

Thus, school planning has succeeded in mobilizing community resources, activating the School Management Committees and increasing the role of women in the schools. These three results are highly significant because they have focused the community on the primary school and its activities. The school plan has given communities and school officials a means to work together to improve primary education, and to involve the community in its improvement.

#### Weaknesses:

- Plans are over ambitious: In the first year or two that the school made plans, the plans they made were overly ambitious to be accomplished in one year. The survey mentioned several ways to cope with this problem. The mothers, when asked about this, suggested that the unfinished elements from a year's plan should be carried over into the next year's plan. Other people asked suggested that there be more follow-up meetings devoted to the plan so that the group that made the plan can watch its progress closely during the year and make adjustments as needed. It was also felt that future years' planning will make more realistic plans because the planners will know what can reasonably be accomplished in one year. All in all, it seems that the making of overly ambitious plans is a function of learning how to do yearly plans. When a group has several years of planning experience, then they will be better able to make a plan in which most of the elements can be accomplished in one year.
- The planning meeting invitation is given to a narrow audience: It was felt that because the school plan draws so heavily on community resources, and, in light of previous school planning experience, the community wants to contribute, a broader audience should be invited to participate in the school planning activity.
- Health-related issues and cultural activities receive low priority in the plan activities: Many teachers and SMC members felt that the school plans should incorporate more health-related activities and cultural activities.
- The school-community link is still weak in certain areas: Though school mapping and planning have been instrumental in establishing a school-community link, more can be done to strengthen this link. Teachers, especially, would like to see a stronger school-community link: guardian and community support is vital to them in their endeavors to successfully educate children. Besides teachers, other people surveyed stressed the need to get more fathers involved with the schools. If more fathers were involved, as mothers have become involved, students would enroll in and attend school more non IDEAL.

#### Other Suggestions as Determined by the Survey Data

1. The survey discovered much about why children do not enroll in and attend school non IDEAL. The reasons listed by different groups surveyed give relevant information for tackling these problems. When teachers, SMC members, mothers and students were asked why students were not enrolled, one of the first four reasons they all gave was "lack of parent consciousness about the importance of education." This suggests that if

parents can be made aware of the value of education, that is learning to read, write and do math, they would be more likely to enroll their children in school. The practical value of a primary education needs to be stressed, perhaps through a communication campaign.

Similarly, when teachers and SMC members were asked why students do not attend school non IDEAL, the first reason they gave was that students must work at household tasks, tasks within the house/bari. This reason was distinguished from “income-generating work,” (when students work outside the home to bring in income) which teachers and SMC members did not feel was a significant reason for students not attending school non IDEAL. It seems, then, that if parents can have children do household tasks at times when school is not in session, more children will be able to attend school non IDEAL. This may not be possible for all seasons of the year, but if a communication campaign can address those seasons and household work where different scheduling of them is possible (guardians can be shown that chores can be done at a time that does not conflict with school hours), this will help in allowing more children to attend school non IDEAL.

2. The survey also discovered that students’ main reason for not enrolling in school was because they did not feel that the school program was attractive. This is very significant for IDEAL project work, which has as one of its goals to make learning more interesting and relevant for students. IDEAL teacher training, using MWTL methodology, helps teachers make the curriculum relevant to students’ lives and helps teachers make their classrooms interesting and fun places to be. Though more teacher training and follow-up training is needed, this response from students strongly shows that IDEAL has diagnosed correctly one of the problems with primary education and is striving to correct this problem.
3. The suggestion was made that the school maps can be used for learning purposes and that classroom, as well as school, maps should be made. These are both excellent ideas that should be capitalized on as the project expands. First, the students can be brought to the school map so that they can see where their houses are on it and learn map-reading skills from it. Second, classes can make their own class maps, based on the school map, instead of having a group of adults make the class maps. Through making class maps, students will learn how to make maps as well as learn where they live in relation to one another. Other geographical and mathematical concepts can be taught from the maps.
4. A final suggestion is that a system is needed for local contributions to be committed in private and, after they are fulfilled, recorded in public. In a number of instances, commitments were made at public meetings and, for one reason or another, they were not fulfilled. It would be better if people could be given time to think about their commitments before having to declare them in public and/or if they could make their commitments in a private way. However, recognition of commitments fulfilled should be done in public. This will not only thank the donors for their contributions to the school, but it will also encourage others to contribute in cash or in kind.

## CHAPTER IV

### FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF IDEAL PROJECT

The *Formative Evaluation of Implementation Process of IDEAL Project* was conducted during November and December of 1999. The evaluation examined the management of the project, the implementation and monitoring of activities, the roles played by different actors at different levels of responsibility and identified gaps which affect quality assurance in implementation. The evaluation consisted of a review of project documents/reports, questionnaires of UEOs, AUEOs, teachers and SMC members, in-depth interviews with relevant Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), National Curriculum and TextBook Board and UNICEF officials, and 15 Focus Group Discussions with SMC members, teachers and AUEOs (5 each). The evaluation covered 204 schools (3 from each of 68 sample unions), 610 teachers (3 from each sample school), 424 SMC members ((at least 2 from each sample school) 89 AUEOs (2-3 from each sample thana) and 34 UEOs (one from each sample thana).

IDEAL uses a non-project approach, and works with government structures and staff. Data for this evaluation were collected through a review of project documentation and reports and through questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with those responsible for the implementation and management of the project. These included people from UNICEF, the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and the National Curriculum and TextBook Board (NCTB). Field staff as well as central level staff took part in the evaluation.

#### **General Background Information**

Before examining the evaluation's findings that relate specifically to implementation management, planning, and supervision and monitoring, the evaluation made pertinent findings related to the characteristics of those working in education and of the schools.

#### Working Conditions:

The working conditions of education personnel need much improvement. From the central level to the school level, facilities for communication and transportation are not sufficient. Many delays in project implementation are the result of inadequate communication facilities. In addition, it is felt by many staff that the TA/DA allowed under the project are not sufficient for education personnel to visit schools as often as needed.

#### School Conditions:

Teachers and AUEOs both feel that schools are cleaner since the inception of IDEAL. AUEOs also feel that schools, have better toilet and water facilities, have more gardens and have more co-curricular and sporting events than they had before the inception of IDEAL. Both teachers and AUEOs think that schools affairs have not been held non IDEAL, as they should be, and that there are not enough toilet facilities for girls. Less than half of the schools visited for this

evaluation had separate toilet facilities for girls. This is a major problem, as it has implications for girls' enrollment and attendance.

### School/Community Involvement:

Teachers and AUEOs feel that communities are much more involved in the schools than they were in the past. School Management Committees are meeting non IDEAL and contributing in different ways to improve the performance of schools. However, only about 10-15% of SMC members are women.

### **Project Management for Implementation**

#### General Characteristics:

- Motivation: Staff involved with IDEAL, both Government and UNICEF, are motivated about the project and its activities. 64% of UNICEF staff working on IDEAL are highly motivated and 61% of DPE and NCTB staff are moderately motivated.
- DPE project management requirements: DPE has several different education projects that it is managing simultaneously. Each of these projects has different management requirements and the lack of project management uniformity has led to confusion. This results in delays in implementation.
- Obtaining approval: Approval for project activities is slow because approvals must follow the vertical chain of command at PMED and DPE. The slow approval process also results in delays in implementation.

#### **Adequacy in Number of Project Staff:**

At the central level, staffing for IDEAL is adequate in the Monitoring Division and in the divisional offices. However, staffing for IDEAL is inadequate in the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and in the Training Division. The PIU has only seven staff dedicated to IDEAL and this is not sufficient for a countrywide 199.5 crore taka project. IDEAL is an innovative, experimental and highly complex project and more PIU staff are needed for its management. Also, the study reported that throughout the DPE, staff feel that IDEAL has increased their workload.

At the thana and school levels, there are many vacant posts. These need to be filled by central administration. The implementation of the project as well as the state of primary education are suffering greatly due to vacant posts. In many geographical areas there simply are not enough AUEOs, Head Teachers and teachers.

The evaluation also found that the number of staff at UNICEF are adequate in finance, in supply and "moderately adequate" in education. With inadequacies in the number of project staff in a

number of government offices, schools staffing patterns need to be examined before the project expands again.

### **Adequacy in Staff Authority and Responsibility:**

Project activities were conceived with the idea of decentralization of authority in mind; however, project activities have gone forward, but the decentralization of authority has not. Though funds are sent to the district level, and this is highly significant, authority needed for quality assurance in monitoring has not been decentralized. District management of bank accounts, stock registers and cashbooks has been very successful: 92% of stock registers are non IDEAL maintained; 89% of cashbooks are non IDEAL maintained; and 83% of bank accounts are jointly operated at school level.

70% of UEOs feel that their level of responsibility and authority is adequate. At all other levels, education staff feel that their delegated responsibility and authority are inadequate and those are 57% of DPE central administration; 43% of divisional administration; and 57% of AUEOs. At the central and divisional levels, the lack of an appropriate level of responsibility and authority has led to delays in receiving information, unclear instructions, delays in filling vacant posts and delays in meeting out disciplinary action. AUEOs feel that their responsibilities have greatly increased because of IDEAL activities, but their authority has not. For example, they are now closely monitoring teacher attendance; however, if disciplinary action against a teacher is necessary, the only disciplinary action they can take is to stop one day of the teacher's salary. For most teachers, this is no deterrent at all. Thus, AUEOs do not have an appropriate level of authority for the responsibility they have been given. This has serious implications for the quality of education. More decentralization and more devolution of authority are needed in order to correctly monitor project activities and the quality of primary education.

### **Coordination among DPE, NCTB and UNICEF:**

The supply of project items has been extremely good. 78% teachers reported increased non IDEAL of logistic supply to schools. 98% of schools received the lesson plan set; 93% of schools received the catchment area mapping guide; and 78% of schools received the school planning guide and the multiple intelligences poster set.

There have been coordination and communication problems in receiving instructions for the implementation of project activities. Instructions have been delayed and sometimes they have not been clear. Staff interviewed for this evaluation felt that more frequent coordination meetings are needed. These should not be long meetings, but short, efficient meetings in order to make decisions, clarify instructions and discuss timetables. Also, better communication facilities (fax, e-mail, etc.) among DPE, NCTB and UNICEF would help in the clear and timely dissemination of instructions.

### **Other Management and Implementation Challenges:**

The following problem areas in implementation and management occurred at all levels (central, divisional, district, thana and school):

- Funding: there have been problems with the timely release of funds to school and Thana.
- Social Mobilization and Communication Activities: more social mobilization and communication activities about education are needed in order to increase social sensitivity and awareness towards education. This will then increase the community involvement in the schools and the communities will contribute more with local resource to the schools.

## **Monitoring and Supervision**

### **Trainings:**

Staff who have received training, AUEOs and teachers, all felt that the training they have received is very relevant to their work and they are using what they have learned in the trainings. The AUEOs interviewed felt that all their trainings have been extremely useful and the Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning was the most useful training they have received. They felt that School Management, School Planning and School Catchment area Mapping were also useful trainings.

Teachers also feel that the training they have received has been useful. Teachers are using MWTL in their classes and are writing lesson plans that incorporate a variety of learning activities. Teachers are using individual work, group work, lectures, and lessons through pictures, songs and recitations. Though some central, division and district administrators had reservations about MWTL methodology, thinking that some aspects of it are not compatible with the social culture. However, field level staff, UEOs, AUEOs and teachers, all feel that it is a very useful methodology and teachers are currently using it in their classrooms.

### **Classroom seating arrangements:**

The evaluation found that very few classrooms have been rearranged to have seating arrangements more appropriate to interactive teaching and learning. Fewer than one classroom in each school visited had been rearranged. Even though interactive teaching and learning can take place in classrooms where furniture is arranged in traditional rows, in such classrooms it is much more difficult for teachers to facilitate different learning activities at the same time.

### **Central Level Activities:**

Central level staff at DPE, NCTB and UNICEF feel that their monitoring and supervision activities have increased. Specifically, they are making more field visits, organizing more review meetings, writing more progress reports, maintaining more records, delivering more supplies and materials and giving more counseling and guidance than they did in the past. As stated earlier, more authority is needed with these increased supervisory responsibilities so that the results obtained from monitoring can make a difference.

### **Field Level Activities:**

UEOs and AUEOs feel that their monitoring and supervision activities have increased. Also, in some areas, because of vacant posts, they are being asked to look after more schools than is their normal number. When the number of schools they look after increases, the quality of the monitoring they are able to do decreases. UEOs and AUEOs feel that they are now making more school visits, organizing more monthly review meetings, reviewing more school progress reports and school records, monitoring teacher and student attendance more closely, delivering more supplies and checking the accountability of head teachers and SMC members more thoroughly.

Along with UEOs and AUEOs, Head Teachers, Assistant Teachers and SMC members are all more involved in monitoring and supervision activities. Teachers feel more committed to their jobs and they are motivating more parents and students to enroll in and attend school non IDEAL. Teachers also feel that their teaching skills have increased. SMCs are more involved in school management and supervision, and are more active in mobilizing local resources for primary education. Through these activities, they are more committed to their work on the SMC.

It is important to note, however, that all the monitoring and supervisory activities carried out by UEOs and AUEOs are administrative in nature. They do little or no supervisory or monitoring activities to assess the quality of education in the classrooms.

## CHAPTER V

### ISSUES FOR EXAMINATION AND CONSIDERATION

#### 1. Improving the Quality of Primary Education:

Though the quality of teaching and learning has improved much in the classrooms using Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning, teachers have identified several different areas in which they feel they need more training. These include:

- Classroom management for group work
- Incorporating multiple intelligences into lesson plans
- Low cost teaching aids

In addition to more training, more needs to be done so that teachers can access technical assistance for their classroom lessons. The supervisory and monitoring work that is being carried out by Head Teachers, AUEOs and other education personnel is mostly administrative in nature. From *Formative Evaluation of Implementation Process of IDEAL Project*, it appears that UEOs and AUEOs are not giving content-related technical assistance to teachers who may be struggling to implement a new methodology (MWTL) in their classrooms. Since some of the UEOs and AUEOs do not have a background in education, it may be that they are not able to do this; or, because of their increased responsibilities, they may not have time to do this. Whatever the reason, the availability of technical assistance for teachers needs to be addressed. It may be that Head Teachers can be called upon to do this. During focus group discussions with AUEOs, it was noted that Head Teachers are doing mostly administrative work. They have not been involved in academic work: “Head teachers act more as managers rather than grassroots educators.” Head Teachers, because they are or have been teachers themselves, have the technical expertise to work as academic supervisors. It may be that they are extremely underutilized in this role and their role as academic supervisors should be expanded.

Other ways of providing teachers with technical assistance also need to be explored. AUEOs are extremely busy and in some geographical regions in short supply. Teachers also should have more than one means of obtaining technical assistance. If they only have one means of technical assistance and are not able to access that means, the quality of classroom learning and teaching will suffer.

Finally, it seems that very few classrooms have been reorganized into spaces that accommodate interactive classroom learning and teaching. As there is no cost attached to reorganizing the seats of a classroom into a more interactive arrangement, it is difficult to understand why this has not been consistently carried out. Studies have shown that interactive learning is more effective with young learners. If MWTL is going to be furthered in classroom learning and teaching, teachers need to work in classrooms that can easily accommodate interactive classroom teaching and learning.

It also should be noted that the formative evaluations completed to date did not measure student achievement. The recent *Assessment of the Achievement of Pupils Completing Grade 4 of Primary Education* measured student achievement in five areas: Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Bangla and English. The schools in which this information was gathered were not IDEAL schools. A similar assessment should be carried out on IDEAL schools at some point in the future to see if IDEAL is having an impact on student achievement.

## **2. Encouraging More Community Involvement in Primary Education**

Though all the evaluations show that community involvement has improved dramatically, there was little to none to begin with, so there is still room for more community involvement. Each evaluation found that more community involvement would be beneficial to teachers, education officials and students. Community members can be involved in improving school facilities, in giving their knowledge to classroom learning and teaching, and in their support for enrollment and non IDEAL attendance.

In order to get the community more involved, social-mobilization activities are needed. Community members and guardians need to know the importance of primary education: its ability to equip children with basic literacy and numeracy skills. A *Baseline Study on Meena Communicative Initiative* shows that Meena is well known to children and parents as a rural school-going girl. However, children and parents mainly remember Meena's messages about health and sanitation. Meena has been used to stress the importance of girls' education and can be used for other education messages in the future. She has great popular appeal and has a proven track record of getting messages to community members.

In addition to increased community involvement in education, social mobilization activities can also target the reasons why parents do not enroll in or encourage their children to attend school. The interesting results of the *Local Level Participation in the Management of Primary Schools in Bangladesh* can be used to create relevant and timely social mobilization messages.

## **3. Management Issues:**

In all evaluations, inadequacies in management, supervision and monitoring are noted. The problems can be summarized as follows:

- Insufficient technical assistance to implementers at the classroom and school/community level
- An inadequate number of project staff at PIU and Training Division levels
- At certain management levels, especially the AUEO level, the level of authority is not commensurate with the level of responsibility
- A lack of coordination and smooth, clear communication among personnel
- Inadequate understanding that IDEAL interventions are designed to become part of the natural fabric of primary education and they are not simply additional duties that will be discontinued in the future
- Insufficient monitoring the quality of the teaching and learning in classrooms.

- A lack of understanding that monitoring does not always result in punitive action, but its purpose is to improve the quality of education and community involvement in it.

Though these issues will not be completely solved in the coming years, the evaluations completed provide data-based, researched areas to adjust so that IDEAL interventions can be further refined and expanded to more children. Educational development takes time and investment of personnel and materials. According to Diana Ravitch, a historian of American education, “In the crusade against ignorance, there have been no easy victories, but no lasting defeats.”

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