UNICEF has much better contact with sub-national government entities than other UN agencies or the IFIs. If we prepare adequately, we could provide credible and valuable technical support.

With the objective of studying decentralization in education in the East Asia and Pacific Region, as a first step in helping to strengthen UNICEF's support to sectoral ministries in this key area of policy development and social change, UNICEF Regional Office implemented a survey in March 2006, using an e-mailed questionnaire and follow up telephone interviews. Respondents were UNICEF Education Programme Officers, usually in consultation with their government counterparts. The results were analyzed and presented to the UNICEF Regional Education Officers Network Meeting. Their comments, a literature review, and some materials provided during the parallel Maastricht training process, were used as the basis for this report.

In responses to the telephone interviews, respondents highlighted some key issues that affected the performance of decentralization reforms:

- Effective technical support and guidance
- Organizational capacity to implement the reform
- Definition, and some stability, in assignment of roles and responsibilities
- Alignment of responsibility with authority
- Community, parent and private sector participation
- Organizational and individual accountability
- Availability of quality management information, including on financial flows
- Transparent and pro-poor resource allocation

Key results from the analysis of the responses in the written questionnaires included that:

- Two thirds of the countries in EAPR are trying to reduce public sector expenditure
- Mobilization of additional resources for education was cited as a key reason for decentralizing by respondents in 40% of countries
- Negative effects on total resources for education (23%) and on equity (15%) were cited as adverse effects of decentralization
- Decreased quality of education was cited by 31% of countries as a negative effect
- Increased democratization of decision making was the most common positive effect of decentralization, cited by 37% of county respondents.

Respondents described ways in which education decentralization could be supported by UNICEF in the future as the key areas of capacity development, development of guidelines, and education information systems. Problems that respondents identified which are *not* covered by UNICEF programmatic responses included ensuring adequate total and pro-poor resource allocations, developing management systems to mitigate new sources of corruption, and ensuring that quality assurance is adequately covered.

Decentralization initiatives are still new, in historical terms. Given the long-term character and serious implications of decentralization reforms, it will be helpful to engage with Ministries of Education and other key partners in case studies looking at what is working well, and what is working less well, in each country as a way of ensuring that the future development of education in the country is enhanced, rather than damaged, by decentralization of responsibilities.

## Purpose

The purpose of this indicative comparative analysis is an initial identification of key issues for the education sector that arise from its implementation of government decentralization policies. The study aims to highlight some best practices and lessons learned from the experience of countries in East Asia and the Pacific. It also seeks to identify gaps in the current work of UNICEF in response to the challenges brought about by decentralization.

These preliminary and somewhat impressionistic results will need to be reviewed in each country in terms of their actual situations and related to concrete data on expenditures, trends, sub-national allocations and so called ‘market decentralization’ – which is effectively a requirement that parents, often poor parents, contribute to the costs of education. The study also covers selected aspects of political, administrative, fiscal and market decentralization.

The purpose of follow up studies – phase two of this initiative – will be to review the results of this modest research and to work out how UNICEF Country Offices can best assist Ministries of Education to ensure that requirements to decentralize education provision result in improvements in sector performance. A core benefit of this survey and following case studies should be increased, and better informed, dialogue between UNICEF staff and governmental officials on the effects of decentralization and on solutions to problems that arise.

## Review of literature, definitions and key issues

Decentralization is normally defined in terms of four types and three levels of completeness of the transfer of powers. The four types of decentralization are political, administrative, fiscal and market decentralization. The three levels of completeness of decentralization are deconcentration, delegation and devolution.<sup>1</sup>

### *Box1. Some basic definitions*

**Centralized power:** This designates the centralized organization of political and administrative decision-making, responsibility and authority in a country where executive and legislative powers are structured within the framework of a central government.

**Types of Decentralization:** Decentralization involves the transfer of all or part of the decision-making, responsibilities and authority vested in central government to regional, provincial or local authorities (districts, municipalities and communities) or even to schools themselves. Decentralization can have political, administrative, fiscal and market dimensions. There are some overlaps and interactions between these facets.

- **Political decentralization** is the devolution of policy and decision making power (such as over content of curricula) to local governments, sometimes democratically elected.
- **Administrative decentralization** refers to the transfer of planning and management responsibilities from central to local levels.
- **Fiscal decentralization** creates changes in the control over financial resources to local authorities, including distribution of central resources to local authorities, sometimes using needs-based formulae (which may include, for example numbers of households below the poverty line), and delegating or devolving revenue collecting powers to local governments.
- **Market decentralization** is the transfer of control over resource allocation to non-state actors, such as the private sector by supporting private sector schools through policy, tax breaks, or even subsidies. Requirements that parents contribute user fees (and that schools, to a matching extent, ‘sell’ their services to parents), can also be viewed as a form of market decentralization.

<sup>1</sup> D. Rondinelli, J. Nellis, and S. Cheema, “Decentralization in Developing Countries : A Review of Recent Experience”, World Bank Staff Working Paper 581, (Washington, DC, World Bank, 1984), cited in Klugman.

**Extent of Decentralization:** The extent to which power is transferred by each type of decentralization can be classified as:

- **Deconcentration** is shifting management responsibilities from the central to lower levels while the center retains overall control (center decides, local level implements).
- **Delegation** occurs when central authorities lend authority to lower levels of government, or even to semiautonomous organizations, with the understanding that the authority can be withdrawn (local level can decide, but decisions can be overturned centrally).
- **Devolution** is a transfer of authority over financial, administrative, or pedagogical matters that is permanent and cannot easily be revoked. Devolution may result in stronger local authorities and is one pathway to achieving community financed and managed schools.

Klugman, in a very helpful UNICEF Innocenti paper that was seminal to this study, noted that the appropriate level of decentralization is different for specific functions in the education sector. While the power to hire and fire teachers or choice of language of instruction may be appropriately devolved to headmasters, it may be desirable to maintain central control over examinations or the content of the core curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

An education system is an organic structure that evolves out of societal needs. It must be responsive to diverse demands from community to national levels. An education system must also ensure efficiency in its services and functions to meet demands for quality teaching and learning. One of the most critical issues now facing decentralizing countries is determining the type of education system that will be most efficiently responsive to the evolving needs of diverse communities. This choice will be informed by numerous considerations including:

- Consolidating various societal needs and education program priorities into a harmonized system.<sup>3</sup>
- Building a system within the context of present infrastructural constraints.
- Ensuring that the education system reflects the needs of the populace and is owned by the populace, to promote sustainability and development.
- Promoting equity and quality life-long learning opportunities, especially for under-served, disadvantaged, and marginalized populations including women, remote communities, and refugee populations.

Decentralization is not an end in itself, but rather a means to ensure the delivery of effective, efficient, and quality education adapted to the demands of the immediate operating environment. So it is not axiomatic that all functions should be decentralized in response to a national decentralization policy.

As noted by UNESCO, MoE's role in national decentralization policy often includes defining the necessary central components of the education system, which would include guidelines, effective planning processes, and established education standards.<sup>4</sup> Specifically central responsibilities for primary education include:

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<sup>2</sup> Jeni Klugman, "Decentralization: A Survey from a Child Welfare Perspective", Innocenti Occasional Papers, Economic and Social Policy Series no. 61, Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 5-7.

<sup>3</sup> When discussing the merits of a decentralized education system, it is useful to consider the current societal situation and how this impacts the educational context.

<sup>4</sup> Planning should happen prior to any *actions* on decentralization. This is articulated well in UNESCO, Education Policies and Strategies Series Number 7, *Decentralization in Education: Policies and Practices* (Paris, France: UNESCO, 2005): 61.

- Developing and operationalizing education policies to ensure equitable resource allocation and to promote educational opportunities for all.
- Developing and promoting a participatory planning process from the community to the national level including participatory planning in the sector strategy.
- Developing a national unified curriculum framework that provides a foundation for the development of
  - 1) school-level curricula and learning and resource materials,
  - 2) professional capacity-building for teacher training and education personnel management, and
  - 3) learner achievement monitoring and assessment.
- Developing, implementing, and monitoring education standards to ensure quality teaching and learning.

Resources are always limited, so the education system must ensure equitable allocation of resources at all levels and an efficient and effective use of assets. To effectively and efficiently decentralize education, while preserving the programmatic goals of the sector, it is also essential that all administrative levels of the education system are integrated with clearly coordinated, defined lines of communication.

### ***Box 2 The various reasons for education decentralization***

There are numerous reasons given for undertaking decentralization.

- **Education finance** addresses the issue of how resources for education are raised. National governments can allocate resources to sub-national levels through block grants (that local government may or may not be able to reallocate between sectors). The amounts allocated may be based on a number of different considerations: political considerations, numbers of population, the target population (children of school age), and on needs based criteria (numbers of households below the poverty line). Local resources can be raised for education by delegation or devolution of tax authorities to local government, or by imposing user fees.
- **Increased Efficiency/Effectiveness** deals with how educational resources are used. The unit costs of basic education provided by a centralized government may be higher than those that could be achieved by local governments, if local governments had the authority to manage their own systems. Eliminating bureaucratic procedures and the need to refer decisions to central government may increase efficiency and motivate officials to be more productive. Allowing local government units to allocate resources where they are most needed, or to deal with specific administrative issues, can increase efficiency if local authorities better understand the needs of their area and system. (Winkler, 1991)
- **Redistribution of political power** aims to enhance the legitimacy of institutions by redistributing power and often by giving citizens a greater management role. Political decentralization can empower local communities. There are some risks that this may result in some fragmentation of the system, non-compliance with national policy initiatives (for example on life skills education) or misused to promote local interest groups (local majority ethnic group self-interest at the expense of local minorities).
- **Improved quality** can result from moving decision-making closer to the needs of each school and may focus also on local cultural differences and learning environment. It is also possible that quality can improve by increasing local accountability and local incentives for quality performance to teachers and school officials.
- **Increased innovation** can result from having a wider range of providers of education. This can lead to a wider variety of experiences and innovations through increasing the “competitiveness” of the system by encouraging providers to act to satisfy the wishes of the citizens and local stakeholders.

Most governments surveyed are initiating, embracing, or have already engaged in some education decentralization. But the literature warns that equity is often a casualty, particularly in the early stages of decentralization efforts.<sup>5</sup> Many governments are decentralizing services to reduce central public sector expenditure with few, if any, provisions to ensure equity in access or quality. Local governments in wealthier regions may be able to replace reduced central resource allocations with local tax revenues or user fees. Local governments in poorer regions may not.<sup>6</sup>

This study assesses effects of decentralization on education in the East Asia and Pacific Islands in terms of many of these key issues. It proposes that in-country case studies be conducted to obtain the local knowledge needed to ensure that decentralization policies will be formulated and implemented in a way that maximizes respect for the rights of all children to a high quality education

## Methodology

The UNICEF EAPRO prepared and pilot tested a check-box paper questionnaire and guidelines for a telephone interview in March 2006 with the Thailand Country Office. The Thailand Country Office provided guidance for changes and those changes were incorporated into the final questionnaire and interview protocol. EAPRO initiated data gathering from the UNICEF education officers in Country Offices for the finalized questionnaire via email in March 2006 and this was completed in April 2006.

Country	Questionnaire	Interview
Cambodia	X	X
China	X	X
DPRK	X	No
Fiji	X	X
Indonesia	X	X
Lao PDR	X	X
Malaysia	X	No
Mongolia	X	X
Myanmar	X	No
PNG	X	X
Philippines	X	X
Thailand	X	X
Timor	X	X
Vietnam	X	X

Figure 1 Countries participating

The Regional Office emphasized that participation was voluntary and that government officials should be involved as much as possible. UNICEF Country Office and Ministry of Education partner respondents filled out a check-box style questionnaire (see Appendix B) and returned it. The consultant conducted follow-up telephone interviews.<sup>7</sup> Detailed interview notes were e-mailed to interviewees for revisions. In two instances, respondents wrote their responses to the telephone interview structured

<sup>5</sup> Bray, Mark. "Decentralization of Education: Community Financing." Directions in Development. Washington, DC: World Bank, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Special considerations will apply to countries with regions that have experienced medium or long term conflict situations. A participatory planning process at the lower levels can provide them with an experiential learning opportunity through which citizens begin to understand their rights, even if capacities to assume deep management responsibilities may be limited. In such situation, in the short term, decentralization may inadvertently increase disparities by investing resources in areas that are less disadvantaged. This may result simply because the more stable areas have a stronger institutional and human resource capacity base from which to lobby for and obtain resources. Adapted from southern Sudan Ministry of Education Organizational Design, unpublished, Suzanne Bond Hinsz, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> The telephone interview protocol is Appendix C.

guidelines and e-mailed them to the Regional Office.

During the telephone interview, respondents answered the eight questions in the telephone interview guideline (see Annex) and clarified their responses to the check-box questionnaires when interview results appeared to differ with questionnaire results. The response rate for the questionnaire was 100% and 11 of 14 countries completed follow up interviews.<sup>8</sup>

The consultant reviewed each country's data by matching telephone interview responses with the written questionnaire results, and then deconstructed the interview data by question rather than country. The categorical questionnaire results were aggregated and grouped according to category (such as protection of poor and political decentralization). Then the results were analyzed and converted into a presentation that was delivered by the Regional Social Policy and Economic Analysis Adviser at the Regional Education Officers Network Meeting in May 2006. Comments received there were recorded and used to revise the presentation and to produce this paper.

## Findings

### *Effect of decentralization on education*

In order to gauge the significance of decentralization on education in each country, the questionnaire poses the question<sup>9</sup> “the effect of decentralization on education in the country so far is...” and respondents choose one of the following: insignificant, minor, medium, significant, or major. Myanmar has no decentralization initiative going on presently and Malaysia reports that their system is centralized. However, as will be shown below, even countries that have no decentralization initiatives currently in place, often still have some decentralization of power in specific areas.

**Table 1 Effect of decentralization on education to date**

NONE	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MEDIUM	SIGNIFICANT
Malaysia	Lao PDR	Cambodia	Mongolia	China
Myanmar	Timor-Leste	Fiji		Papua New Guinea
		Indonesia		Philippines
				Thailand
				Vietnam

Of the 14 countries studied, 9 are trying to reduce central public sector expenditures. It is important to note that effective decentralization actually requires additional funding – at least in the short term - as jobs, people, and organizations change and need to function in new ways.

#### **Is the government trying to reduce central public sector expenditure?**

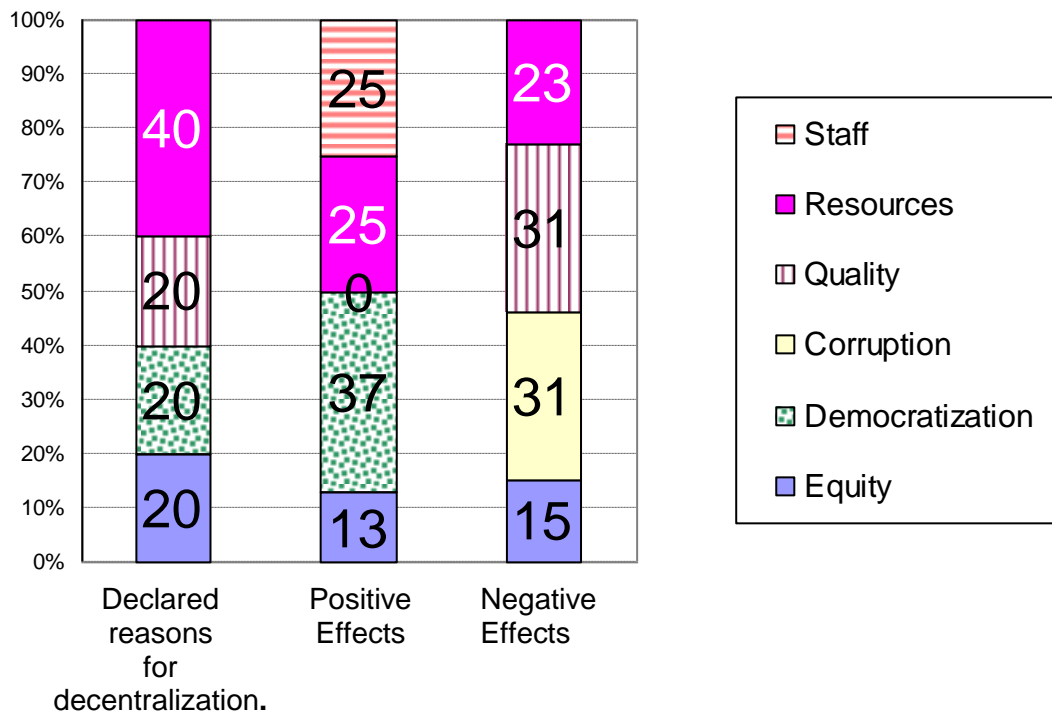
<b>Yes</b>	Cambodia , China, Fiji, Indonesia, Mongolia, PNG, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam
<b>No</b>	DPRK, Lao PDR, Malaysia Myanmar, Timor-Leste

<sup>8</sup> The telephone line to Papua New Guinea was too poor to conduct a telephone interview. Vietnam sent written answers.

<sup>9</sup> Questionnaire item 2.

### Declared reasons for and effects of decentralization

While 20 percent of countries responding note quality improvement as an *objective* of education decentralization, 0% report that quality had actually improved as a *result* of decentralization. Further, 31% report quality decreases as a *negative effect* of decentralization (that education quality diminished as a result of decentralization).



Governments often cite enhanced resource mobilization as an important objective of decentralization; 40% of country responses note this. But only 25% of respondents consider that resource allocations increased while almost an equal number of countries, 23%, report that resources decreased as a result of decentralization. Different countries have had different experiences.

On the positive side, while 20% of the EAPR governments had declared that they were seeking to increase democratization through decentralization, an even greater proportion of 37% of respondents noted increased democratization as a result of decentralization. Another positive response was that 25% of respondents considered that numbers of staff have increased as a useful positive effect of decentralization.<sup>10</sup>

Effects on equity were mixed. Increased equity was noted by 20% of respondents as one of the reasons governments initiated decentralization processes. While 13% noted increased equity as a positive result, 15% noted decreased equity as a negative effect.

<sup>10</sup> It would be useful to know whether these staff increases were in numbers of teachers at local levels.

UNICEF promotes both quality and equity and should consider its programmatic support in this light. For countries just starting to decentralize, what support should UNICEF give based on the experiences of other countries in the region? Similarly, how can negative consequences be mitigated for countries in the midst of decentralization? It would be useful to share lessons learned in countries that did well, and to learn how countries doing less well can improve, especially in terms of quality and equity issues.

### ***Are the poor protected?***

UNICEF is concerned with equity, particularly during decentralization, since vulnerable groups can easily be further marginalized. The questionnaire seeks information on four types of protection of the poor. They include: 1) pro-poor transfers, 2) whether pro-poor transfers are based on a formula such as population, poverty, or a sectorally specific formula, 3) whether there is a specific transfer of funds for education that is based on the number of children enrolled, and 4) whether poor or vulnerable children are excluded from the need to pay for school.

Lao PDR shows no protection any of in these four categories of pro-poor policy. DPRK and Myanmar offer protection on only one of the four pro-poor issues. In contrast, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and Viet Nam report protection in all four categories. Again, in-country validation of these results could be quite important in countries where UNICEF considers equity to be a serious issue.

Equity	Cambodia	China	DPRK	Fiji	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Mongolia	Myanmar	PNG	Philippines	Timor-Leste	Thailand	Viet Nam
Pro-poor transfers?	Dark	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark
Transfers based on formula?	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	White	White	Dark
On children enrolled?	Dark	Dark	White	White	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark	Dark
Poor need not pay?	Dark	Dark	White	White	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	White	Dark	White	Dark	Dark	Dark

Figure 6 Pro-poor policy presence is shown by dark boxes

### ***Right to free education versus responsibilities to contribute***

Governmental guarantees of the right to free education can exist in the constitution, in legislation, and in policy. If education is a constitutionally guaranteed right, that suggests that the country is highly committed to it. A constitutional right cannot formally be taken away without revising the constitution. If the right to free education is only guaranteed in policy, the right seems less robust – policy can more easily be changed than a constitution – and is perhaps also less binding. Legislation is normally somewhere in between. At the same time, it would seem necessary to

reinforce constitutionally (and CRC) guaranteed rights to free basic education with appropriate legislation and policy in some countries.

Parental Contribution	Country	Security of Right		
		Const.	Legis.	Policy
	Cambodia			
	China			
	DPRK			
	Fiji			
	Indonesia			
	Lao PDR			
	Malaysia			
	Mongolia			
	Myanmar			
	PNG			
	Philippines			
	Timor-Leste			
	Thailand			
	Viet Nam			

**Figure 7 Parental contribution requirements contrasted with the right to free basic education**

Survey responses<sup>11</sup> showed that only DPR Korea guarantees free education at all three levels: constitution, legislation and policy. At the other extreme, there are two countries (Malaysia and Myanmar) in which it this right is not guaranteed in any way.

The degree of formalization of the right to free education, as indicated by the extent of its presence on the right hand side of the figure, can be contrasted with the existence of parental responsibilities<sup>12</sup> to contribute toward education.<sup>13</sup>

The length of the bar on the left of the diagram is a composite score reflecting the number of different types of parental contributions to education. Parental contributions for primary education include tuition, exam fees, textbooks, materials, accommodation (if boarding), entrance fees, instruments, transportation, teacher salaries, and ‘other’.

These data may be misleading because parents may only contribute a small amount in total, even though the number of types of parental contributions is high. Conversely, parents may contribute a large monetary sum but to only one category (such as for tuition) - so it may appear, incorrectly, that parental contributions are relatively low.

Given these drawbacks, the information obtained can only be considered as a comparative indicator, rather than a measure, of the relative extent of parental contributions. We might well expect that, in most countries where parents are asked to make many types of contributions, the amounts being contributed are probably generally greater – that correlation between percentage of costs paid and number of

<sup>11</sup> Questionnaire item number 6.

<sup>12</sup> Questionnaire item number 32.

<sup>13</sup> Existence of parental payments means that education is not free, in violation of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and, in many cases, national constitutions, legislation or policy. Still, it is important to know if the requirement for parental contribution has the *effect* of excluding poor children from access to education.

types of payments is likely to be positive, rather than negative. Still, this information is only indicative rather than conclusive. In-country studies of total amounts of parental contributions would be needed to obtain more solid results.

The responses indicate that there could also be a relationship between the ‘strength’ (degree of formalization) of the right to free education and numbers of parental contributions. For example, DPR Korea has a high ‘strength’ of the right to education and no parental contributions at all are required. Mongolia is similar. In contrast, Myanmar has no right to education guaranteed anywhere and the parental contribution required is high.

Conversely, contrasts appear in Papua New Guinea and Philippines, between the strength of the right and parental responsibility to contribute. The degree of formalization of the right is low, yet parents contribute toward only a couple of items. And China has a high level of pro-poor protection, but also reports that parents contribute to educational expenses in many categories.<sup>14</sup>

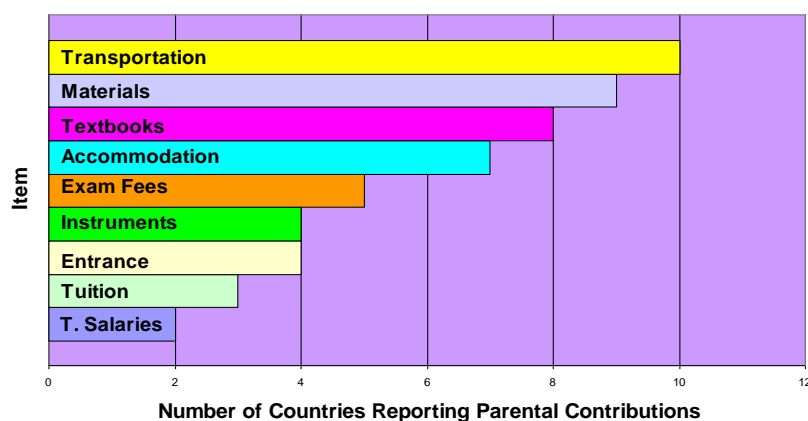


Figure 8 Questionnaire item 32 Parental Contributions

Categorical analysis of results shows that parents in almost every country contribute towards either transportation, materials, textbooks or accommodation. Only few countries report required contributions to teacher salaries or tuition.

### ***Decentralization of expenditure control***

The level of decentralization of expenditure control is analyzed using an index based on responses to the following questions: 1) from which level are teacher’s salaries mostly paid, 2) at which levels can teacher salaries be set, 3) at which levels can school construction be independently contracted, 4) from which level is school maintenance usually paid, and 5) which entities have authority to open and close schools. The questions are scored as follows: 0 if it is centrally controlled, 1 if subnational, 2 if local and 3 if controlled at school level. These scores are added for a

<sup>14</sup> There are several notes and exceptions in responses. Ethnic minorities do not have to pay in Vietnam and do not have to pay accommodation in China. Additionally, China ensures free tuition for the poorest. In Indonesia, sometimes parents need to contribute toward teacher salaries. Parents pay for school uniforms in Timor-Leste.

composite country-by-country score for level of decentralization of expenditure control.

Results show significant decentralization of expenditure control in Indonesia, China, and Mongolia, and low levels in Timor-Leste (0) and PNG. Lao PDR and Myanmar, the only countries that reported that no *current* decentralization initiatives are in place, both show medium levels of decentralization of expenditure control.

There are tensions in some key areas of decentralization of expenditure control.<sup>15</sup> It is useful to set levels of teacher's salaries at national level – this is a significant component of national public sector expenditure. But some areas are more expensive to live in than others. So it may also be useful to decentralize some part of the determination of salary levels. On the other hand, local administrations may not be able to handle administration of teacher's pension funds. The potential for corruption is high and the skills necessary for managing and investing these funds may be limited.

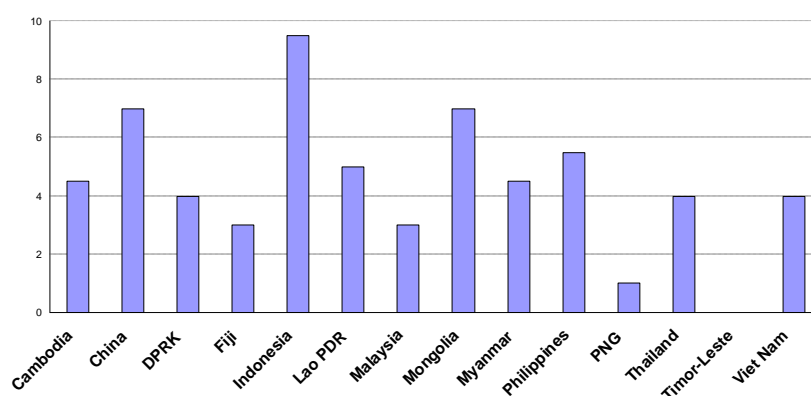


Figure 9 Decentralization of expenditure control

As another example, there is some tension between centralized and local control of construction contracts. Central level control of construction contracts may create useful economies of scale in materials procurement - and also some standardization of school design. Decentralized contracting encourages use of locally appropriate construction materials and norms but also increases potential for corruption at the local level. Local corruption may be more difficult to control (lesser audit capacity and less investigative reporting by the press), and many countries did report increased corruption in responses noted earlier.

### ***Decentralization of administrative control***

Decentralization of administrative control is measured similarly to expenditure control and includes two of the same questions since there is some overlap.<sup>16</sup> (Administrative decisions can have financial consequences.) Administrative decentralization includes responses to the following questions: 1) decisions to hire

<sup>15</sup> Private schools are excluded from this analysis. But a private school oriented system would imply a high level of expenditure decentralization. Private schools are revisited in various comments on market decentralization. Unfortunately, not much information is available on this topic in most countries.

<sup>16</sup> Questions 34 and 35.

and fire primary school heads are made at which level(s), 2) decisions to hire and fire primary school teachers are made at which level(s), 3) budgets for in-service training mostly exist at which level(s), 4) content of in-service training can be decided at which level(s) 5) at which levels can teacher salaries be set, and 6) from which level is school maintenance usually paid, and 7) which entities have authority to open and close schools.<sup>17</sup> The questions are scored as follows: 0 if it is centrally controlled, 1 if subnational, 2 if local and 3 if school. Scores are added for a composite country-by-country score for level of decentralization for control of expenditures.

Results show that Mongolia and Indonesia are highly decentralized; China, DPR Korea, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam moderately decentralized; Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Malaysia, and Papua New Guinea only slightly decentralized; and Myanmar and Timor-Leste not decentralized at all.

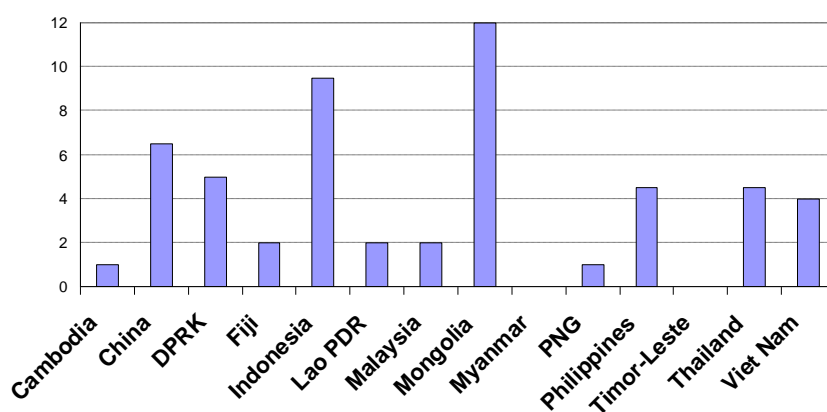


Figure 10 Decentralization of administrative control

increasingly paying special attention to this final administrator in the education service delivery chain in decentralized education systems.

A number of countries in this survey noted that the headmaster is a key player in making a decentralized system of education work effectively. This is supported by the literature.<sup>18</sup>

Countries are

### ***Political decentralization and civil society empowerment***

The survey poses political decentralization and civil society empowerment questions on a “yes” or “no” basis. These questions reflect UNICEF’s policy interests, including local political issues as well as participatory decision making.

This last category includes the responses to the questions:<sup>19</sup> 1) can a decision to teach in the local language be made at a subnational level, 2) is it illegal to speak the local/maternal language in a school, 3) can some of the non-core curriculum elements be decided/added locally, 4) can teaching material be adapted to local religious beliefs, 5) parent-teacher associations (or similar) influence decisions in most schools, and 6) do most secondary schools have some form of student government.

<sup>17</sup> Questionnaire questions numbered 17, 20, 22, 23, 34, and 35 comprise this category.

<sup>18</sup> David Chapman, “Educational trends in Developing Asia,” *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (April 2000): 302.

<sup>19</sup> Questionnaire questions numbered 10 - 15 comprise this category.

Overall results show Fiji and Indonesia with very high levels of political decentralization and civil society empowerment. Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam are also high. Political decentralization is low in Lao PDR and Timor-Leste and absent in Myanmar.

Two specific questions are worth closer investigation. Only in Lao DPR is it illegal to speak the local/maternal language in school, although it appears no one has been charged with this offence. All countries except Myanmar and Timor-Leste allow non-core curriculum elements to be decided or added locally. This is effectively limited, however, in a number of countries. In Indonesia and Cambodia, for example, only life skills classes can be governed locally. In DPR Korea, schools can decide on extra-curricular activities and secondary schools can select optional subjects from a central list. In Lao PDR and Mongolia, local control over curriculum is set via percentage.<sup>20</sup> Lao PDR is 20% and Mongolia is 25%. Lao PDR notes that putting this provision into

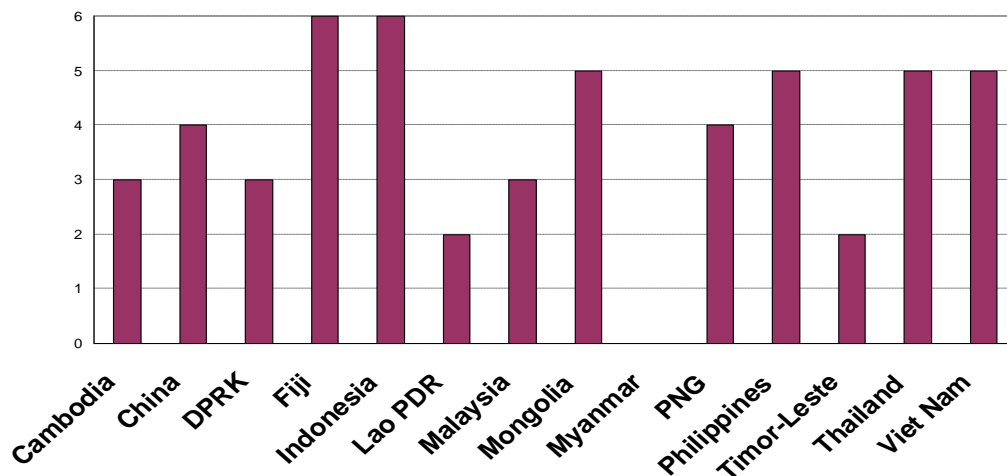


Figure 11 Political decentralization and civil society empowerment

practice is difficult.

Comparing administrative to political decentralization, country results tend to be similar. There are two exceptions, notably Fiji and Papua New Guinea with low administrative decentralization yet high political decentralization. The reasons for this anomaly would seem worth investigating.

Another key issue, inadequately covered in this study, is local control of the balance of expenditure between education and health. At first sight, it would seem useful that local government could take such decisions and allocate resources where they are most needed. However, one of the authors, while engaged in a study of decentralization of government responsibilities, interviewed a regional level political leader who influenced the allocation of resources. She stated that she had campaigned on increasing attention to education in the last election and that she now needed a different issue. In the currently forthcoming election, she planned to campaign on an increased allocation of resources to the health sector.

<sup>20</sup> Lao PDR is 20% and Mongolia is 25%.

## Lessons learned

The key quotations below are taken from country responses to the telephone interview question, “given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far.”<sup>21</sup> The full text of the feedback for this question is available in Appendix D, Interview Highlights by Question.

- “The degree of commitment of government at all levels to this decentralization process - for now and in the years to come - is going to be critically important for the effectiveness and sustainability of the basic education reform particularly in terms of adding value and significantly improving the quality, relevance and outcomes of the basic education process in Indonesia.” Indonesia
- “There should have been proper planning for the reform.” Papua New Guinea
- “It is important to make *teachers* understand the benefit of transferring to local government.” Thailand
- “Orientation, advocacy, capacity building on decentralization, and creating an enabling environment for it to happen are very important.” Vietnam
- “Making central policies and regulations is not enough and does not work unless there are local systems and local capacity in place.” China
- “There is a need to strengthen capacity of staff at school and subnational level in budget planning, monitoring, and implementation.” Mongolia
- “If the structure is going to change, we need additional resources in the interim to make the change happen. We need funding for capacity building of lower-level education staff, training throughout the ministry for people to perform their new roles, and funding to assist people to change their mindset.” Philippines
- “Financial decentralization without accountability is counter productive.” Lao PDR

The key thematic areas overall were adequate advance planning, capacity development, adequate funding, management with performance monitoring and accountability, and a balanced approach to local decision making involving an appropriate mix of deconcentration, delegation and devolution of the political, administrative, fiscal and market components of decentralization.

Given that some governments may be using decentralization to achieve reduced central public expenditures (though, significantly not in public declarations of the purposes of decentralization), it is important to note that to decentralize effectively, governments will need to spend more money, at least in the short-term, to decentralize capacity effectively. Effective decentralization involves retraining people, changing job descriptions, re-engineering data, communication, and budget flows between the different levels of government, and changing the working relationships between ministries. Additionally, to manage decentralization well, governments will need a communication strategy to reduce resistance to change. In short, effective decentralization is not less expensive, at least in the short-term.

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<sup>21</sup> Interview question 5.

## **Best practices**

The following are key quotations taken from the responses to the interview question “Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?”<sup>22</sup> The full text of the feedback for this question is available in Appendix D, ‘Interview Highlights by Question’.

- “There should be a strong master plan for capacity building of the critically important management systems and human capacities at all levels of government, not least at the district level...” Indonesia
- “...Central government invites [provinces] to make their own decisions, except for national guidelines.” China
- “...getting good headmasters and teachers locally and capacity building of school managers and teachers.” Mongolia
- “Work performance evaluation encourages government management teams to work hard to improve their performance on education work.” China
- “Mass media advocacy helped mobilize unutilized resources and paved the way for establishing community learning centers.” Vietnam

A number of countries report a lack of best practices. This is clearly an area where further sharing of problems and experiences may be valuable.

## **Negative consequences of decentralization and UNICEF’s key areas of action**

Revisiting the question on the negative consequences of decentralization, the results are displayed again below. Clearly corruption and quality are two main results, followed by less resources and more disparity. If these main consequences are compared to UNICEF’s key areas of support,<sup>23</sup> some gaps appear.

Negative consequences of decentralization	Key areas of UNICEF support to education decentralization
Corruption  Less resources  Lower quality  More disparity	Capacity building Child friendly schools Early child development Child participation Parent teachers associations Resource centers with satellite schools Building linkages between communities and schools Development of guidelines, policies and standards Education management information systems

← ? ←

<sup>22</sup> Interview question 6.

<sup>23</sup> Interview question 7, “What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?”

Given that corruption is often serious, perhaps UNICEF is not doing enough to stem corruption - or perhaps other agencies with a more prominent anti-corruption mandate such as UNDP and World Bank need to be doing more. It is possible that through strategic technical support to ministries of education, notably on developing transparent and effective systems, some sources of corruption can be averted. Effective low-cost methods of reducing corruption associated with decentralization, include publishing the amounts of funds sent out by central to local governments, and the dates they were sent, in newspapers so that people know how much to expect and when. Sub-national audit requirements and capacity are perhaps also worth some attention. Perhaps we need to either encourage other agencies to do more or else refocus UNICEF support to such work.

Improving quality of education and pro-poor policy implementation are key UNICEF programming concerns. It may be useful to re-examine these concerns from a decentralization perspective. UNICEF already promotes grassroots participation, creating demand for quality education programming, and also helps to develop guidelines, policies, and standards. It is important these interventions are at a strategic level so that they are completely integrated into the ministry's processes and organizational structure to support a type of decentralization that does not reduce education quality. Poor organizational performance reduces quality. If UNICEF can help the ministry of education manage decentralization effectively, organizational performance as a whole - and support for quality education - will improve. These activities include refining the design of the ministry strategically, refining job descriptions and incentive structures (as per China's positive comments on this topic), giving job training to those whose jobs change (which UNICEF does to some extent as capacity building), and communicating change in a way that manages resistance to change.

The results also raise the issue that UNICEF and Ministries of Education might benefit from additional technical expertise in economics or finance to avoid reductions in resources to education and increased disparities. Issues where further attention are needed include school fees (perhaps invoking the right to free education, with exemptions for the poor as a fall-back strategy), and pro-poor district allocations (including analysis of the district allocation formulas used and relating the results to district financial status).

The problem of shortage of in-house expertise within UNICEF could be resolved by hiring consultants. There is a lot of literature on this topic and a corresponding number of experts! Alternatively, UNICEF could partner more closely with World Bank, UNDP, or other actors dealing with these issues to highlight education-specific decentralization impacts. The adequacy of coverage of these issues, not necessarily directly by UNICEF, but more probably in partnership with other agencies and government, could usefully be investigated in country case studies.

## **Discussion**

So, is decentralization good or bad? In terms of political decentralization, it is generally positive. It can promote participation by the poor, nurture national cohesion,

and bolster civil society. On the other hand, political decentralization can also result in the capture of power by local elites standing on ethnic, regional, or religious platforms, particularly if a country is also embarking on political democratization. Fledgling democracies easily fall prey to the divisive politics and decentralization can exacerbate this tendency. Undue local political influence on resource allocations between sectors such as education and health has also been mentioned.

Administrative decentralization can be positive or negative and is normally both. It is designed to ensure appropriate social service provision and good monitoring. Interventions include capacity and organizational development, area-focused approaches and information systems. UNICEF has focused most of its support to decentralization processes on administrative capacity development, often through providing training in planning, sometimes micro-planning, and capacity development of head teachers. This has clearly been very useful but, depending on local conditions, it may also be worth considering broadening our support to training in the human resource and financial dimensions of management, including helping to reduce corruption in the education system. It may also be useful to broaden our MIS support to other management information systems we are already familiar with, such as audit recommendation production and tracking and performance monitoring.

Fiscal decentralization is intended to promote expenditure efficiency and relevance. By keeping some part of regional revenue collection within the region, fiscal decentralization may help to reduce the corruption that sometimes accompanies vertical revenue transfers from central government to regions. But if central control is lost, the system is vulnerable to local abuse with little or rudimentary central oversight. So the net direction of this effect is uncertain. And, once a government has devolved taxation authorities, it can be difficult to implement further national level tax reforms. If done in a pro-poor way, wealthier regions will also transfer some of their funds to poorer regions. But these transfers may work better in theory than in practice. Delayed receipt of inter-regional transfers has created difficulties for some poorer districts. At local level, budgetary priority is given to immediate problems with severe impacts. If resources are constrained at the start of the year due to delayed transfers, education may lose out.<sup>24</sup> So knowledge of budgetary processes and advocacy during crucial periods of change can have a significant impact on education resource availability.

Market decentralization has two main thrusts. These are encouragement of private sector provision of education and requirement that parents contribute to the costs of education by requiring user fees. Encouragement of the private sector will result in wealthier urban parents sending their children to private schools. This may free up some state resources for schools elsewhere, at the cost of creating a two-tier system. Worthy proposals to tax schools in wealthy urban areas and transfer those resources to poorer districts have met with little success as that would affect the school fees paid by the elite of society. This leads to the other important political dynamic here. Once the children of the elite are in private schools it becomes more difficult to sustain the interest of senior members of government in promoting the state system.

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<sup>24</sup> David Chapman, "Educational trends in Developing Asia," *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (April 2000): 292.

The issue of user fees is perhaps more familiar to us. Again, political dynamics interact with economic imperatives. User fees can reduce cost to the state *or* free up state resources to be deployed elsewhere in the education system – but the same resources cannot be used twice to perform both functions! User fees may create a barrier to entry to the poor. This can be reduced, but generally not eliminated, by providing exemptions to the poor. Unfortunately, exemptions can be hijacked and there have been claims that the rich benefit from such exemptions disproportionately. At the same time, while the whole of a society may be personally interested in maintaining a system of free education for all, only some will feel personally involved in sustaining exemptions for the poor in a contributory system. Over time, the value of exemptions may be eroded by inflation. In times of crisis, they may even be withdrawn.

From a more macro perspective, decentralization requires organizational support that sometimes includes redesigning and relocating parts of the education system and setting up appropriate linkages across sectors and between levels. The decentralization process needs to be managed and phased with appropriate institutional planning, legal and financial frameworks and to include a pro-poor budget framework. The government needs management, administrative, financial, human resource systems that support its new objectives in addition to training regarding how these systems work. A communications plan and mass media advocacy strategy to enlist support and to manage change resistance is also needed. Capacity building of all the key players in these activities is necessary but insufficient on its own, to achieve success, protect the poor, and maintain quality.

All the countries surveyed reported some degree of decentralization of several functions of their basic education system. Clearly, specific country situations vary widely. At the same time, there are strong similarities between the concerns reported – that education decentralization could adversely affect the quality and equity of the basic education system and that UNICEF programmes are effective in some, but not all, of the necessary areas of technical support.

## Recommendations

### ***How should UNICEF be supporting education: what is to be done?***

Respondents note a number of ways in which education decentralization can be supported in the future.<sup>25</sup> Responses follow three main themes: quality, disparity, and capacity.

With respect to education quality, responses include child-friendly schools, early learning centers, parent-teacher associations, child participation, learning assessment, and further cluster development. A common element in all of these responses is the focus on the community's role in the process of enhancing quality. Child Friendly

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<sup>25</sup> Interview question 8, “Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?”

Schools has a core dimension 'Participation by Community, Parents and Students' especially in the process of school self-assessments linked to planning. Parent teacher Associations can play a crucial role in monitoring government inputs to schools and strengthening local level decision making processes. Early learning centers being supported by UNICEF usually follow a community based approach, with community involvement and local government support from their pool of decentralized funds. Access to quality early learning opportunities has proven to be a key element in ensuring success for children in the earliest grades of primary school. Cluster development, under a decentralized resource center system, can help ensure equitable distribution of resources and access to in-service training for core and satellite schools within the cluster. The recognition that efforts to improve quality in an increasingly decentralized education system requires greater local participation is in line with UNICEF's current emphasis on the broader Child Friendly School framework.

In terms of disparity, responses include information systems and analysis and amelioration of processes of social exclusion. UNICEF can also emphasize analysis and solutions in the future such as investigating the effects of pro-poor transfers and determining what resources would be needed in a country in order to ensure the poor have education access. For such efforts to be successful, however, they need to be based on local realities rather than anecdotes and unproven assumptions from the center. Strengthening data and information from local levels, and ensuring that local stakeholders are engaged in the collection, analysis and use of such information on disparities is essential. UNICEF tends to look at the supply side of education solutions rather than the demand side, but the best solutions require both. Again, partnerships with concerned agencies and hired-in technical expertise would be an advantage in a deeper analysis of these issues.

In terms of capacity, responses focus on developing the human capacity of planners, administrators, teachers, and school heads and increasing institutional capacity at central and local levels. UNICEF is doing this well and such efforts are very necessary, but they are not sufficient in isolation. To achieve its mandate to improve equity and quality there are a number of additional areas in which UNICEF should support the education sector.

- First, UNICEF must analyze decentralization law and the strength of governmental commitment for equity and quality in education. If the country is only starting to decentralize, UNICEF is well-placed to advocate for appropriate legal security of rights and to provide examples of frameworks and good practices for governments and ministries to consider.
- Second, UNICEF needs to be more detailed in its financial analysis of decentralization, including the decentralization budget itself and the pro-poor fiscal tools proposed. Some of the information UNICEF requires for appropriate support to education includes answers to the following questions. How does district allocation after decentralization compare to allocations before decentralization came into effect? What is the inter-district resource allocation formula and how biased is it? Is it equal for all districts? Is it based on population? Does it favor poorer districts and is it based upon their revenue-raising capacity? Is it based upon the number of children who are not yet in school? There are also

important areas of uncertainty surrounding the extent of parental contributions to education and the extent to which enrollment is affected by these.

- Third, UNICEF needs to look much more thoroughly at the institutional aspects of decentralization, including the organizational structures themselves including linkages<sup>26</sup> between ministries and levels of government, revised job descriptions and proposed accountability structures. The processes by which education is to function in the decentralized environment are fundamentally different than traditional centralized models and a change strategy that includes a communication plan is required. Good execution of these institutional supports has a positive effect on quality through improved effectiveness of the system itself.

As a final point, decentralization is often not administered or integrated at the same pace or in the same way across ministries. When analyzing decentralization problems in education it may also be useful to look at the experiences of other ministries to see what they have already tried and how it has worked out. Health is a natural partner to education, but planning and finance ministries often have a great deal to offer since they specialize in two areas central to a well-functioning education ministry.<sup>27</sup>

This cursory indicative and rapid study serves only to highlight some of the key issues on concern according to the frequency that they manifest in countries in the region. Systematic in-country analysis, using the tools of economics and social policy analysis, and policy impact analysis, will be needed to identify, with key partners, some pro-active concrete policy conclusions.

## Conclusion

Results obtained were from a rapid survey of key informants, rather than country data. But the key informants were well informed and so the patterns discerned are likely to be valid. Key gaps in the UNICEF response to decentralization, as well as many positive responses, were noted. Feasibility of broadening the UNICEF response should be assessed. To do that, it would be useful to have some in-depth country studies. These would include a situation analysis of decentralization in education. They would also entail a financial analysis covering especially household level pro-poor policies such as fee exemptions and pro-poor district resource allocation formulas, trends in these expenditures and an analysis of the fiscal space available to governments to increase total public expenditure on education. Analysis of local staffing levels and capacities, gaps and trends would also be needed.

The goal should be to work out what, in each country, should be decentralized and what functions would best be left at central level in each country. Then, instead of asking the question “Is decentralization a good thing?” we could start to say “This is what will help to make the system work better.”

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<sup>26</sup> The need for linkages is clearly laid out in David Chapman’s article which uses Cambodia as an example (p. 299).

<sup>27</sup> Emanuela di Gropello, “Education Decentralization and Accountability Relationships in Latin America,” World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3453, (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 2004): 21.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Disclaimer**

Opinions expressed in this study are not necessarily those of UNICEF.

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## **APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTIONS AND PURPOSE LETTER**

### **Research to Improve UNICEF Education Support to Decentralizing Countries**

#### Purposes of the research project

1. Identify levels of decentralization in education in the region.
2. Highlight best practices and lessons learned.
3. Identify knowledge gaps, needs for policy advice and solutions.
4. Produce a report for the Education Programme Officers network meeting in May. The meeting will discuss how UNICEF can ensure that education decentralization improves sector performance. Some countries may wish to suggest specific directions for future research.

Participation in all phases of this research project is purely voluntary. Phase One has two parts:

- 1) a list of telephone interview questions labeled “Interview”
- 2) a check-box style questionnaire labeled “Questionnaire”.

Both are attached to this email. You may participate in both parts, only one, or neither.

Responses should be jointly provided by the Chief of Education and the Chief of Planning (or Social Policy focal Point). If possible, please involve Ministry of Education and/or Ministry of Planning counterparts in completing the questionnaire and/or during the telephone interview.

#### The research process

1. The “Questionnaire” (check-box style questionnaire) should be completed by Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March and returned by scan to [suzanneh@isb.ac.th](mailto:suzanneh@isb.ac.th) or by fax to Mahesh Patel, EAPRO. The pilot country took less than one hour to answer this.  
We would like to have preliminary responses before the telephone interview, if possible. During the telephone interview, we can then help you to respond to any unclearly formulated questions.
2. The “Interview” is a list of questions you will be asked in a telephone interview, by the consultant Suzanne Hinsz. No need to submit written responses. The interview will last one hour (the pilot country took 40 minutes).  
Khun Daranee will ring your office this week to arrange a time. If you agree, we would like to schedule your interview on the 3, 4, or 5 April.

#### Instructions for completing the “Questionnaire”

1. Often, it will be appropriate to tick more than one box.
2. The questionnaire always refers to “primary” or “basic education”, unless otherwise stated.
3. “Subnational” is the first level of subnational government (often a region, province or state).
4. “Local” refers lowest level of government (generally a population level of 10,000-40,000). In the case of a large city, it refers to the municipality.
5. For very large countries (China, Philippines, and Indonesia), “national” refers to the first level of subnational government (as in DevInfo) and “subnational” as the second subnational level.
6. Often, countries will not have data. In that case, just tick “Don’t know”.
7. “Like to know” means you would like to know the answer to the question. We will compile these responses to identify preliminary future research topics for further discussion.
8. Please use the “notes” and “other” sections to make distinctions for marginalized or vulnerable groups such as refugees.

With thanks for your participation in this research effort!

Mahesh Patel, Regional Social Policy and Economic Analysis Adviser  
Cliff Meyers, Regional Education Adviser, EAPRO

## **APPENDIX B: TICK BOX QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Decentralisation in Primary Education Questionnaire**

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

**Framework**

- 1 Is the government trying to reduce central public sector expenditure?
- 2 The effect of decentralisation on education in the country so far is...
- 3 What are the three main declared reasons for education decentralisation?
- 4 What are the two main positive effects of decentralisation so far?
- 5 What are the two main negative effects of decentralisation so far?
- 6 Right to free primary education exists: national constitution, legislation, policy?
- 7 Do schools report to the sectoral ministry or multi-sectoral local government?
- 8 Do subnational governments receive block grants from central government?
- 9 Can subnational government allocate resources between health & education?
- 10 Can a decision to teach in the local language be made at subnational level?
- 11 Is it illegal to speak the local/maternal language in school?
- 12 Can some non-core curriculum elements be decided/added locally?
- 13 Can teaching material be adapted to local religious beliefs?
- 14 Parent-Teacher Associations (or similar) influence decisions in most schools.
- 15 Do most secondary schools have some form of student government?

I don't know  
 Like to know

Please make a tick mark in ALL applicable boxes including "I don't know" and "like to know."

<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> insignificant	<input type="checkbox"/> minor	<input type="checkbox"/> medium <input type="checkbox"/> significant <input type="checkbox"/> major other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> resource mobilization	<input type="checkbox"/> quality	<input type="checkbox"/> quality <input type="checkbox"/> democratization <input type="checkbox"/> equity other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> staff <input type="checkbox"/> funds	<input type="checkbox"/> quality	<input type="checkbox"/> equity <input type="checkbox"/> democratization other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> less resources	<input type="checkbox"/> less quality	<input type="checkbox"/> more disparity <input type="checkbox"/> corruption other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> constitution	<input type="checkbox"/> legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> policy note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> sectoral ministry	<input type="checkbox"/> multi-sectoral local government	other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	note(s) _____

**Administration of Public Schools**

- 16 Decisions to hire and fire secondary school heads are made at which level(s)?
- 17 Decisions to hire and fire primary school heads are made at which level(s)?
- 18 Decisions to hire and fire pre-school heads are made at which level(s)?
- 19 Decisions to hire and fire secondary teachers are made at which level(s)?
- 20 Decisions to hire and fire primary teachers are made at which level(s)?
- 21 Decisions to hire and fire pre-school teachers are made at which level(s)?
- 22 Budgets for in-service training mostly exist at which level(s)?
- 23 Content of in-service training can be decided at which level(s)?
- 24 Are student exam results used by authorities to assess school performance?
- 25 Schools are assessed by an inspector every \_\_\_\_\_ years.

<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> central	<input type="checkbox"/> subnational	<input type="checkbox"/> local	<input type="checkbox"/> school	note(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ years primary	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ years secondary	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ years pre-school	note(s) _____	

**Figure 2**

**Decentralisation in Primary Education**

**Finance: Revenues of Public Schools**

Regarding funds transfers from central to subnational levels:...

- 26 Are there pro-poor resource transfers?  I don't know  Like to know  yes  no  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 27 Are transfers based on a formula (e.g. population, poverty, health, education)?  yes  no  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 28 Is there an earmarked grant just for education?  yes  no  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 29 Is the transfer/grant for education based on number of children enrolled?  yes  no  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 30 Are poor or vulnerable children excluded from the need to pay?  yes  no  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 31 Does subnational government contribute to education costs from local taxes?  yes  no  sometimes  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 32 Do parents contribute toward these items?  tuition  exam fees  textbooks  materials  accommodation (if boarding)  entrance instruments  transportation  teacher salaries  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Finance: Expenditures of Public Schools**

- 33 From which level are teacher's salaries mostly paid?  central  subnational  local  school  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 34 At which levels can teacher salaries be set?  central  subnational  local  school  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 35 At which levels can school construction be independently contracted?  central  subnational  local  school  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 36 From which level is school maintenance usually paid?  central  subnational  local  school  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 37 Which entities have authority to open and close schools?  central  subnational  local  school  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**PRIVATE Sector (Faith- and Non-Faith-Based Private Primary Schools)**

- 38 Are private schools taxed, subsidised, or both?  taxed  subsidised  both  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 40 Private schools are assessed by an inspector every \_\_\_ years.  \_\_\_ years  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 41 Private schools are what percent of total enrollment (primary and secondary)?  \_\_\_ % primary  \_\_\_ % secondary  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 39 To which level(s) are private school license fees paid?  central  subnational  local  none  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 42 Are student exam results used by authorities to assess school performance?  central  subnational  local  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 43 Is private education sector growth slower or faster than state sector?  much slower  slower  faster  much faster  note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make a tick mark in ALL applicable boxes including "I don't know" and "like to know."

**APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Telephone Interview**

## Decentralization and Primary Education

1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?
2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?
3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?
4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?
5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?
6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?
7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?
8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?
9. Is there any other information you would like to include?
10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire?

**APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS BY QUESTION**

**Q1: What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

**CAMBODIA:** The process, started in the late 1990s, is called “decentralization and deconcentration.” It signifies the devolution of political power from the central government to democratically elected Commune Councils. Deconcentration means the devolution of administrative power/functions from the ministries in Phnom Penh to their provincial departments. The goal is to 1) foster democracy from the grassroots level and 2) facilitate development through bottom-up planning processes.

**CHINA:** For 5 years, the government has decentralized health and education down to district and county levels. It is fiscal decentralization rather than administrative decentralization.

**FIJI:** The decentralization initiative started 6 or 7 years ago. Structural Adjustment Policies and private sector deregulation drove the process. People in rural areas want to have their own people in charge. The government is trying to achieve more financial equity.

**INDONESIA:** Decentralization started in 2001 and has great momentum. It makes sense given the vast, diverse geographical area, its varied socio-economic development stages, and cultural diversity. The government realizes one model cannot fit each and every community.

**They think the central government is best suited to set standards, provide good policy guidance, and to monitor that standards are met in the various provinces and districts.**

**LAO PDR:** There is no national decentralization program per se, but there is an administrative reform program that is aimed at promoting greater efficiency and a desire to improve national revenue collection by collecting at province level.

**MONGOLIA:** As a huge country with a very low population density, decentralization makes sense. Mongolia seeks for improved transparency, services, and resource use.

**PNG:** Seeks to minimize bureaucratic red tape and misuse of funds while promoting cohesive social service planning and decision-making at the community and village levels.

**PHILIPPINES:** The government wants to decentralize basic services to the lowest level possible to enable better resource use. The health sector is fully devolved to the province level. Education is now starting to decentralize.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** There is little going on in terms of decentralization. It is very highly centralized.

**THAILAND:** Thailand seeks to achieve efficiency, equity, and quality services by devolving and allocating public services to local administrations within 10 years starting from 2001-2010. The government has started to increase the share of local

revenue relative to total government revenue from 20% in 2001 to 24% now. The goal is 35%.

**VIET NAM:** In 1989 Viet Nam began economic reforms which have resulted in considerable social, political, and economic changes and refinement of provincial roles and responsibilities. The government is committed to decentralization.

### **Central Themes**

Improved resource use (efficiency)

Increased equity

Improved planning

Democratization

No interest in decentralization

**Q2: What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

**CAMBODIA:** Seeks improved education service delivery, equitable access to education, and improved education quality.

**CHINA:** The major agenda is 9 years of compulsory education. Central government makes allocations leaves implementation to be accomplished in a decentralized manner. Poorest counties are targeted first.

**FIJI:** We have four divisions with commissioner in charge of each. At the district level, there are educational officers and each is being given more autonomy.

**INDONESIA:** Hopes to bridge the gap between regional differences in socio-economic status, improve school attendance, have students complete 9 years of basic education, and improve school quality and access. **The new education law (2003) transferred principal responsibility to district government and important decision-making powers are decentralized to the schools themselves to plan, manage, and deliver minimum education quality in terms of content, process, and outcomes of basic education for all students.** There is much greater opportunity for community oversight and for heads of school to manage human and financial resources, including building new facilities and improving existing ones.

**LAO PDR:** There is de facto deconcentration to the PTA/cluster level due to central government weakness. Central government provides teacher salaries, but PTAs and parents meet all other school costs.

**MONGOLIA:** The Central ministry is now focused policy analysis and fulfilling an advisory role while decision-making is done at local level, closer to demand.

**PNG:** Wants to increase student enrollment and improve student retention rates. **Provincial Education advisors now have full administrative power and responsibility including teacher deployment, salaries, and recruitment. Policy decisions are referred to the national department of education.**

**PHILIPPINES:** Wants better use of limited resources and to improve student retention. If local stakeholders have greater ownership, they are better able to respond to issues that might keep kids out of school. Therefore, it is helpful if school heads are involved and empowered to deal with this problem. Additionally, if local people are accountable, education quality may improve.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** Seeks financial disbursement directly to primary schools (the practical means for doing this is not yet clear). Voluntary parental contributions used to pay teacher salaries so when education was made free, teachers weren't paid. This has resulted in more centralization because now teachers are employed by the central ministry rather than parents.

**THAILAND:** To ensure access for all and relevant and improved education quality.

**VIET NAM:** Wants decentralized planning, implementation, management, and M&E and local level impact on planning and budgeting.

**Common Themes**

Improved quality, Improved equity, Improved student retention, Better educational , relevance, Improved education service delivery, Basic education for all

**Q3 Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

**CAMBODIA:** There is better strategic **planning** and better **resource allocation**. **Direct financial allocation** to schools. **Schools are encouraged to do school development planning in which they strive for school improvement and they are encouraged to include teachers and community people in that planning effort.**

**CHINA:** **Human resource downsizing** is working well and is stabilizing. Additionally, closing incomplete schools and school mapping are positive effects. Opening boarding schools to provide primary schools access. Central government provides school structure design but construction is decentralized.

**FIJI:** Decentralization isn't happening as it could be because change-averse personalities have the opportunity to play a large role.

**INDONESIA:** The national constitution stipulates that 20% of the government's budget for non-salary expenditure should go to education, but it amounts to only 8.4% this fiscal year

**LAO PDR:** N/A

**MONGOLIA:** The following are all working well: **school administration**, licensing, **selecting headmasters**, and opening and closing schools. **Local governor's offices can select headmasters and headmasters can select teachers and do hiring and firing.**

**PNG:** **There is a significant increase in student enrollment.** **Teacher salary** issues have been rectified and **student retention** rates are better.

**PHILIPPINES:** The **policy environment** has been set up well, allowing school-community partnership. The **school-based management model** has been very successful and the ministry is ready to scale it up throughout the country. **Resource mobilization** has been successful such that there is now a positive pooling of school resources.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** N/A

**THAILAND:** ECD centers have improved under TAO management, providing more **suitable learning environments** and better caregiver salaries.

**VIET NAM:** **Staffing** and **fund raising** have improved.

**Common Themes**

Improved retention and enrollment

Better planning

Better resource allocation

Improved school management and administration

Better staffing levels

#### **Q4 Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**

**CAMBODIA: Money comes late, therefore planning is less efficient.** Commune Council staff lacks capacity to understand education issues. Linkages between Commune Councils and education officials are not yet well-defined and established.

**CHINA:** Monitoring and implementation of 9 years compulsory education is not working well nor is the free text book scheme.

**FIJI:** There is a **slow pace of change. Funds disbursement lacks equity** and transparency and there are no clear criteria for the disbursement *process*.

**INDONESIA: Unclear assignment of administrative functions and** financing arrangements do not conform to administrative functions.

**LAO PDR:** Governors now have power to decide who to pay first and teachers are paid months behind schedule.

**MONGOLIA: Financial systems.** Governors tend to money for other local priorities rather than social services. Money needs to be distributed in a pro-poor way.

#### **MYANMAR**

**PNG: Human resource development and training** is a major issue. **Since the reform we feel quality has been traded for quantity.** There is lack of basic **learning materials** in remote schools. The reform triggered the need for more teachers and education divisions in provinces resorted to recruiting teachers with no proper qualification to teach. Lack of school **infrastructure**.

**PHILIPPINES: There is change resistance** as individuals want to retain the power to allocate resources. Individuals are finding their new roles (such as monitoring, evaluating, providing technical assistance, and policy setting) are out of their comfort zones.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** N/A

**THAILAND: There is opposition from teachers,** a lack of education administration capacity to perform new responsibilities, fragmented education management, lack of trust and transparency, lack of job security, lack of qualified staff, more nepotism. Spending on construction rather than quality improvement. More vulnerability to corruption.

**VIET NAM: Education decentralization has not** reduced disparity or corruption and has not improved quality.

#### **Common Themes**

Lack of training and systems to perform new roles Change resistance Less quality More disparity More corruption Lack of qualified staff Less transparency Lack of resources, Political meddling in funds disbursement, Monitoring and implementation of decentralization

**“Since the reform we feel quality has been traded for quantity.” PNG**

**Q5 Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

**CAMBODIA:** The Ministry of Education needs to **define its decentralization framework and structure**. We found the Commune Councils are **not yet capable** to do education planning the way the ministry of education was envisioning the process with use of use of education data.

**CHINA:** **Making central policies and regulations is not enough and does not work unless there are local systems in place and local capacity in place.** In terms of implementation, it has not been understood well at all. People rely on orders from above. Instead of rationalizing available resource (and mobilizing them) there is still a **mind set** of dependency on the center for development of the sector. We cannot push resource mobilization without appropriate **systems** in place. Fiscal decentralization has created autonomy to determine local priorities and **funds are being diverted away from the social sector toward infrastructure development. There is a profound need** for local monitoring and surveillance systems.

**FIJI:** 94% of schools are already “non-governmental.” Funding is via grants per child, capital grants for running the schools, and subsidies for teacher salaries. Schools have to bid annually for governmental funds for capital grants. Any shortfall is funded by are funded by religious organizations, parents, and PTAs.

**INDONESIA:** Laws and policies need to be reviewed thoroughly to **clarify assignment of structures and functions. Decentralized functions need to be aligned with appropriate governance and management structures and financing arrangements at all levels of government.** The government needs to prioritize health and education much more because currently the overall financial resources are inadequate to create the **necessary momentum** and conditions for putting in place an effective and effective decentralized education system. **The degree of commitment of government at all levels to this decentralization process -- for now and in the years to come -- is going to be critically important for the effectiveness and sustainability of the basic education reform particularly in terms of adding value and significantly improving the quality, relevance and outcomes of the basic education process in Indonesia.**

**LAO PDR:** **Financial decentralization without accountability is counter productive.**

**MONGOLIA:** There is a need to **strengthen capacity** of staff at school and subnational level in **budget planning, monitoring, and implementation.** The local governors need to be **trained and strengthened.** As decentralization carries on, lower administrative levels need **financial skills training.** If financial shortfalls are not administered in a pro-poor way, people remain caught in a poverty trap. Central government grants redistribution must be pro-poor.

**PNG:** There should have been proper planning for the reform. The department should have ensured that there were more teachers, enough spaces for children, materials are appropriate for the levels of schools, etc.... Planning should have taken precedence. There is a need for education department to **fund teacher training** because once the reform is complete in the next 3-5 years the **need for qualified teachers** will be high.

**PHILIPPINES:** If the structure is going to change, we need additional resources in the interim to make the change happen. We need funding for capacity building of lower-level education staff, training throughout the ministry for people to perform their new roles, and funding to assist people to change their mindset.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** N/A

**THAILAND:** It is important to make **TEACHERS** understand the benefit of transferring to local government. Teachers are afraid of getting fewer benefits than being with the central administration. Local authorities are not independent from the national politics. This is dangerous for decentralization as a whole.

**VIET NAM:** Stakeholders are used to vertical mechanisms and top-down planning, they get confused and perplexed in adapting the new mechanism/approach. **Orientation, advocacy, capacity building on decentralization, and creating an enabling environment for it to happen are very important.** Both central and local stakeholders are poorly qualified and unprepared and local absorbing capacity is very low. Central staff possess better technical know-how (due to better exposure) but are unwilling to implement decentralization because they are worried about losing power and money. Local staff have poor technical know-how but are willing to implement decentralization because they get more power and more money. Close follow-up using practical M&E tool of decentralization policy enforcement is a must.

**“Making central policies and regulations is not enough and does not work unless there are local systems in place and local capacity in place.” China**

**“The degree of commitment of government at all levels to this decentralization process -- for now and in the years to come -- is going to be critically important for the effectiveness and sustainability of the basic education reform particularly in terms of adding value and significantly improving the quality, relevance and outcomes of the basic education process in Indonesia.” Indonesia**

**“Financial decentralization without accountability is counter productive.” Lao PDR**

**“There is a need to strengthen capacity of staff at school and subnational level in budget planning, monitoring, and implementation.” Mongolia**

**“There should have been proper planning for the reform.” PNG**

**“If the structure is going to change, we need additional resources in the interim to make the change happen. We need funding for capacity building of lower-level education staff, training throughout the ministry for people to perform their new roles, and funding to assist people to change their mindset.” Philippines**

**“It is important to make **TEACHERS** understand the benefit of transferring to local government.” Thailand**

**“Orientation, advocacy, capacity building on decentralization, and creating an enabling environment for it to happen are very important.” Viet Nam**

**Q6 Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**

**CAMBODIA:** Not really. We are learning from what did not work.

**CHINA:** The **rate of compulsory education is greatly improved** and the **general education level has greatly improved** as a result of the local government taking responsibility. The central government does not push the provinces and counties to simply accept their directives, policies, and standards. It invites them to make their own decisions, except for national guidelines. **Work performance evaluation** encourages government management teams to improve their performance on education work.

**FIJI:** Because Fiji *says* it is decentralizing, some head teachers and principals take a more pro-active role in school management and involve students and communities much more. Individual teachers are also taking **initiative**. TANDRA KAHANI is a program in which schools (especially rural ones) articulate MDG goals via a drama or musical.

**INDONESIA:** The laws and legal framework are good starting points. Lower level individuals should be given giving financial responsibilities and the necessary training and skills on how to deal with those new managerial, technical, and financial responsibilities. There should be a strong master plan for capacity building of the critically important management systems and human capacities at all levels of government, not least at the district level, where a lot of new functions and responsibilities are now vested.

**LAO PDR:** No

**MONGOLIA:** There is a lack of empirical evidence on this, but it looks like best practices include: local school administration and licensing **getting good headmasters and teachers locally**, and **capacity building of school managers and teachers**.

**PNG:** Creation of elementary system has brought **ownership** by the people in communities. Education reform and decentralization was the only means of **increasing enrollment** substantially.

**PHILIPPINES:** School based management is working well. Developing national **competency based teaching standards** so that decentralization is supported and education quality is improved. Management at the division level is actually quite good at leadership and coordination. **Student tracking system** has been helpful at tracking student progress through school and tracking public health initiatives.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** No

**THAILAND:** Municipalities (many via working with local universities) have **created local specific curricula** to meet the needs of local students such as the sport school and one teaching Chinese language. Due to the early retirement policy of the government, Phuket PAO allocated budget for hiring 300 teachers to substitute for

teachers who took early retirement, providing a solution for a problem facing schools. The strong CSO role put pressure on local authorities to prioritize the ECD in major development areas.

**VIET NAM: Mass media advocacy** on “Socialization of Education” policy helped **mobilize unutilized resources** and paved the way for establishing **community learning centers**. There are now more than 6,000. There are also continuing education centers at district and all provincial levels. **Diversifying** the basic education system through non-public/private schools and developing the distance education system have been powerful.

**“There should be a strong master plan for capacity building of the critically important management systems and human capacities at all levels of government, not least at the district level...” Indonesia**

**“Work performance evaluation encourages government management teams to work hard to improve their performance on education work.” China**

**“Mass media advocacy helped mobilize unutilized resources and paved the way for establishing community learning centers.” Viet Nam**

**“...getting good headmasters and teachers locally and capacity building of school managers and teachers.” Mongolia**

**“...Central government invites [provinces] to make their own decisions, except for national guidelines.” China**

**Q7 What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

**CAMBODIA**

- Institutional development and capacity building to support the ministry in decentralizing data collection (EMIS), human resource management systems, and training in budget management systems. UNICEF has supported the training of provinces and districts in the operation and use of these systems.
- Child-Friendly Schools program promotes community participation and this supports decentralization through school level planning that involves schools and Commune Councils and parents.

**CHINA**

- EMIS assists them to support decentralization.
- Building capacity for developing local plans. For instance teaching them how to do a situation assessment. We are therefore working with the department of planning and development within the ministry of education on this.
- UNICEF pioneered (and the government accepts and wants national coverage) PRA as a tool to involve communities in planning activities.
- We are working on quality improvement, NFA for out-of-school adolescents, and implementation at the provincial level.

**FIJI**

- Early Learning Development Standards, a pilot set of standards for child development (0 – 6 years) in the Pacific countries. By implementing country-wide, it encourages national focus on rural areas. This supports decentralization.
- Fiji is not a UNICEF Pacific focus country and thus not much else is done here with regards to education.

**INDONESIA**

- Have started the new 5-year country program cycle that directly addresses important basic education decentralization issues from pre-primary through the primary and junior secondary level.
- Involved in a quality improvement of primary schools in poorer, rural districts. This project, the CLCC, focuses on training of school heads for transparent school-based management; trains members of the school committees (monitoring student attendance and performance as well as transparent management of school resources and school improvement planning), promotes an active and joyful teaching-learning process, and seeks to improve student competencies.
- We aim to institutionalize and mainstream these best education practices at the school level so that districts and provinces can take on, sustain, and develop these functions even further in the future. This will include the training of district and provincial education officers in EFA planning as well as monitoring and supervising services. We are also planning to link this active and joyful CLCC teaching-learning approach with in-service as well as pre-service teacher training schemes within existing teacher training institutions.
- We are also starting a \$17 Million EU-funded project, “Mainstreaming Good/ Best Education Practices.” The project will start off by identifying and documenting best practices regardless of the origin of the practice, whether it’s locally initiated and implemented or whether it has been supported by an external

donor or development partner. It is also envisioned that this project initiative will be a catalyst for a mini-SWAP project within the next two to three years in selected provinces in which other donors also have significant involvement in basic education.

- Another project on EFA within our overall Education Program, 2006-2010, will strengthen the central government's ability to set standards and policies as well as streamline and consolidate life skills education including HIV/AIDS.
- The diversity and flexibility of local responses to decentralization will be strengthened by early childhood development building upon local cultures and practices. In this regard, we aim to support parental education on ECD as well as supporting flexible and affordable community-based structured play and early learning activities for poor and disadvantaged children.

### **LAO PDR**

- Given the situation, UNICEF is supporting education through PTA and cluster strengthening via training in management and quality development.
- UNICEF is also assisting the central government develop guidelines for clusters. This supports good management practices and quality improvement.
- UNICEF is gently supporting local language education initiatives but this is a sensitive issue.

### **MONGOLIA**

It is supporting in two levels:

- First, through the Child-Friendly Schools Project where UNICEF is promoting *quality* schools, PTAs, and the inclusion of students and parents in school development plans.
  - UNICEF is using a local level planning and participatory approach through school assessments by parents and students.
  - UNICEF is also ensuring schools are child-friendly and that minimum standards are met (like sanitation).
- Second, through the Convergent Basic Social Services Program
  - This ensures integration of social services at the community level via the community plan. The plans are consolidated at the district level and then at the regional level and finally sent to the central level.
  - This initiative promotes bottom-up approach to social planning and community empowerment.

### **PNG**

- Capacity building at the local and community level. We are training teachers on the concepts of child friendly schools. This makes them become effective classroom teachers.
- Because of the reform some teachers have been given accelerated promotion to be senior teachers and head teachers. We are supporting them by giving them training on basic financial management so that school funds are budgeted, planned, spent and acquitted in a proper manner.
- Another way to target student discipline and abuse in schools, we have supported school based counseling in which teachers are trained to provide basic counseling and guidance.
- Providing basic school supplies and textbooks to schools.
- Water and sanitation in schools.

### **PHILIPPINES**

- Policy development.
- Student tracking system.
- Building capacity at the school management level.
- Creating networks of child-friendly schools.

### **TIMOR-LESTE**

- UNICEF has been a central player in developing PTAs and providing training to PTAs and principals in basic school-based management.
- UNICEF has supported the development of PTAs in about 40% of the schools.
- UNICEF trains PTAs using a grassroots model (this replaces the old top-down PTA approach the country used in the past).
- The training will be an important part of capacity building for future decentralization.

### **THAILAND**

- Clear guidance on budget allocation from MOE/MOI on budget allocation to ensure the minimum standard of education.
- Efficient quality assurance.
- Trust and acceptance of teachers to be under local administration.
- Rewards and punishments, personnel management, and job security of teachers.

### **VIET NAM**

- Support to school-based (bottom-up) planning, management, and M&E through development of modules and organization of capacity building training for principals and education managers at local levels on planning and management skills.
- Support to community involvement and participation in education to promote local ownership through development of modules and organization of capacity building training for members of parent teacher association (PTA) and education councils (EduC) on participation skills.
- Support to child participation and adolescent participation in education through development of modules and organization of in-service training for teachers on multi-grade teaching techniques, integrated lesson planning, life skills, activity-based teaching, and creating an enabling environment for equal child and adolescent participation in order to address children's right to a quality basic education within a child friendly learning environment.
- Support to the development and use of community-based monitoring and progress assessment system (COMPAS) tool.

### **Common Themes**

- EMIS
- Capacity building at the local level
- Using Child-Friendly Schools as a means to promote quality education
- Strengthening PTAs and clusters
- Supporting head teachers and education managers via capacity building
- Supporting in-service teacher training
- Building linkages between communities and schools
- Supporting the central government education ministry in data collection and development of guidelines, policies, and standards

**Q8 Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

**CAMBODIA:** Coordinate a framework for education decentralization through working with other donors who are providing assistance in this area and further capacity building.

**CHINA:** Conduct training needs assessments of our education planners at the local level and to build-in surveillance on education data quality.

**FIJI:** Develop systems for information gathering and management.

**INDONESIA:** Coordinate across programs and sectors to facilitate decentralization at provincial and district levels generally and to establish rational, interactive, and compatible planning and management systems.

**LAO PDR:** Support student assessment and school clusters. Assist the central government in developing minimum standards and school readiness criteria).

**MONGOLIA:** Focus on most poor areas and strengthen the capacity of the Regional Development Councils to prepare regional plans.

**PNG:** Capacity building at provincial level on planning and budgeting and for school board members on basic financial management.

**PHILIPPINES:** We need to strengthen the active engagement of children, parents, and the community in education.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** PTA expansion, further PTA training, and assisting in the implementation of the new curriculum.

**THAILAND:** MICS, promoting CFS, promoting linkages between schools and local government, and support for local systems to track out-of-school children.

**VIET NAM:** Support development of evidence-based laws, sub-laws, policies, and strategies reflecting child-friendly concept of quality education and assisting planning and decision-making over the allocation of education resources.

**Common Themes**

- Continuing to capacity build throughout
- Assisting the central government ministry develop guidelines and policies, legal frameworks, and data-gathering mechanisms
- Promoting quality
- Continuing grass roots efforts aimed at community participation, PTA strengthening, and school management strengthening
- Assisting in developing information systems for data gathering and management

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEWS BY QUESTION**

### **Q1: What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

#### **CAMBODIA**

- By late 1990s, aid agencies began to promote decentralization. It was further accelerated following the nation-wide election of the Commune Councils in 2002.
- In Cambodia, this issue is referred to as “decentralization and deconcentration”. Decentralization signifies the devolution of political power from the central government to local governments, and is represented by the move towards greater role to be played by democratically elected Commune Councils. Deconcentration means the devolution of administrative power/ functions from the ministries in Phnom Penh to their provincial departments.
- Political decentralization was initiated in 2001 via the Law on Administration and Management of the Commune/Sangkat (March 2001). The Commune Councils were elected in February 2002 with a 5-year term.
- In parallel, within ministries, there is some incremental administrative deconcentration of functions to lower levels.
- The overall objectives of decentralization and deconcentration are to 1) foster democracy from the grassroots level; and 2) facilitate development based on felt needs of the communities through bottom-up planning process.

#### **CHINA**

- For 5 years, the government has decentralized health and education down to district and county levels. It is fiscal decentralization rather than administrative decentralization.
- In terms of fiscal decentralization, in the 1980s it started decentralization (revenue and expenditure).
- Fiscal decentralization was geared toward providing more efficiency, effectiveness and equity.
- Lower levels of government lacked the funding to – there was a funding gap.

#### **FIJI**

- The decentralization initiative started 6 or 7 years ago. Structural Adjustment Policies and private sector deregulation drove the process.
- People in rural areas want to have their own people in charge and for decisions to be made at their level.
- The government wants to instill ownership at the district level.
- The government is trying to achieve a more equitable funds disbursement.

#### **INDONESIA**

- The country is trying to leave top-down authoritarian rule behind and is trying to improve services to the vast geographical area with very different stages of socio-economic development and cultural groups.
- It is trying to take advantage of a revitalization of local resources, human and financial. It is trying to get local communities more involved in and responsible for planning and development processes and to create greater self-reliance.
- They realize one model cannot fit each and every community.

- They think the central government is best suited to set standards, provide good policy guidance, and to monitor that standards are met in the various provinces and districts.
- In practice the whole decentralization process started in 2001 and 2002.
- There is a lot of legislation including education laws to support decentralization.
- The government realizes Indonesia is so unique because it is vast and there are very different situations from place to place within the country. Only if communities become directly engaged in providing ideas and solutions in addressing local problems and challenges can the MDGs be achieved.

### **LAO PDR**

- There is no national decentralization program per se, but there is an administrative reform program that is aimed at promoting greater efficiency.
- Additionally, there are changes in national financial management but it is not directly linked to administrative reform. Starting around the mid-1990s, the central government decided that to enhance revenue collection, revenue should be collected at the province level. In theory, excess revenue from richer provinces should be sent to the central government for transfer to poorer provinces. In practice, richer provinces ensure a minimum is actually transferred.

### **MONGOLIA**

- The only information on that is the 1997 Mongolian Human Development Report, based on 1996 decentralization law. That report highlights:
  - Greater accountability,
  - Transparency,
  - Better services,
  - Better use of resources, and
  - Responding to an open market system as decentralization objectives.
- Mongolia is a huge country with a very low population density, therefore decentralization makes sense.

### **PNG**

PNG is going through a reform process and it feels through the decentralization process several things are under the microscope:

- Empowerment of people at the provincial and district level so that decisions are made at the community and village level in which they are involved in the planning process.
- The process of service delivery is hampered when it goes through several levels of government and processes. Through these processes there are chances of misuse and service delivery is lacking or nil. The decentralization process will minimize bureaucratic red tape and misuse
- To ensure services reaches the people in a cohesive process.
- People contribute in the planning process and create ownership and feel responsible for the resources allocated to them in the districts.

### **PHILIPPINES**

- The government wants to bring down all the basic services to the lowest level possible to enable better use of limited resources.
- The health sector is already fully devolved to the province level. Education was never devolved and still is not, but is now decentralizing.

### **TIMOR-LESTE**

- There is little going on in terms of decentralization. It is very highly centralized.

### **THAILAND**

- Mainly, development management by local government authority to achieve efficiency, equity, and quality services.
- Thailand is trying to achieve through decentralization processes by increasing the efficiency on services delivery to local people. This could reduce the financial burden of the central government, as well as improve capacity of local personnel to response the needs of local people. The Decentralization Act BE 1999 has played a crucial role in decentralization. This could minimize the roles of central government and increase responsibilities for local administration. The goals of decentralization consist of devolving and allocating public services to local administrations within 10 years starting from 2001-2010. The government has started to increase the share of local revenue relative to total government revenue to 20 percent by the end of 2001 and 35 percent by 2006. Nowadays, the share of local revenue relative to total government is 24 percent. The total planned budget to allocate 35 percent to local administration will be delayed.

### **VIET NAM**

- Viet Nam started “Renovation” period in 1986 but not until 1989 Viet Nam embarked on a policy of economic reform which has brought about considerable social, political and economic changes, and as a result, the process of redefining the roles and responsibilities of provincial authority is ongoing.
- Undergoing those processes, Viet Nam is trying to delegate authority to the sub-national level to develop the decentralized National Programme of Action. The recent Grass root Democratization Decree and Provincial Programme of Action are testimony to the government’s commitment to decentralization.

**Q2: What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

**CAMBODIA**

- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has two five-year plans called Education Strategic Plan and an Education Sector Support Program. The latter is an operational plan to achieve the goals set in the former. They do not really provide a clear rationale for decentralization in the sector; rather the decentralization is mentioned as an objective in itself. The Ministry is seeking to improve the following through decentralization as one of the means:
  - Service delivery;
  - Equitable access to education; and
  - Quality of education.

**CHINA**

- It's major agenda is 9 years of compulsory education.
- Subregional levels now are mandated to raise their own funds to achieve 9 years compulsory education throughout the country.
- Local government allocation and planning is now decentralized at county and province levels.
- Central government has made central allocations but has left the implementation to be implemented in a decentralized manner. Poorest counties are targeted first.

**FIJI**

- We have four divisions with commissioner in charge of each.
- At the district level, there are educational officers and each is being given more autonomy.

**INDONESIA**

- It hopes to bridge the gap between regional differences – socio-economic status, school attendance, and complete 9 years of basic education. It should provide an opportunity to reach EFA goals. It wants to improve school quality and access. There is big disparity between transition of students from primary to junior secondary school as well as enrollment and completion of junior secondary level.
- 2005-9 education program should improve relevance and quality of education including literacy and life skills to make them more self reliant and prepared for continuing life long learning in the modern world.
- Statistics show that under the centralized education planning model, the quality of education was low and actually declining, especially in the poorest parts of the country. There has been a rapid expansion of primary school education access, but this has not been met by a high skill to knowledge ratio. Learning achievements in Indonesia are low even compared to many of its Asian neighbors. It wants to rectify the quality and relevance of education including teacher preparation and accreditation, and school management. The new education law (2003) transferred principal responsibility to district government and important decision-making powers are decentralized to the schools themselves to plan, manage, and deliver minimum education quality in terms of content, process, and outcomes of basic education for all students.
- Under the centralized system, corruption was rampant. A lot of money didn't reach the intended beneficiaries at the school beneficiary level. There was and still is serious under-funding of education services. Another goal of distributing power

and responsibility to district and down to school is that it would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the system as well as being more relevant to local needs, including the ability to experiment and the district level since local innovations potentially can stimulate education improvement.

- The 2003 education law strengthened the involvement of school committees including school planning and financial transparency at the school level. There is much greater opportunity for community oversight now than in the past.
- It also strengthened the hand of the heads of school to manage human and financial resources, including building new facilities and improving existing ones.

### **LAO PDR**

- There is no formal education decentralization. There is de facto deconcentration to the PTA/cluster level because the central government is so weak.
- The central government provides teacher salaries, but no further revenue. PTAs and parents meet all other school costs.

### **MONGOLIA**

- Everything used to be centralized.
- After decentralization, everything went to the local level (finance, licensing, hiring and firing, and administration).
- Central ministry is now focused policy analysis and fulfilling an advisory role.
- The aim is for decision-making to be done at local level, closer to local demand.

### **PNG**

- To increase student enrolment because there is an increase of student population and number of spaces in schools from primary to secondary schools is very limited for those that qualify for the spaces.
- Improve on student retention rates because according to statistics before the reform retention was a great concern. Also we must admit that retention is an issue which the government has to deal with at the moment.
- Provincial Education advisors have been given the administrative powers to take full responsibility of all education services in the provinces. These include teacher deployment, salaries, recruitment. This gave them full powers to make decisions at the provincial level and report to the National department of education. However policy decisions are referred to the National department of education.

### **PHILIPPINES**

- The government wants to bring down all the basic services to the lowest level possible to enable better use of limited resources.
- The government also wants to use the resources of other stakeholders. For example, local government has a special education fund. We want to allow the local school boards to use the special education funds to augment regular funding.
- One challenge in education is to improve student retention. If local stakeholders have greater ownership, they are better able to respond to issues that might keep kids out of school. Therefore, it is helpful if school heads are involved and empowered to deal with this problem.
- It is hoped that if local people are accountable, education quality will improve.

### **TIMOR-LESTE**

- There is no formal education decentralization strategy at the moment.

- The government is trying to implement a policy for school financing that will allow for disbursement to directly primary schools (the practical means for doing this is not yet clear).
- They abolished primary school fees (as well as fees for some secondary schools) at the beginning of the year.
- They are trying to send money to the schools to cover what the schools are not receiving from the parents.
- Some voluntary contributions from the parents used to be used to pay teacher salaries, so when they abolished the fee, teachers weren't paid. The upshot is that frankly this has resulted in a more centralized system because now teachers are being employed by the central ministry itself (whereas they used to be paid through parental contributions).

### **THAILAND**

- To ensure access for all and relevant and improved quality of education.
- Department of Local Administration functions as the key government organization implementing educational decentralization policies and allocating budget to local administration organizations-PAO, municipality, and TAO. There are 3 levels of provision of education under responsibility of local administrations: 1) ECD- already transferred to DLA (TAOs), 2) Primary education, and 3) Informal Education.

### **VIET NAM**

- Viet Nam wants decentralized planning, implementation, management, M&E, and the impact of local level decisions on the overall plan and budget allocation in education.
- "Education Reform" started during late 1970s after the reunification of the country in 1975. The second phase of the Reform started in 2002-2003 school year implementing the new "National unified curriculum" for both primary and lower secondary education.

### **Q3 Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

#### **CAMBODIA**

- As a side-effect, there is better strategic planning through ESP/ESSP process and better resource allocation through the 11 Priority Action Programs (PAP) in the ESP/ESSP. Strategic planning however remains very much driven at the central Ministry with consultation at province/district levels.
- **School level development planning is beginning to be recognized as a way to promote decentralized school improvement, especially with involvement of commune officials and parents.**
- PAP provides the mechanism that ensures money flows from the central treasury through the provinces/district and finally to schools. This allows schools to receive operational budget to fund development plans.
- In 2000 schools started receiving direct support through allocations that were done centrally.
- Beginning 2001, the authority was delegated to provinces/districts to apply the resource allocation formula for school operational budget. That was a positive effect. Schools are encouraged to do school development planning in which they strive for school improvement. They are encouraged to include teachers and community people in that planning effort. The PAP school operational budget supports the implementation of the school development plan.

#### **CHINA**

- The downsizing of human resources is working well. It is stabilizing now.
- The closure of incomplete schools (not run by full-time teachers, only serve grades 1 – 3) and to do a proper school mapping. Not all have closed down, but the rationalizing is working well.
- The government is opening boarding schools in order to provide access to primary schools.
- Central government provides the design for school structures but the construction has been decentralized.

#### **FIJI**

- It is hard to say because there is still a “hangover” of old centralized system.
- Some decentralization is being done according to policy, but because old personalities and politics are in place, decentralization isn’t happening as it could be. Since it is a small country, personalities have the opportunity to playing a large role.

#### **INDONESIA**

- There hasn’t been any serious assessment of the decentralization process since it has really just begun. The groundwork (education law) is sound but we don’t yet know how it will work in reality.
- The national constitution stipulates that 20% of the government’s budget for non-salary expenditure should go to education. However, the actual share of financial resources for education out of total government expenditure only amounts to 8.4% in this fiscal year

#### **LAO PDR: N/A**

### **MONGOLIA**

- School administration, licensing, selecting headmasters, and opening and closing schools.
- Local governor's offices can select headmasters and headmasters can select teachers and do hiring and firing.

### **PNG**

- **The notable achievement is there has been a significant increase in student enrollment.** At the moment there are 1.1 million students enrolled in the national education system.
- Salary issues for teachers have been rectified. Before all the teachers have to come to Port Moresby for any problems concerning salary but now any issue related to salaries are dealt with any the provincial level.
- Improvement in retention rates.
- Planning, implementation, and monitoring of the reform is the responsibility of the Provincial Education Advisors.

### **PHILIPPINES**

- The decentralization **policy environment** has been set up well. This should allow schools to work in partnership with communities.
- The **school-based management model** has been very successful and the ministry is ready to scale it up throughout the country.
- **Resource mobilization** has been successful such that there is now a positive pooling of school resources.

### **TIMOR-LESTE: N/A**

### **THAILAND**

- Educational structure (175 ESAOs and 5 MoE main offices); Teacher professional license; 5-years pre-service teachers training (4 yrs in substance and 1 year intern).
- For primary and secondary education: Municipalities has been supported and managed the primary school, and some of secondary school. Currently, 144 schools are supervised by municipalities.
- For ECD: ECD centers have already been transferred to the TAOs, some TAOs are good at managing centers, creating more suitable learning environments. Budget for milk and lunch are provided for children aged 3-5 years old. Some TAOs have increased caretaker salaries.

### **VIET NAM**

- Staffing and fund raising.

#### Q4 Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?

##### CAMBODIA

- The school operational budget always comes late. That affects the ability to implement the plan efficiently.
- Commune Councils staff responsible for education concerns still lacks capacity to understand education issues and link effectively with education officials. So the linkages between Commune Councils and education official are not yet well-defined and established.
- Schools for the most part are still accountable to the education system. They need to be more accountable to the community and parents.

##### CHINA

- The monitoring and implementation of 9 years compulsory education.
- Free text book scheme.
- Monitoring whether the education is actually free or not – they lack appropriate monitoring systems. UNICEF will help the government develop a monitoring system.
- There is an insignificant, archaic system in place now.

##### FIJI

- There is a **slow pace of change**.
- **Funds disbursement lacks equity** across geographic areas and there is discontent in areas that feel they are neglected.
- There is a **lack of transparency** for financial disbursement figures to various geographical areas. Information is only broken down by the four divisions.
- There are no clear criteria for the disbursement *process*.

##### INDONESIA

- In such a massive decentralization process, it is important that functions assigned from central to lower levels of government are clearly and efficiently defined. They should also be aligned with overall appropriate governance, managerial, and financial structures. The key functions and responsibilities are still vague and confusing, particularly at provincial and district levels of government.
- Financing arrangements still do not conform to functions.

##### LAO PDR

- Financial decentralization results in giving governors power to decide who to pay first and teachers are paid months behind schedule. This has been the case since the mid-1990s.

##### MONGOLIA

- **Financial systems.** Early in the 1990s, decentralization took place (including all social sectors) to the governor level. Governors used money for other local priorities rather than social services. Therefore a new law was passed to ensure that could not happen, but the money needs to be earmarked for distribution in a pro-poor way.
- In many cases PTAs should have better decision making, but this is not carried out in practice.

### **PNG**

- Human resource development and training is a major issue facing education department.
- Elementary teachers are not trained teachers. These teachers have to be trained in the systematic method.
- Since the reform we feel quality has been traded for quantity.
- There is lack of or non existence of basic learning materials in some to the schools in the remote and rural schools in the country.
- The reform triggered the need for more teachers: Education divisions in provinces resorted to recruiting teachers with no proper qualification to teach. That affects quality of education.
- Lack of infrastructure in schools.

### **PHILIPPINES**

- **Change resistance.** There are pockets of resistance to decentralization centrally and regionally.
- Individuals want to retain the power to allocate resources.
- Individuals are finding their new roles (such as monitoring, evaluating, providing technical assistance, and policy setting) are out of their comfort zones.
- The funding for some important aspects of education is being provided by donors, so there is a concern that funding or interest might end. Several initiatives are pilots and are not yet running nation-wide.

### **TIMOR-LESTE: N/A**

### **THAILAND**

- Failure to make teachers understanding of the importance of decentralizing education to local government, thus, **opposition from teachers.**
- Primary Education:
  - Many TAO has limited capacity to fully perform their responsibilities, as well as fragmented management of many TAO, decentralization on education are opposed by teachers. Lack of trust and transparency are considered as the major obstacles for transferring primary education to TAOs.
  - Lack of qualified staff at TAO level.
  - Lack of job security of teachers.
- ECD:
  - Lack of qualified staff. Since ECD centers are now under DLA, many caretakers are concerned their training is limited. In addition, recruiting is under the control of TAO authorities, so the kinship is becoming more powerful than qualification
  - Despite the TAO plan, implementation tends to focus on buildings or construction rather than on teaching quality, improvement of learning standards, or caretaker training. Construction procurement is vulnerable for corruption in the local administrations.

### **VIET NAM**

- Reducing disparity, prohibiting corruption, and improving quality.

**Q 5 Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

**CAMBODIA**

- The country is developing decentralization organic law. While the organic law is not yet in place, each sector is developing its own decentralization approach in a top-down way.
- The Ministry of Education needs to define its decentralization framework and structure. Some donors are currently supporting the ministry through technical assistance to develop this.
- Education Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) was supported by the World Bank in a number of provinces as an effort to improve school quality. This was an experiment in education decentralization that shifted responsibilities for school improvement through interventions at district and cluster levels. The ministry has gained a lot of good experience from this. The project has not managed to go wide-scale because it was implemented outside the ministry structure.
- UNICEF tried to link Commune Councils to the school system and supported the Ministry to experiment with the Commune Council sub-committee for EFA. Given the experience, we found the Commune Councils are not yet capable to do education planning the way the ministry of education was envisioning the process with use of use of education data.

**CHINA**

- **Making central policies and regulations is not enough and does not work unless there are local systems in place and local capacity in place.** In terms of implementation, it has not been understood well at all. People rely on orders from above. Instead of rationalizing available resource (and mobilizing them) there is still a mind set of dependency on the center for development of the sector.
- Cannot push them to mobilize resources without the systems in place. In many ways, we have seen the fiscal decentralization is nice in theory, but it has created an autonomy to determine local priorities and funds are being diverted away from the social sector toward infrastructure development.
- Need local monitoring and surveillance systems.
- Since 1980s, both revenue and expenditure decentralized, but in 1994, China recentralized fiscal revenue to central government, and there was no matching decrease of expenditure responsibility at lower level of governments, especially county and township governments. Expenditure responsibility for education still lies with the county and township governments, so there is a gap to finance education and health. Although the central government uses intergovernmental fiscal transfers to local levels, they are insufficient.

**FIJI**

- 94% of schools are “non-governmental.” Funding is via grants per child, capital grants for running the schools, and subsidies for teacher salaries.
- Schools have to bid annually for governmental funds for capital grants. Any shortfall is funded by are funded by religious organizations, parents, and PTAs.
- Some teachers are civil servants. They tend to be the ones with higher qualifications and experience because the overall number of civil servant teachers is fixed. As one civil servant goes off the government rolls, another can come on.

- Some teachers are not civil servants. Of these, 80% of their salaries are funded by the government, the remainder needs to be raised some other way and sometimes it doesn't come at all.

### **INDONESIA**

- Laws and policies need to be reviewed thoroughly to clarify assignment of structures and functions. Again, these new decentralized functions need to be aligned with appropriate governance and management structures and financing arrangements at all levels of government.
- It is clear how much more needs to be done, but it is remarkable how much has happened within a few years, particularly given the governmental culture.
- The government needs to prioritize health and education much more because currently the overall financial resources are inadequate to create the necessary momentum and conditions for putting in place an effective and effective decentralized education system. However, the degree of commitment of government at all levels to this decentralization process -- for now and in the years to come -- is going to be critically important for the effectiveness and sustainability of the basic education reform particularly in terms of adding value and significantly improving the quality, relevance and outcomes of the basic education process in Indonesia..

### **LAO PDR**

- The financial decentralization without accountability is counter productive.

### **MONGOLIA**

- There is a need to strengthen capacity of staff at school and subnational level in budget planning, monitoring, and implementation.
- The local governors need to be trained and strengthened. As decentralization carries on, lower administrative levels need financial skills training.
- Even though the financial shortfalls at the local level are met by central government, these are not necessarily poverty-sensitive because money could be reallocated into school construction or salaries. Because of this problem, people remain caught in a poverty trap. The grants redistribution at the central government level needs to be earmarked to ensure a pro-poor distribution.

### **PNG**

- There should have been proper planning the reform. The department should have ensured that there are more teachers, enough spaces for children, materials are appropriate for the levels of schools, etc.... Planning should have taken precedence. Now that we are talking about UPE, we want to have a better plan with specific options before we decide to do anything.
- There is a need for education department to fund teacher training because once the reform is complete in the next 3-5 years the need for qualified teachers will be high.

### **PHILIPPINES**

- If the structure is going to change, we need additional resources in the interim to make the change happen. We need funding for capacity building of lower-level education staff, training throughout the ministry for people to perform their new roles, and funding to assist people to change their mindset.

**TIMOR-LESTE: N/A**

**THAILAND**

- It is important to make TEACHERS understand the benefit of transferring to local government. As it is now, teachers are afraid of getting fewer benefits than being with the central administration.
- The local politics is reliant on the personal network or kinship network of local authorities, this is deficient in trust among local people, lack of transparency, and create conflict interests. In addition, national politics has involved (interfered) in local administrations (TAOs) creating political networks (through "hou kha nan") using the local authorities to convince local people to vote for them. Local authorities are not independent from the national politics. This is dangerous for decentralization as a whole. Creating good morals among local authorities is very crucial for Thai society. The role of CSO needs to be stronger in the planning process and in monitoring project implementation.

**VIET NAM**

- Stakeholders are used to vertical mechanism and top-down planning. When their time comes for sectoral/horizontal collaboration and bottom-up planning, they get confused and perplexed in adapting the new mechanism/approach. Orientation, advocacy, capacity building on decentralization, and creating an enabling environment for it to happen are very important.
- Both central and local stakeholders are poorly qualified and unprepared and local absorbing capacity is very low.
- While the central staff possess better technical know-how (due to better exposure) they are unwilling to implement decentralization because they are worried about losing power and money. The local staff is just the opposite; i.e., poor technical know-how but willing to implement decentralization because they have more power and more money. Close follow-up using practical M&E tool of decentralization policy enforcement is a must.

**Q6 Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**

**CAMBODIA:** Not really. We are learning from what did not work.

**CHINA**

- The rate of compulsory education is greatly improved and the general education level has greatly improved as a result of the local government taking responsibility.
- The central government does not interfere in provincial and county decision-making. It does not push the provinces and counties to simply accept their directives. It invites them to make their own decisions.
- The central government encourages provincial government to develop their own policies. It does not insist on its own standards except its national guidelines – it encourages provinces to then establish its own standards.
- Work performance evaluation result for government management teams is one of the factors to determine their future promotion. This is a factor to encourage them to work hard to improve their performance on education work.

**FIJI**

- Because Fiji says it is decentralizing, this has prompted some head teachers and principals to take a more pro-active role in school management and to involve students and communities much more.
- Additionally, some individual teachers have taken a leading role in education innovation and are moving forward with decentralization.
- TANDRA KAHANI is a program promoted by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNAIDS in which schools comes forward with MDG goals articulated via a drama or musical to put forward their dreams for their goals. This program has particularly taken off for rural schools.

**INDONESIA**

- The government has decentralized education to appropriate levels.
- It is too early to come up with concrete best practices.
- The laws and legal framework are good starting points, but there is some concern about the speed of decentralization particularly giving financial responsibilities to lower levels without those individuals having the necessary training and skills on how to deal with those new managerial, technical, and financial responsibilities.
- There hasn't initially been a strong master plan for capacity building of the critically important management systems and human capacities at all levels of government, not least at the district level, where a lot of new functions and responsibilities are now vested.

**LAO PDR:** No

**MONGOLIA**

- There is a lack of empirical evidence on this, so the information is observation biased.
- Best practices include:
  - Local school administration and licensing,
  - Getting good headmasters and teachers locally, and
  - Capacity building of school managers and teachers.

**PNG**

- Creation of elementary system has created ownership by the people in the respective communities.
- Education reform and decentralization was the only means of increasing enrollment substantially.

**PHILIPPINES**

- School based management.
- Developing national competency based teaching standards so that decentralization is supported and education quality is improved. National standards would influence the way teachers will get in-service and pre-service training and the way teachers are hired. Currently, division and local standards are different due to limited local resources.
- Management at the division level is actually quite good at leadership and coordination.
- Student tracking system has been helpful at tracking students and their progress through school and has also benefits in tracking public health initiatives.

**TIMOR-LESTE:** No

**THAILAND**

- External school performance done by the Office for National Educational Standards and Quality Assurances, every five years for every school.
- Primary education: Municipalities have created a specific curriculum to meet the needs of local students such as the sport school in Roi-Et, Chinese language in Nahon Sawan. Besides many municipalities have developed the curriculum with the local universities such as in Lopburi, Nahonsrithammarat.
- Due to the early retirement policy of the government, Phuket PAO has allocated budget for hiring 300 teachers to substitute for teachers who took early retirement. The local administration therefore efficiently provide provided a solution for a problem facing schools.
- ECD: The strong CSO role also put pressure on local authorities to prioritize the ECD issue in major development areas.

**VIET NAM**

- Yes. Frequent mass media advocacy on “Socialization of Education” policy to mobilize unutilized resources and legalization of the establishment of “community learning centres” (currently >6,000).
- Continuing education centre at district and provincial levels (all).
- Diversification of the system to provide basic education through non-public/private schools and distance education system.

**Q7 What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

**CAMBODIA**

- Institutional development and capacity building to support the ministry in decentralizing data collection (EMIS), human resource management systems, and training in budget management systems. UNICEF has supported the training of provinces and districts in the operation and use of these systems.
- Child-Friendly Schools program promotes community participation and this supports decentralization through school level planning that involves schools and Commune Councils and parents.

**CHINA**

- EMIS assists them to support decentralization.
- Building capacity for developing local plans. For instance teaching them how to do a situation assessment. We are therefore working with the department of planning and development within the ministry of education on this.
- UNICEF pioneered (and the government accepts and wants national coverage) PRA as a tool to involve communities in planning activities.
- We are working on quality improvement, NFA for out-of-school adolescents, and implementation at the provincial level.

**FIJI**

- Early Learning Development Standards, a pilot set of standards for child development (0 – 6 years) in the Pacific countries. By implementing country-wide, it encourages national focus on rural areas. This supports decentralization.
- Fiji is not a UNICEF Pacific focus country and thus not much else is done here with regards to education.

**INDONESIA**

- Have started the new 5-year country program cycle that directly addresses important basic education decentralization issues from pre-primary through the primary and junior secondary level.
- Involved in a quality improvement of primary schools in poorer, rural districts. This project, the CLCC, focuses on training of school heads for transparent school-based management; trains members of the school committees (monitoring student attendance and performance as well as transparent management of school resources and school improvement planning), promotes an active and joyful teaching-learning process, and seeks to improve student competencies.
- We aim to institutionalize and mainstream these best education practices at the school level so that districts and provinces can take on, sustain, and develop these functions even further in the future. This will include the training of district and provincial education officers in EFA planning as well as monitoring and supervising services. We are also planning to link this active and joyful CLCC teaching-learning approach with in-service as well as pre-service teacher training schemes within existing teacher training institutions.
- We are also starting a \$17 Million EU-funded project, “Mainstreaming Good/Best Education Practices.” The project will start off by identifying and documenting best practices regardless of the origin of the practice, whether it’s locally initiated and implemented or whether it has been supported by an external

donor or development partner. It is also envisioned that this project initiative will be a catalyst for a mini-SWAP project within the next two to three years in selected provinces in which other donors also have significant involvement in basic education.

- Another project on EFA within our overall Education Program, 2006-2010, will strengthen the central government's ability to set standards and policies as well as streamline and consolidate life skills education including HIV/AIDS.
- The diversity and flexibility of local responses to decentralization will be strengthened by early childhood development building upon local cultures and practices. In this regard, we aim to support parental education on ECD as well as supporting flexible and affordable community-based structured play and early learning activities for poor and disadvantaged children.

### **LAO PDR**

- Given the situation, UNICEF is supporting education through PTA and cluster strengthening via training in management and quality development.
- UNICEF is also assisting the central government develop guidelines for clusters. This supports good management practices and quality improvement.
- UNICEF is gently supporting local language education initiatives but this is a sensitive issue.

### **MONGOLIA**

It is supporting in two levels:

- First, through the Child-Friendly Schools Project where UNICEF is promoting *quality* schools, PTAs, and the inclusion of students and parents in school development plans.
  - UNICEF is using a local level planning and participatory approach through school assessments by parents and students.
  - UNICEF is also ensuring schools are child-friendly and that minimum standards are met (like sanitation).
- Second, through the Convergent Basic Social Services Program
  - This ensures integration of social services at the community level via the community plan. The plans are consolidated at the district level and then at the regional level and finally sent to the central level.
  - This initiative promotes bottom-up approach to social planning and community empowerment.

### **PNG**

- Capacity building at the local and community level. We are training teachers on the concepts of child friendly schools. This makes them become effective classroom teachers.
- Because of the reform some teachers have been given accelerated promotion to be senior teachers and head teachers. We are supporting them by giving them training on basic financial management so that school funds are budgeted, planned, spent and acquitted in a proper manner.
- Another way to target student discipline and abuse in schools, we have supported school based counseling in which teachers are trained to provide basic counseling and guidance.
- Providing basic school supplies and textbooks to schools.
- Water and sanitation in schools.

### **PHILIPPINES**

- Policy development.
- Student tracking system.
- Building capacity at the school management level.
- Creating networks of child-friendly schools.

### **TIMOR-LESTE**

- UNICEF has been a central player in developing PTAs and providing training to PTAs and principals in basic school-based management.
- UNICEF has supported the development of PTAs in about 40% of the schools.
- UNICEF trains PTAs using a grassroots model (this replaces the old top-down PTA approach the country used in the past).
- The training will be an important part of capacity building for future decentralization.

### **THAILAND**

- Clear guidance on budget allocation from MOE/MOI on budget allocation to ensure the minimum standard of education.
- Efficient quality assurance.
- Trust and acceptance of teachers to be under local administration.
- Rewards and punishments, personnel management, and job security of teachers.

### **VIET NAM**

- Support to school-based (bottom-up) planning, management, and M&E through development of modules and organization of capacity building training for principals and education managers at local levels on planning and management skills.
- Support to community involvement and participation in education to promote local ownership through development of modules and organization of capacity building training for members of parent teacher association (PTA) and education councils (EduC) on participation skills.
- Support to child participation and adolescent participation in education through development of modules and organization of in-service training for teachers on multi-grade teaching techniques, integrated lesson planning, life skills, activity-based teaching, and creating an enabling environment for equal child and adolescent participation in order to address children's right to a quality basic education within a child friendly learning environment.
- Support to the development and use of community-based monitoring and progress assessment system (COMPAS) tool.

### **Common Themes**

- EMIS
- Capacity building at the local level
- Using Child-Friendly Schools as a means to promote quality education
- Strengthening PTAs and clusters
- Supporting head teachers and education managers via capacity building
- Supporting in-service teacher training
- Building linkages between communities and schools
- Supporting the central government education ministry in data collection and development of guidelines, policies, and standards.

**Q8 Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

**CAMBODIA**

- To coordinate a framework for education decentralization through working with other donors who are providing assistance in this area.
- Carrying on capacity development (planning, financing, and monitoring).

**CHINA**

- We need a lot of help to conduct training needs assessment of our education planners at the local level. We want a broader consultation to develop a framework for this research.
- Surveillance of management systems is lacking. We need to build-in surveillance on data quality in order to have a greater parity on education data and data quality. It is already part of our support, but we need to develop the surveillance system further.

**FIJI**

- Student Management Information System in schools would help government to identify particular student needs in particular geographical areas.
- UNICEF should support the ministries to a greater extent with information management. In many countries there are lots of different donors with different agendas and only a few governmental personnel on the ground making decisions. Before one project is finished and sustained another project comes along. This creates a lot of pressure on the ministries. Focus groups within each country can help digest all the information since there is little coordination or concern amongst donors for the abilities of the governments to manage their involvement or the information they are providing.
- Using DEVINFO for information-based planning would be an excellent data source for governments throughout the region. It would help governments put all the information they are receiving into a usable format.

**INDONESIA**

- Coordinating within UNICEF *across programs and sectors* so we have an integrated approach for facilitating decentralization at provincial and district levels generally.
- Working with governments at all level to strengthen their establishment of rational, interactive, and compatible planning and management systems including direct engagement with the Ministry of Planning: BAPPENAS.

**LAO PDR**

- UNICEF should add student assessment support in the next country program (2007). This will support the work the World Bank is currently undertaking on this important education quality initiative.
- Through supporting school clusters and the central government, UNICEF is trying to support minimum standards for child-friendly schools.
- UNICEF's support for school-readiness criteria will also aid education quality initiatives.

**MONGOLIA**

- In the future, UN agencies such as UNDP (governance), WHO, and UNICEF have identified geographical focus areas in the most poor areas. There is a division of labor between the UN agencies. One of the goals of this is to strengthen the capacity of the Regional Development Councils to prepare regional plans.
- The current programs will be carried into the future and those will support decentralization.

### **PNG**

There are many areas UNICEF can support in the decentralization process, inter alia,

- Teacher training.
- Support to school sanitation hygiene.
- Capacity building at provincial level on planning and budgeting. Basic financial management for school board members so that they can use school funds effectively.
- Initiatives to promote gender values in schools.
- Support curriculum on HIV/AIDS as this is becoming a real concern for the country.
- Early childhood care and development initiatives to prepare a child at home before entering elementary schools at age 7.
- Advocate for universal primary education at all levels of government.
- Mobilize communities to take initiatives in supporting children's school fees and inform them that these children will be assets in the community when they become lawyers, doctor, engineers, etc.

### **PHILIPPINES**

We need to strengthen the active engagement of children, parents, and the community in education. To accomplish this, we need to partner with NGOs.

### **TIMOR-LESTE**

- PTA expansion and further PTA training.
- Formal teacher training is centralized, but UNICEF is doing workshops via clusters to assist in the implementation of the new curriculum.

### **THAILAND**

- MICS, promoting CFS through Educational Service Area Officer as well as promoting linkages between schools and local government (sub-district administrative government) and support for local systems to track out-of-school children.
- Decentralized budget in education: area based survey/MICS and improving education data

### **VIET NAM**

- Support development of evidence-based laws, sub-laws, policies, and strategies reflecting child-friendly concept of quality education.
- Targeted support to respond to the needs and rights of all children, particularly the most disadvantaged, vulnerable children, and ethnic minority children with focus on girls.
- Support to quality and equity in education.
- Support to mainstreaming gender and child rights.
- Support to making voices of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable children heard in school
- Planning and decision-making over the allocation of education resources.

**Q9 Is there any other information you would like to include?**

**CAMBODIA**

- In Cambodia up to now the health and education sectors have worked on decentralization of certain of their administrative functions, though most decisions in allocation of resources remains centralized. The real engagement of Health and Education in decentralization and deconcentration will start during the next phase of the reform during which the government is intending to establish a unified provincial administration with unified budgets, unified plans, and unified management of human resources.
- In this phase of the reform the government intends to carefully analyze the different functions of certain key sectors including education and determine which level of administration (central, provincial, district, or commune) is better suited to administer these functions and thus be accountable for the performance of these functions. However the allocation of functions to different levels of administration will require that assets, human and financial resources required to perform the function, be allocated to the responsible administration. Therefore it is expected that the process of progressive allocation of functions will require political commitment, a real engagement with the sectoral ministries, and will need to be carefully phased in order not to disrupt services including education.
- One last comment concerns the fact that the next phase of decentralization and deconcentration reform will require substantial parallel progress in fiscal decentralization to ensure different levels of administrations have the resources to provide services to their constituency. The central government will also need a revenue sharing mechanism to avoid poor and remote areas of the country finding themselves without resources

**CHINA:** No

**FIJI**

- Inspectorate largely has been decentralized to district level.
- There are a lot of donor projects, one of which is school assessment which is being piloted across the country.

**INDONESIA**

- The UNICEF education strategy is in tune with education decentralization and the government's aspirations as reflected in their National Basic Education Plan, 2005-2009.
- The government wants to provide universal access to education and decentralization can help meet quality challenges, but delays in clarifying and rationalizing financial and management structures will certainly slow and/or erode the effectiveness of reforms but it is too early to tell to what extent the population at large will embrace and take ownership of the decentralization process and what will be its main results. The journey ahead is undoubtedly long and winding and occasionally with painful setbacks!

**LAO PDR**

- Lao has just approved a measure to provide free sets of textbooks to all school children. This is an important breakthrough for the children of Lao. Nabendra would be well-positioned to discuss this at the May education meeting.

- UNDP has a governance and public administration reform project and is taking the main role in decentralization.

**MONGOLIA:** No

**PNG**

- Teacher's conditions are very poor. This includes salary and other benefits. If teachers are compensated accordingly there will be improvements in enrollment, retention, and most importantly quality. School discipline is a big issue in schools and we feel establishing school based counselors is the way forward.
- Achieving UPE by 2015 is a long shot. The government must come up with clear plans and guidelines to see all children go to school by 2015. If not, this country will be left behind compared to others in the world. UPE (free and compulsory) should be given a higher priority because a lot of children are dropping out of school because of school fees.
- Most of the provinces are under resourced in manpower and logistics. Some of the provincial education offices don't have a vehicle to move around. That contributes to inspectors not visiting schools.
- Monitoring activities established.

**PHILIPPINES**

There is an executive order that is forcing ministries to rationalize across the social sectors. There is a civil service panel that is looking into how the various ministries are being reconstructed.

**TIMOR-LESTE**

People are used to hierarchical system and are not used to making decisions or taking any initiative, so decentralization will be difficult.

**THAILAND**

Promotion of child rights (KAP) per CRC; Promotion of effective EMIS/SMIS and policy formulation based on evidence base.

**VIET NAM:** No

**APPENDIX F: COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY INTERVIEW AND TICK-BOX RESPONSES**

**CAMBODIA**

[\[insert tick-box questionnaire here\]](#)

**Decentralization in Cambodia Interview**

Date: 5 April 2006

Participant: Perseveranda So, Education Officer

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

- By late 1990s, aid agencies began to promote decentralization. It was further accelerated following the nation-wide election of the Commune Councils in 2002.
- In Cambodia, this issue is referred to as “decentralization and deconcentration”. Decentralization signifies the devolution of political power from the central government to local governments, and is represented by the move towards greater role to be played by democratically elected Commune Councils. Deconcentration means the devolution of administrative power/ functions from the ministries in Phnom Penh to their provincial departments.
- Political decentralization was initiated in 2001 via the Law on Administration and Management of the Commune/Sangkat (March 2001). The Commune Councils were elected in February 2002 with a 5-year term.
- In parallel, within ministries, there is some incremental administrative deconcentration of functions to lower levels.
- The overall objectives of decentralization and deconcentration are to 1) foster democracy from the grassroots level; and 2) facilitate development based on felt needs of the communities through bottom-up planning process.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has two five-year plans called Education Strategic Plan and an Education Sector Support Program. The latter is an operational plan to achieve the goals set in the former. They do not really provide a clear rationale for decentralization in the sector; rather the decentralization is mentioned as an objective in itself. Reading between the lines of these two plans, it seems the Ministry is seeking to improve the following through decentralization as one of the means:
  - Service delivery;
  - Equitable access to education; and
  - Quality of education.

**3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

- As a side-effect, there is better strategic planning through ESP/ESSP process and better resource allocation through the 11 Priority Action Programs (PAP) in the ESP/ESSP. Strategic planning however remains very much driven at the central Ministry with consultation at province/district levels. School level development planning is beginning to be recognized as a way to promote decentralized school improvement, especially with involvement of commune officials and parents.
- PAP provides the mechanism that ensures money flowed from the central treasury through the provinces/district and finally to schools. This allowed schools to receive operational budget for the first time to fund the development plans. In

2000 schools started receiving direct support through allocations that were done centrally. Beginning 2001, the authority was delegated to provinces/districts to apply the resource allocation formula for school operational budget. That was a positive effect. Schools are encouraged to do school development planning in which they strive for school improvement. They are encouraged to include teachers and community people in that planning effort. The PAP school operational budget supports the implementation of the school development plan.

**4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**

- The school operational budget always comes late. That affects the ability to implement the plan efficiently.
- Commune Councils staff responsible for education concerns still lacks capacity to understand education issues and link effectively with education officials. So the linkages between Commune Councils and education official are not yet well-defined and established.
- Schools for the most part are still accountable to the education system. They need to be more accountable to the community and parents.

**5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

- The country is developing decentralization organic law. While the organic law is not yet in place, each sector is developing its own decentralization approach in a top-down way.
- The Ministry of Education needs to define its decentralization framework and structure. Some donors are currently supporting the Ministry through technical assistance to develop this.
- Education Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) was supported by the World Bank in a number of provinces as an effort to improve school quality. This was an experiment in education decentralization that shifted responsibilities for school improvement through interventions at district and cluster levels. The ministry has gained a lot of good experience from this. The project has not managed to go wide-scale because it was implemented outside the ministry structure.
- UNICEF tried to link Commune Councils to the school system and supported the Ministry to experiment with the Commune Council sub-committee for EFA. Given the experience, we found the Commune Councils are not yet capable to do education planning the way the ministry of education was envisioning the process with use of use of education data.

**6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?** Not really – learning from what did not work (above).

**7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- Institutional development and capacity building to support the ministry in decentralizing data collection (EMIS), human resource management systems, and training in budget management systems. UNICEF has supported the training of provinces and districts in the operation and use of these systems.
- Child-Friendly Schools program promotes community participation and this supports decentralization through school level planning that involves schools and Commune Councils and parents.

**8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

- To coordinate a framework for education decentralization through working with other donors who are providing assistance in this area.
- Carrying on capacity development (planning, financing, and monitoring).

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

- In Cambodia up to now the health and education sectors have worked on decentralization of certain of their administrative functions, though most decisions in allocation of resources remains centralized. The real engagement of Health and Education in decentralization and deconcentration will start during the next phase of the reform during which the government is intending to establish a unified provincial administration with unified budgets, unified plans, and unified management of human resources.
- In this phase of the reform the government intends to carefully analyze the different functions of certain key sectors including education and determine which level of administration (central, provincial, district, or commune) is better suited to administer these functions and thus be accountable for the performance of these functions. However the allocation of functions to different levels of administration will require that assets, human and financial resources required to perform the function, be allocated to the responsible administration. Therefore it is expected that the process of progressive allocation of functions will require political commitment, a real engagement with the sectoral ministries, and will need to be carefully phased in order not to disrupt services including education.
- One last comment concerns the fact that the next phase of decentralization and deconcentration reform will require substantial parallel progress in fiscal decentralization to ensure different levels of administrations have the resources to provide services to their constituency. The central government will also need a revenue sharing mechanism to avoid poor and remote areas of the country finding themselves without resources

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire? No.**

**CHINA**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**China Interview**

Date: 6 April 2006

Participants:

- Anjana Mangalagiri, Education Officer
- Mei Hong, Consultant

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

- For 5 years, the government has decentralized health and education down to district and county levels. It is fiscal decentralization rather than administrative decentralization.
- In terms of fiscal decentralization, in the 1980s it started decentralization (revenue and expenditure).
- Fiscal decentralization was geared toward providing more efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

- It's major agenda is 9 years of compulsory education.
- Subregional levels now are mandated to raise their own funds to achieve 9 years compulsory education throughout the country.
- Local government allocation and planning is now decentralized at county and province levels.
- Central government has made central allocations but has left the implementation to be implemented in a decentralized manner. Poorest counties are targeted first.

**3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

- The downsizing of human resources is working well. It is stabilizing now.
- The closure of incomplete schools (not run by full-time teachers, only serve grades 1 – 3) and to do a proper school mapping. Not all have closed down, but the rationalizing is working well.
- The government is opening boarding schools in order to provide access to primary schools.
- Central government provides the design for school structures but the construction has been decentralized.

**4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**

- The monitoring of implementation of 9 years compulsory education
- Free text book scheme
- Monitoring whether the education is actually free or not – they lack appropriate monitoring systems. UNICEF will help the government develop a monitoring system.
- There is an insignificant, archaic system in place now.

**5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

- Making central policies and regulations is not enough and does not work unless there are local systems in place and local capacity in place.

- In terms of implementation, it has not been understood well at all. People rely on orders from above. Instead of rationalizing available resource (and mobilizing them) there is still a mind set of dependency on the center for development of the sector.
  - Cannot push them to mobilize resources without the systems in place. In many ways, we have seen the fiscal decentralization is nice in theory, but it has created an autonomy to determine local priorities and funds are being diverted away from the social sector toward infrastructure development.
  - Need local monitoring and surveillance systems.
  - Since 1980s, both revenue and expenditure decentralized, but in 1994, China recentralized fiscal revenue to central government, and there was no matching decrease of expenditure responsibility at lower level of governments, especially county and township governments. Expenditure responsibility for education still lies with the counties and township governments, so there is a gap to finance education and health. Although the central government uses intergovernmental fiscal transfers to local levels, they are insufficient.
- 6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**
- The rate of compulsory education is greatly improved and the general education level has greatly improved as a result of the local government taking responsibility.
  - The central government does not interfere in provincial and county decision-making. It does not push the provinces and counties to simply accept their directives. It invites them to make their own decisions.
  - The central government encourages provincial government to develop their own policies. It does not insist on its own standards except its national guidelines – it encourages provinces to then establish its own standards.
  - Use work performance evaluation to improve education and health for government leadership teams. In China, work performance evaluation result for government management teams is one of the factors to determine their future promotion. This is a factor to encourage them to work hard to improve their performance on education work.
- 7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**
- EMIS assists them to support decentralization.
  - Building capacity for developing local plans. For instance teaching them how to do a situation assessment. We are therefore working with the department of planning and development within the ministry of education on this.
  - UNICEF pioneered (and the government accepts and wants national coverage) PRA as a tool to involve communities in planning activities.
  - We are working on quality improvement, NFA for out-of-school adolescents, and implementation at the provincial level.
- 8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**
- We need a lot of help to conduct training needs assessment of our education planners at the local level. We want a broader consultation to develop a framework for this research.

- Surveillance of management systems is lacking. We need to build-in surveillance on data quality in order to have a greater parity on education data and data quality. It is already part of our support, but we need to develop the surveillance system further.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire?**

**DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK)**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

(no interview)

**FIJI**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Fiji Interview**

Date: 6 April 2006

Participant: Richard Wah, Education Officer

- 1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**
  - The decentralization initiative started 6 or 7 years ago. Structural Adjustment Policies and private sector deregulation drove the process.
  - People in rural areas want to have their own people in charge and for decisions to be made at their level.
  - The government wants to instill ownership at the district level.
  - The government is trying to achieve a more equitable funds disbursement.
  
- 2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**
  - The same as above.
  - We have four divisions with commissioner in charge of each.
  - At the district level, there are educational officers and each is being given more autonomy.
  
- 3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**
  - It is hard to say because there is still a “hangover” of old centralized system.
  - Some decentralization is being done, according to policy, but because old personalities and politics are in place, decentralization isn’t happening as it could be. Since it is a small country, personalities have the opportunity to playing a large role.
  
- 4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**
  - There is a slow pace of change.
  - Funds disbursement lacks equity across geographic areas and there is discontent in areas that feel they are neglected.
  - There is a lack of transparency for financial disbursement figures to various geographical areas. Information is only broken down by the four divisions.
  - It appears that the overall funding level is good, but disbursement is not equitable.
  - There need to be clear criteria for the disbursement *process*.
  
- 5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

There needs to be transparency in the data for numbers of kids in school because:

  - 94% of schools are “non-governmental.” Funding is via grants per child, capital grants for running the schools, and subsidies for teacher salaries.
  - Schools have to bid annually for governmental funds for capital grants. Any shortfall is funded by are funded by religious organizations, parents, and PTAs.
  - Some teachers are civil servants. They tend to be the ones with higher qualifications and experience because the overall number of civil servant teachers is fixed. As one civil servant goes off the government rolls, another can come on.
  - Some teachers are not civil servants. Of these, 80% of their salaries are funded by the government, the remainder needs to be raised some other way and sometimes it doesn’t come at all.

**6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**

- Because Fiji says it is decentralizing, this has promoted some head teachers and principals to take a more pro-active role in school management and to involve students and communities much more.
- Additionally, some individual teachers have taken a leading role in education innovation and are moving forward with decentralization.
- TANDRA KAHANI is a program promoted by UNDP, UNICEF, and UNAIDS in which schools comes forward with MDG goals articulated via a drama or musical to put forward their dreams for their goals. This program has particularly taken off for rural schools.

**7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- Early Learning Development Standards, a pilot set of standards for child development (0 – 6 years) in the Pacific countries. By implementing country-wide, it encourages national focus on rural areas. This supports decentralization.
- Fiji is not a UNICEF Pacific focus country and thus not much else is done here with regards to education.

**8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

- Student Management Information System in schools would help Government to identify particular student needs in particular geographical areas.
- UNICEF should support the ministries to a greater extent with information management. In many countries there are lots of different donors with different agendas and only a few governmental personnel on the ground making decisions. Before one project is finished and sustained another project comes along. This creates a lot of pressure on the ministries. Focus groups within each country can help digest all the information since there is little coordination or concern amongst donors for the abilities of the governments to manage their involvement or the information they are providing.
- Using DEVINFO for information-based planning would be an excellent data source for governments throughout the region. It would help governments put all the information they are receiving into a usable format.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

- Inspectorate largely has been decentralized to district level.
- There are a lot of donor projects, one of which is school assessment which is being piloted across the country.

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire? No.**

**INDONESIA**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Indonesia Interview**

Date: 5 April 2006

Participants:

- Marcoluigi Corsi, Program/Planning Officer
- Erik Bentzen, Education Officer

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

- The country is trying to leave top-down authoritarian rule behind and is trying to improve services to the vast geographical area with very different stages of socio-economic development and cultural groups.
- It is trying to take advantage of a revitalization of local resources, human and financial. It is trying to get local communities more involved in and responsible for planning and development processes and to create greater self-reliance.
- They realize one model cannot fit each and every community.
- They think the central government is best suited to set standards, provide good policy guidance, and to monitor that standards are met in the various provinces and districts.
- In practice the whole decentralization process started in 2001 and 2002.
- There is a lot of legislation including education laws to support decentralization.
- The government realizes Indonesia is so unique because it is vast and there are very different situations from place to place within the country. Only if communities become directly engaged in providing ideas and solutions in addressing local problems and challenges can the MDGs be achieved.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

- It hopes to bridge the gap between regional differences – socio-economic status, school attendance, and complete 9 years of basic education. It should provide an opportunity to reach EFA goals. It wants to improve school quality and access. There is big disparity between transition of students from primary to junior secondary school as well as enrollment and completion of junior secondary level.
- 2005-9 education program should improve relevance and quality of education including literacy and life skills to make them more self reliant and prepared for continuing life long learning in the modern world.
- Statistics show that under the centralized education planning model, the quality of education was low and actually declining, especially in the poorest parts of the country. There has been a rapid expansion of primary school education access, but this has not been met by a high skill to knowledge ratio. Learning achievements in Indonesia are low even compared to many of its Asian neighbors. It wants to rectify the quality and relevance of education including teacher preparation and accreditation, and school management. The new education law (2003) transferred principal responsibility to district government and important decision-making powers are decentralized to the schools themselves to plan, manage, and deliver minimum education quality in terms of content, process and outcomes of basic education for all students.

- Under the centralized system, corruption was rampant. A lot of money didn't reach the intended beneficiaries at the school beneficiary level. There was and still is serious under-funding of education services (see reply to Question 3).
- Another goal of distributing power and responsibility to district and down to school that it would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the system as well as being more relevant to local needs, including the ability to experiment and the district level since local innovations potentially can stimulate education improvement.
- The education law 2003 has strengthened the involvement of school committees including school planning and financial transparency at the school level. There is much greater opportunity for community oversight now than in the past.
- It also strengthened the hand of the heads of school to manage human and financial resources, including building new facilities and improving existing ones.

### **3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

- There hasn't been any serious assessment of the decentralization process since it has really just begun. The groundwork (education law) is sound but we don't yet know how it will work in reality.
- The national constitution stipulates that 20% of the government's budget for non-salary expenditure should go to education. However, the actual share of financial resources for education out of total government expenditure only amounts to 8.4% in this fiscal year.

### **4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**

- In such a massive decentralization process, it is important that functions that are assigned from central to lower levels of government are clearly and efficiently defined. They should also be aligned with overall appropriate governance, managerial, and financial structures. The key functions and responsibilities are still vague and confusing, particularly at provincial and district levels of government.
- Financing arrangements still do not conform to functions.
- Sufficient financial resources have not yet been allocated to systematically train people to perform their new roles and responsibilities. People have limited planning, technical, financial, and human resource capacity, especially at the sub-national levels of government.
- Central ministry also needs to downsize to match their new responsibility levels.
- Central ministry needs to develop management and technical capacities particularly at the district levels in order to strengthen governance and service delivery vis-à-vis local communities and schools and also to develop a list of minimum basic competencies.
- All the ministries need to work more closely together because all are facing the same issues.
- The ministries need new management and operations systems primarily in the areas of data and information systems; budgeting and expenditure tracking; and performance monitoring.
- Financial resources available from central level of government to district levels of government need to be substantially increased. There is only a small portion of the budget for non-salary expenditures, hamstringing efforts to improve quality.
- The central level government ought to expand education allocations though the Block grant transfer mechanism and should develop and disclose a multi-year plan

for financial, technical and management assistance to local governments and worked out in consultation with them. It's very important that this support to local governments is adequate as well as timely.

- Primary schools are not yet the center of a strategy that is performance based. Therefore schools need to apply minimum quality standards of service in order to do this. Basic student competencies need to be developed through a more child-centered activity-based teaching-learning process including continuous assessment of student achievements.
- The financial resources at school level will make schools more responsive to incentives. Therefore if they innovate, they ought to be able to tap into proposal-based block grants. However, it's also important to target special assistance to schools that have difficulties meeting minimum quality standards in poor and disadvantaged areas. In line with this, the central level government ought to adopt pro-poor basic education programs in order to raise motivation and stimulate demand in line with the goals of the national and sub-national Education Plans, 2005-2009.

### **5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

- Laws and policies need to be reviewed thoroughly to clarify assignment of structures and functions. Again, these new decentralized functions need to be aligned with appropriate governance and management structures and financing arrangements at all levels of government.
- It is clear how much more needs to be done, but it is remarkable how much has happened within a few years, particularly given the governmental culture.
- The government needs to prioritize health and education much more because currently the overall financial resources are inadequate to create the necessary momentum and conditions for putting in place an effective and effective decentralized education system.
- The degree of commitment of government at all levels to this decentralization process -- for now and in the years to come -- is going to be critically important for the effectiveness and sustainability of the basic education reform particularly in terms of adding value and significantly improving the quality, relevance and outcomes of the basic education process in Indonesia.

### **6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**

- The government has decentralized education to appropriate levels.
- It is too early to come up with concrete best practices.
- The laws and legal framework are good starting points, but there is some concern about the speed of decentralization particularly giving financial responsibilities to lower levels without those individuals having the necessary training and skills on how to deal with those new managerial, technical and financial responsibilities.
- There hasn't initially been a strong master plan for capacity building of the critically important management systems and human capacities at all levels of government, not least at the district level, where a lot of new functions and responsibilities are now vested.

### **7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- Have started the new 5-year country program cycle that directly addresses important basic education decentralization issues at the pre-primary through the primary and junior secondary level.
- Involved in a quality improvement of primary schools in poorer, rural districts. This project, the CLCC, focuses on training of school heads for transparent school-based management; training members of the school committees (monitoring student attendance and performance as well as transparent management of school resources and school improvement planning) and an active and joyful teaching-learning process and improving student competencies within the classrooms.
- We aim to institutionalize and mainstream these best education practices at the school level so that districts and provinces can take on, sustain, and develop these functions even further in the future. This will include the training of district and provincial education officers in EFA planning as well as monitoring and supervision of the services. We are also planning to link this active and joyful CLCC teaching-learning approach with in-service as well as pre-service teacher training schemes within existing teacher training institutions.
- We are also starting a \$17 million EU-funded project, “Mainstreaming Good/ Best Education Practices”. The project will start off by identifying and documenting best practices regardless of the origin of the practice, whether it’s locally initiated and implemented or whether it has been supported by an external donor or development partner. It is also envisioned that this project initiative will be a catalyst for a mini-SWAP project within the next two to three years in selected provinces in which other donors also have significant involvement in basic education.
- Another project on EFA within our overall Education Program, 2006-2010, will strengthen the central governments ability to set standards and policies as well as streamline and consolidate life skills education including HIV/AIDS.
- The diversity and flexibility of local responses to decentralization will be strengthened by early childhood development building upon local cultures and practices. In this regard, we aim to support parental education on ECD as well as supporting flexible and affordable community-based structured play and early learning activities for poor and disadvantaged children.

**Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

- Coordinating within UNICEF *across programs and sectors* so we have an integrated approach for facilitating decentralization at provincial and district levels generally.
- Working with governments at all level to strengthen their establishment of rationale interactive and compatible, planning and management systems including direct engagement with the Ministry of Planning: BAPPENAS.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

- The UNICEF education strategy is in tune with education decentralization and the government’s aspirations as reflected in their National Basic Education Plan, 2005-2009.
- The government wants to provide universal access to education and decentralization can help meet quality challenges, but delays in clarifying and rationalizing financial and management structures will certainly slow and/or erode

the effectiveness of reforms but it is too early to tell to what extent the population at large will embrace and take ownership of the decentralization process and what will be its main results.

- The journey ahead is undoubtedly long and winding and occasionally with painful setbacks!

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire?**

Note that with respect to question 25, there are regular supervisory visits to some schools on an annual basis, but they are not systematic and they don't cover all schools particularly those that are remote or difficult to reach.

**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LAO PDR)**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Lao Interview**

Date: 6 April 2006

Participants:

- Desiree Jongsma, Program Officer
- Nabendra Dahal, Education Officer

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

- There is no national decentralization program per se, but there is an administrative reform program that is aimed at promoting greater efficiency.
- Additionally, there are changes in national financial management but it is not directly linked to administrative reform. Starting around the mid-1990s, the central government decided that to enhance revenue collection, revenue should be collected at the province level. In theory, excess revenue from richer provinces should be sent to the central government for transfer to poorer provinces. In practice, richer provinces ensure a minimum is actually transferred.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

- There is no formal education decentralization. There is de facto deconcentration to the PTA/cluster level because the central government is so weak.
- The central government provides teacher salaries, but no further revenue. PTAs and parents meet all other school costs.

**3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well? N/A**

**4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**

Financial decentralization results in giving governors power to decide who to pay first and teachers are paid months behind schedule. This has been the case since the mid-1990s.

**5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

The financial decentralization without accountability is counter productive.

**6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they? NO**

**7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- Given the situation, UNICEF is supporting education through PTA and cluster strengthening via training in management and quality development.
- UNICEF is also assisting the central government develop guidelines for clusters. This supports good management practices and quality improvement.
- UNICEF is gently supporting local language education initiatives but this is a sensitive issue.

**8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

- UNICEF should add student assessment support in the next country program (2007). This will support the work the World Bank is currently undertaking on this important education quality initiative.
- Through supporting school clusters and the central government, UNICEF is trying to support minimum standards for child-friendly schools.
- UNICEF's support for school-readiness criteria will also aid education quality initiatives.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

- Lao has just approved a measure to provide free sets of textbooks to all school children. This is an important breakthrough for the children of Lao. Nabendra would be well-positioned to discuss this at the May education meeting.
- UNDP has a governance and public administration reform project and is taking the main role in decentralization.

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire? No**

**MALAYSIA**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

(No interview)

**MONGOLIA**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Mongolia Interview**

Date: 4 April 2006

Participants:

- Yameen Mazumder, Program Officer
- Uranchimeg Bidragchaa, Education Officer

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

- The only information on that is the 1997 Mongolian Human Development Report, based on 1996 decentralization law. That report highlights:
  - Greater accountability,
  - Transparency,
  - Better services,
  - Better use of resources, and
  - Responding to an open market system as decentralization objectives.
- Mongolia is a huge country with a very low population density, therefore decentralization makes sense.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

- Everything used to be centralized.
- After decentralization, everything went to the local level (finance, licensing, hiring and firing, and administration).
- Central ministry is now focused policy analysis and fulfilling an advisory role.
- The aim is for decision-making to be done at local level, closer to local demand.

**3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

- School administration, licensing, selecting headmasters, and opening and closing schools.
- Local governor's offices can select headmasters and headmasters can select teachers and do hiring and firing.

**4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**

- Financial systems. Early in the 1990s, decentralization took place (including all social sectors) to the governor level. Governors used money for other local priorities rather than social services. Therefore a new law was passed to ensure that could not happen, but the money needs to be earmarked for distribution in a pro-poor way (see also the next question).
- In many cases PTAs should be involved in decision making, but this is not carried out in practice.

**5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

- There is a need to strengthen capacity of staff at school and subnational level in budget planning, monitoring, and implementation.
- The local governors need to be trained and strengthened. As decentralization carries on, lower administrative levels need financial skills training.
- Even though the financial shortfalls at the local level are met by central government, these are not necessarily poverty-sensitive because money could be reallocated into school construction or salaries. Because of this problem, people

remain caught in a poverty trap. The grants redistribution at the central government level needs to be earmarked to ensure a pro-poor distribution.

**6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**

- There is a lack of empirical evidence on this, so the information is observation based.
- Best practices include:
  - Local school administration and licensing,
  - Getting good headmasters and teachers locally, and
  - Capacity building of school managers and teachers.

**7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- It is supporting in two levels:
- First, through the Child-Friendly Schools Project where UNICEF is promoting *quality* schools, PTAs, and the inclusion of students and parents in school development plans.
  - UNICEF is using a local level planning and participatory approach through school assessments by parents and students.
  - UNICEF is also ensuring schools are child-friendly and that minimum standards are met (like sanitation).
- Second, through the Convergent Basic Social Services Program
  - This ensures integration of social services at the community level via the community plan. The plans are consolidated at the district level and then at the regional level and finally sent to the central level.
  - This initiative promotes bottom-up approach to social planning and community empowerment.

**8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

- In the future, UN agencies such as UNDP (governance), WHO, and UNICEF have identified geographical focus areas in the most poor areas. There is a division of labor between the UN agencies. One of the goals of this is to strengthen the capacity of the Regional Development Councils to prepare regional plans.
- The current programs will be carried into the future and those will support decentralization.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include? No.**

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire?**

Change the answer to question 30 to “yes.”

**MYANMAR**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

(No interview)

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Papua New Guinea Interview**

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

PNG is going through a reform process and it feels through the decentralization process several things are under the microscope:

- Empowerment of people at the provincial and district level so that decisions are made at the community and village level in which they are involved in the planning process.
- The process of service delivery is hampered when it goes through several levels of government and processes. Through these processes there are chances of misuse and service delivery is lacking or nil. The decentralization process will minimize bureaucratic red tape and misuse.
- To ensure services reaches the people in a cohesive process.
- People contribute in the planning process and create ownership and feel responsible for the resources allocated to them in the districts.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

In line with the Government reform system, National department of education has gone through the education reform which began in 1992. The Education reform has several aims and objectives:

- To increase student enrolment because there is an increase of student population and number of spaces in schools from primary to secondary schools is very limited for those that qualify for the spaces.
- Improve on student retention rates because according to statistics before the reform retention was a great concern. Also we must admit that retention is an issue which the government has to deal with at the moment.
- Provincial Education advisors have been given the administrative powers to take full responsibility of all education services in the provinces. These include teacher deployment, salaries, recruitment. This gave them full powers to make decisions at the provincial level and report to the National department of education. However policy decisions are referred to the National department of education.

**3. Aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

Some aspects are working others are not working as planned. Those working well are:

- The notable achievement is there has been a significant increase in student enrollment. At the moment there are 1.1 million students enrolled in the national education system.
- Salary issues for teachers have been rectified. Before all the teachers have to come to Port Moresby for any problems concerning salary but now any issue related to salaries are dealt with any the provincial level
- Improvement in retention rates.
- Planning, implementation and monitoring of the reform is the responsibility of the Provincial Education Advisors.
- Human resource development and training is a major issue facing education department.
- Elementary teachers are not trained teachers. These teachers have to be trained in the systematic method

- 4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**
  - Since the reform we feel quality has been traded for quantity.
  - There is lack of or non existence of basic learning materials in some to the schools in the remote and rural schools in the country.
  - The reform triggered the need for more teachers: education divisions in provinces resorted to recruiting teachers with no proper qualification to teach. That affects quality of education.
  - Lack of infrastructure in schools.
  
- 5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**
  - There should have been proper planning the reform. The Department should have ensured that there are more teachers, enough spaces for children, materials are appropriate for the levels of schools, etc.. Planning should have taken precedence. Now that we are talking about UPE, we want to have a better plan with specific options before we decide to do anything.
  - There is a need for education department to fund teacher training because once the reform is complete in the next 3-5 years the need for qualified teachers will be high.
  
- 6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**
  - Creation of elementary system has created ownership by the people in the respective communities.
  - Education reform and decentralization was the only means of increasing enrollment substantially.
  
- 7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**
  - Capacity building at the local and community level. We are training teachers on the concepts of child friendly schools. This makes them become effective classroom teachers.
  - Because of the reform some teachers have been given accelerated promotion to be senior teachers and head teachers. We are supporting them by giving them training on basic financial management so that school funds are budgeted, planned, spent and acquitted in a proper manner.
  - Another way to target student discipline and abuse in schools, we have supported school based counseling in which teachers are trained to provide basic counseling and guidance.
  - Providing basic school supplies and textbooks to schools.
  - Water and sanitation in schools.
  
- 8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

There are many areas UNICEF can support in the decentralization process, inter alia,

  - Teacher training.
  - Support to school sanitation hygiene.
  - Capacity building at provincial level on planning and budgeting. Basic financial management for School board members so that they can use school funds effectively.

- Initiatives to promote gender values in schools.
- Support curriculum on HIV/AIDS as this is becoming a real concern for the country.
- Early Childhood Care and Development initiatives to prepare a child at home before entering elementary schools at age 7.
- Advocate for Universal primary education at all levels of government
- Mobilize communities to take initiatives in supporting children's school fees and inform them that these children will be assets in the community when they become lawyers, doctor, engineers, etc.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

- Teacher's conditions are very poor. This includes salary and other benefits. If teachers are compensated accordingly their will be improvements in enrollment, retention, and most importantly quality. School discipline is a big issue in schools and we feel establishing school based counselors is the way forward.
- Achieving UPE by 2015 is a long shot. The government must come up with clear plans and guidelines to see all children go to school by 2015. If not, this country will be left behind compared to others in the world. UPE (free and compulsory) should be given a higher priority because a lot of children are dropping out of school because of school fees.
- Most of the provinces are under resourced in manpower and logistics. Some of the provincial education offices don't have a vehicle to move around. That contributes to inspectors not visiting schools.
- Monitoring activities established.

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire?** Nil for the moment

**PHILIPPINES**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Philippines Interview**

Date: 6 April 2006

Participants:

- Colin Davis, Senior Program Officer
- Maria Lourdes de Vera, Education Officer
- Jesus LR Mateo, Director, Department of Education

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

- The government wants to bring down all the basic services to the lowest level possible to enable better use of limited resources.
- The health sector is already fully devolved to the province level. Education was never devolved and still is not, but is now decentralizing.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

- The government wants to bring down all the basic services to the lowest level possible to enable better use of limited resources.
- The government also wants to use the resources of other stakeholders. For example, local government has a special education fund. We want to allow the local school boards to use the special education funds to augment regular funding.
- One challenge in education is to improve student retention. If local stakeholders have greater ownership, they are better able to respond to issues that might keep kids out of school. Therefore, it is helpful if school heads are involved and empowered to deal with this problem.
- It is hoped that if local people are accountable, education quality will improve.

**3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**

- The decentralization policy environment has been set up well. This should allow schools to work in partnership with communities.
- The school-based management model has been very successful and the ministry is ready to scale it up throughout the country.
- Resource mobilization has been successful such that there is now a positive pooling of school resources.

**4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well?**

- Change resistance. There are pockets of resistance to decentralization centrally and regionally.
  - Individuals want to retain the power to allocate resources.
  - Individuals are finding their new roles (such as monitoring, evaluating, providing technical assistance, and policy setting) are out of their comfort zones.
- The funding for some important aspects of education is being provided by donors, so there is a concern that funding or interest might end. Several initiatives are pilots and are not yet running nation-wide.

**5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**

- If the structure is going to change, we need additional resources in the interim to make the change happen. We need funding for capacity building of lower-level education staff, training throughout the ministry for people to perform their new roles, and funding to assist people to change their mindset.

**6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**

- School based management
- Developing national competency based teaching standards so that decentralization is supported and education quality is improved. National standards would influence the way teachers will get in-service and pre-service training and the way teachers are hired. Currently, division and local standards are different due to limited local resources.
- Management at the division level is actually quite good at leadership and coordination.
- Student tracking system has been helpful at tracking students and their progress through school and has also benefits in tracking public health initiatives.

**7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- Policy development
- Student tracking system
- Building capacity at the school management level
- Creating networks of child-friendly schools

**8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

We need to strengthen the active engagement of children, parents, and the community in education. To accomplish this, we need to partner with NGOs.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

There is an executive order that is forcing ministries to rationalize across the social sectors. There is a civil service panel that is looking into how the various ministries are being reconstructed.

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire?**

Levels are defined as follows:

- Central
- Regional – conglomeration of divisional levels.
- Division – parallel to a province or a city.
- School.

**THAILAND**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Thailand Interview**

1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?
  - Mainly, development management by local government authority to achieve efficiency, equity and quality services.
  - The Decentralization Act of 1999 has played a crucial role in decentralization.
  - This could minimize the roles of central government and increase responsibilities for local administration. The goals of decentralization consist of devolving and allocating public services to local administrations within 10 years starting from 2001-2010. The government has started to increase the share of local revenue relative to total government revenue to 20 percent by the end of 2001 and 35 percent by 2006. Nowadays, the share of local revenue relative to total government is 24 percent. The total planned budget to allocate 35 percent to local administration will be delayed.
  
2. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization of education?
  - To ensure access for all and relevant and improved quality of education.
  - Department of Local Administration functions as the key government organization working for implementing educational decentralization policies and allocating budget to local administration organizations PAO, municipality, and TAO.
  - There are 3 levels of provision of education under responsibility of local administration:
    - 1) ECD- already transferred to DLA (TAOs)
    - 2) Primary education
    - 3) Informal Education
  
3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?
  - Educational structure (175 ESAOs and 5 MoE main offices)
  - Teacher professional license
  - 5-years of pre-service teachers training (4 yrs in substance and 1 year in turn).
  - Some TAOs have shown good management capability by creating suitable learning environments.
  - Budget for milk and lunch are provided for children aged between 3-5 years old.
  - Some TAOs have increased the salaries of caretakers.
  
4. Which aspects of decentralization in education are not working well?
  - Fail to make teachers understanding of the importance of decentralizing education to local government, thus, opposition from teachers.
  - Primary Education: limited TAO capacity to perform their responsibilities.
  - Lack of trust and transparency are the major obstacles for transferring primary education to TAOs.
  - ECD: Lack of qualified staff since staff have limited training and non-transparent hiring is more prevalent due to kinship network.
  - Education implementation tends to focus on infrastructure development rather than quality development despite what the TAO plan has indicated. Real

implementation still focuses on buildings or construction such as renovating the child development center rather than emphasizing teaching quality, improving learning standards, or caretaker training.

- Moreover, budget is spent for procurement of construction materials is vulnerable for corruption in the local administrations.
5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?
    - It is important to make TEACHERS understand the benefit of transferring to local government. As it is now, teachers are afraid of getting less benefit than being with the central administration.
    - The local politics is reliant on the personal network or kinship network of local authorities. This creates distrust among local people, a lack of transparency, and conflicts of interest.
    - National politics interferes in local administrations (TAOs, creating political networks (through "hou kha nan") using the local authorities to convince local people to vote for them. Local authorities are not independent from the national politics which is dangerous for decentralization as a whole.
    - Creating good morals among local authorities is crucial for Thai society.
    - The role of CSO needs to be stronger, including involvement in the planning process and monitoring project implementation.
  6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?
    - External school performance done by the Office for National Educational Standards and Quality Assurances every five years for every school.
    - Primary education: municipalities have created specific curriculum to meet the needs of local students such as the sport school in Roi-Et and Chinese language in Nahon Sawan. Many municipalities have developed the curriculum with the local universities such as in Lopburi and Nahonsrithammarat.
    - A good practice also comes from Phuket PAO. Due to the government's early retirement policy, Phuket PAO has allocated budget for hiring 300 teachers to substitute the early teachers that took early retirement. The local administrations therefore efficiently provided an intervention for a problem facing schools.
    - ECD: the strong role of CSO put pressure for local authorities to prioritize ECD as the major development issue in areas of TAO such as in Wiangchai district in Chaing Rai.
  7. What are the main risks of the education decentralization process?
    - Acceptance of decentralization by teachers needs to be well addressed.
    - Clear guidance on budget allocation from MOE/MOI on budget allocation to ensure the minimum standard of education
    - Efficient quality assurance
    - Rewards and punishments, personnel management, and job security of teachers.
  8. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting decentralization of education?
    - MICS
    - Promoting CFS through Educational Service Area Officer

## Decentralization and Primary Education

- Promoting linkages between schools and local government (sub-district administrative government), support for local systems for tracking out-of-school children.
  - Decentralized budget in education
9. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?
- Promoting child rights (KAP) per CRC
  - Promoting effective EMIS/SMIS and policy formulation based on evidence base.
10. Is there any other information you would like to have included?

**TIMOR-LESTE**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Timor-Leste Interview**

Date: 6 April 2006

Participants:

- Peter Ninnes, Education Officer

**1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**

- There is little going on in terms of decentralization. It is very highly centralized.

**2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**

- There is no formal education decentralization strategy at the moment.
- The government is trying to implement a policy for school financing that will allow for disbursement to directly primary schools (the practical means for doing this is not yet clear).
- They abolished primary school fees (as well as fees for some secondary schools) at the beginning of the year.
- They are trying to send money to the schools to cover what the schools are not receiving from the parents.
- Some voluntary contributions from the parents used to be used to pay teacher salaries, so when they abolished the fee, teachers weren't paid. The upshot is that frankly this has resulted in a more centralized system because now teachers are being employed by the central ministry itself (whereas they used to be paid through parental contributions).

**3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well? N/A**

**4. Which aspects of education decentralization are not working well? N/A**

**5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?  
N/A**

**6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they? No**

**7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- UNICEF has been a central player in developing PTAs and providing training to PTAs and principals in basic school-based management.
- UNICEF has supported the development of PTAs in about 40% of the schools.
- UNICEF trains PTAs using a grassroots model (this replaces the old top-down PTA approach the country used in the past).
- The training will be an important part of capacity building for future decentralization.

**8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

- PTA expansion and further PTA training.

- Formal teacher training is centralized, but UNICEF is doing workshops via clusters to assist in the implementation of the new curriculum.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

- People are used to hierarchical system and are not used to making decisions or taking any initiative, so decentralization will be difficult.

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire? No**

**VIETNAM**

[insert tick-box questionnaire here]

**Vietnam Interview**

- 1. What is the country trying to achieve through decentralization processes?**
  - Viet Nam started “Renovation” period in 1986 but not until 1989 Viet Nam embarked on a policy of economic reform which has brought about considerable social, political and economic changes, and as a result, the process of redefining the roles and responsibilities of provincial authority is ongoing.
  - Undergoing those processes, Viet Nam is trying to delegate authority to the sub-national level to develop the decentralized National Programme of Action. The recent Grass root Democratization Decree and Provincial Programme of Action are testimony to the government’s commitment to decentralization.
  
- 2. What is the country trying to achieve through education decentralization?**
  - Viet Nam wants decentralized planning, implementation, management, M&E and the impact of local level decisions on the overall plan and budget allocation in education.
  - “Education Reform” started during late 1970s after the reunification of the country in 1975. The second phase of the Reform started in 2002-2003 school year implementing the new “National unified curriculum” for both primary and lower secondary education.
  
- 3. Which aspects of the decentralization in education are working well?**
  - Staffing and fund raising.
  
- 4. Which aspects of education decentralization are NOT working well?**
  - Reducing disparity, prohibiting corruption, and improving quality.
  
- 5. Given what the country has experienced, what are the lessons learned so far?**
  - Stakeholders get used to vertical mechanism and top-down planning. When their time comes for sectoral/horizontal collaboration and bottom-up planning, they get confused and perplexed in adapting the new mechanism/approach. Orientation, advocacy, capacity building on decentralization, and creating an enabling environment for it to happen are very important.
  - Both central and local stakeholders are poorly qualified and unprepared and local absorbing capacity is very low.
  - While the central staff possess better technical know-how (due to better exposure) they are unwilling to implement decentralization because they are worried about losing power and money. The local staff is just the opposite; i.e., poor technical know-how but willing to implement decentralization because they have more power and more money. Close follow-up using practical M&E tool of decentralization policy enforcement is a must.
  
- 6. Are there any best practices the country is using in its decentralization of education? If so, what are they?**
  - Yes. Frequent mass media advocacy on “Socialization of Education” policy to mobilize unutilized resources and legalization of the establishment of “community learning centre” (currently >6,000).

- Continuing education centre at district and provincial levels (all).
- Diversification of the system to provide basic education through non-public/private schools and distance education system.

**7. What are the key areas in which UNICEF is supporting education decentralization?**

- Support to school-based (bottom-up) planning, management, and M&E through development of modules and organization of capacity building training for principals and education managers at local levels on planning and management skills.
- Support to community involvement and participation in education to promote local ownership through development of modules and organization of capacity building training for members of parent teacher association (PTA) and education councils (EduC) on participation skills.
- Support to child participation and adolescent participation in education through development of modules and organization of in-service training for teachers on multi-grade teaching techniques, integrated lesson planning, life skills, activity-based teaching...and creating enabling environment for equal child participation and adolescent participation in order to address children's right to a quality basic education within a child friendly learning environment.
- Support to the development and use of community-based monitoring and progress assessment system (COMPAS) tool.

**8. Are there any additional areas in which UNICEF should support decentralization of education in the future?**

- Support development of evidence-based laws, sub-laws, policies, and strategies reflecting child-friendly concept of quality education.
- Targeted support to respond to the needs and rights of all children, particularly the most disadvantaged, vulnerable children and ethnic minority children with focus on girls.
- Support to quality and equity in education.
- Support to mainstreaming gender and child rights.
- Support to making voices of the most disadvantaged, vulnerable children heard in school planning and decision-making over the allocation of education resources.

**9. Is there any other information you would like to include?**

- UNICEF's new Provincial Child Friendly Programme (PCFP) will provide a great opportunity to build capacity around decentralization and to influence local Socio-Economic Development Plans.

**10. Do you have any questions related to the check-box questionnaire? No.**