SOCIAL AND GENDER DISPARITY IN EDUCATION
SECTOR-WIDE AND PROGRAMME-BASED APPROACHES

Outcomes of the Regional Meeting for UNICEF South Asia
20–21 February 2006, Kathmandu, Nepal
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South Asia has over 40 million primary school-age children out of school, about 60 per cent of whom are girls. Children from low castes and particular ethnic and language groups form other groups of the hard-to-reach, and girls from these groups face a double disadvantage.

In addition, services in several South Asian countries are frequently disrupted by conflicts and natural disasters, all of which affect participation in education as a long term process, and compete in the national budget with the delivery of social services.

There is therefore an urgent need to ensure that the delivery of education and social services by governments is as effective as possible, and that the services reach those who, because of poverty, caste or gender, are suffering multiple discrimination.

To try to address this need, several countries in South Asia are engaged in the process of developing more broad-based programme approaches in the education sector, including Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAps), often beginning with the primary and basic education subsector.

Evidence to date, however, suggests that SWAps do not have a strong emphasis on poverty reduction, or on social inclusion. SWAps often involve cost-recovery processes and the effects of these on women and children in poorer households are often not considered.

To put these concerns under more scrutiny and look for improvements, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia organized the Social and Gender Disparity in SWAps Regional Meeting for UNICEF South Asia held on 20–21 February 2006 in Kathmandu, focusing on the Education sector. This report is the outcome of the meeting.

The meeting set out to examine the effects of SWAps and PBAs not just from within the goals of the MDGs, but also from a human rights point of view. It is clear that while there is much debate on the structure of SWAps and PBAs, there is much less on whether the impacts of the programmes are really reaching the people we want to reach – particularly hard-to-reach children.

The meeting was therefore a forum for sharing practical experiences and tools from the field, for the benefit of UNICEF’s own programmes but also for global debate. We hope that the outputs from this forum will lead to even better strategies and the attainment of the right to education by more of the region’s marginalized children.

Cecilia Lotse
Regional Director
UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
The meeting was organized by Susan Durston, Regional Education Adviser, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, with support from colleagues in ROSA, particularly Nancy Spence, Consultant, and Pushpa Chhetri, Programme Assistant.

Nancy Spence and John Evans compiled this report. The contribution of all participants, including presenters and discussants, and their agencies (highlighted in the report) is warmly appreciated.
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>BEDS</td>
<td>Basic Education Development Strategy (Yemen)</td>
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<td>BESSIP</td>
<td>Basic Education Sub-Sector Programme (Zambia)</td>
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<td>BPEP II</td>
<td>Basic and Primary Education Programme Phase II (Nepal)</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>CLC</td>
<td>Community Learning Centre</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee (OECD)</td>
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<td>DEO</td>
<td>District Education Office</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK)</td>
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<td>DPEP</td>
<td>District Primary Education Programme 1990–2006 (India)</td>
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<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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<td>ESDFP</td>
<td>Education Sector Development Framework and Programme (Sri Lanka)</td>
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<td>ESIP</td>
<td>Education Strategic Investment Programme (Uganda)</td>
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<td>ESP</td>
<td>Education Sector Plan 2003–15 (Ghana)</td>
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<td>ESSP</td>
<td>Education Sector Strategic Plan (Rwanda)</td>
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<td>ESSP</td>
<td>Education Sector Support Programme</td>
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<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<td>GFP</td>
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<td>HQ</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>MDTF</td>
<td>Multi-Donor Trust Fund</td>
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<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mid-Term Review</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>Net Enrolment Ratio</td>
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<td>ODI</td>
<td>Overseas Development Institute</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PBA</td>
<td>Programme-Based Approach</td>
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<td>PEDC</td>
<td>Primary Education For Disadvantaged Children (Vietnam)</td>
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<td>PEDP</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent–Teacher Association</td>
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<td>RBM</td>
<td>Results-Based Management</td>
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<td>SA</td>
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<td>SIP</td>
<td>Sector Investment Programme</td>
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<td>SSA</td>
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<td>SWAp</td>
<td>Sector-Wide Approach</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
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<td>TBS</td>
<td>Targeted Budget Support</td>
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<td>TC</td>
<td>Technical Cooperation</td>
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<td>UNEGIE</td>
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<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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## SUMMARY

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<th>The Essential Question for the Meeting</th>
<th>How can UNICEF uniquely contribute to the issues of gender and social exclusion in the context of SWAps and PBAs?</th>
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| Why SWAps?                            | • Governments have greater ownership  
• More cost effective and efficient  
• Potential for better coordination amongst partners  
• All parties subscribe to one plan |
| The Evidence for SWAps                | • SWAps and PBAs have strong potential for addressing social and gender inequality  
• Some significant increases in enrolment and decreases in gender gap have been observed  
• National policy frameworks potentially provide the ideal context for mainstreaming commitments to the promotion of gender equality and girls’ education  
• There is enhanced trust between government and poor communities due to strengthened transparency |
| Policy Issues and Issues of Concern Regarding SWAps | • Key preconditions for success are government commitment to sector policy change and to ownership of the agreed sector policy framework  
• Donor coordination is essential to ensure that individual donors’ strategies do not conflict and that all key areas within the sector receive adequate support  
• The task of identifying the impact of contributions from an individual donor within a SWAp is almost impossible  
• The potential benefits of sector-wide approaches are certainly greater than benefits accruing from conventional project-based support but the associated risks are often greater  
• Reliance on high levels of institutional capacity and commitment involves strengthening existing capacity at a number of levels |
The forces against harmonization and alignment are often more powerful in fragile states:
  - the range and number of instruments and actors (aid and non-aid) are greater than in ‘normal’ situations
  - some of the instruments used in fragile states have been found to mitigate against coordination by their nature (project-level aid and humanitarian aid especially)
  - there can be a lack of strong, legitimate government leadership

But so are the arguments for it:
  - absorptive capacity is low, and is made worse by unharmonized and unpredictable aid; it is even easier to overwhelm a fragile state government than in other circumstances
  - political pressure for reform from donor governments requires high levels of coordination to avoid recipients playing governments off against each other
  - as many people are closer to the edge of survival, the costs of failure are higher
  - the arguments about transaction costs apply equally to relations between donors and UN/non-state actors as to between donors and recipient governments

**Social inclusion:** There are two major barriers – access and quality

**Working children and remote communities:**
  - The challenge is to monitor these and to provide adequate financial resources

**Minorities and ethnic groups:**
  - There is need for proper recognition and independent mechanisms to ensure community involvement

**Caste and religion:**
  - No child should be excluded on the grounds of location, caste, ethnicity, gender or abilities to acquire relevant knowledge, learning skills and complete their education

**Children with disabilities:**
  - There are large gaps in understanding of the needs of such children by both teachers and the wider educational system

**Gender as a special priority:**
  - Quality and availability of data which are globally comparable and standardized remain as challenges

**Equity in Access and Quality:**
  - SWApS often do not address the voices of the excluded
  - To date, the focus has been more on gender parity than on equality
**UNICEF Role and Comparative Advantages**

**Current engagement in SWAps:**
- Gender mainstreaming and a focus on girls
- Integration of cross-sectoral perspectives
- Expanding stakeholder participation and collaboration in planning
- Inclusion of disadvantaged or underserved populations in sector plans
- Piloting of models for scaling up through sector plans
- Capacity building – particularly at decentralized level for planning, implementation, and monitoring

**Comparative advantages:**
- Risk analysis
- Monitoring conditionalities for impact on children
- Providing evidence-based research and documentation
- Operation at decentralized level
- Capacity building
- Human rights-based organization
- Results oriented approach
- Technical link – the ‘missing middle’

**Challenges:**
- Capacity building for UNICEF staff
- Clear guidance and support on administrative procedures and options in new financing modalities
- Consolidation of the evidence base on successful initiatives at the local level
- Strengthened partnerships and enhanced synergies
- Development of strategies to ensure that key concerns for intersectorality are maintained and enhanced through sector-wide approaches
- Vigilance and continued capacity to ensure that a focus on long-term planning and systems approaches does not crowd out essential targeted measures for disparity reduction

**Where Do We Go From Here?**

**UN reform and SWAps – defining UNICEF’s position:**
- UN reform and harmonization must allow for flexible participation of UN agencies in SWAps and PBAs
- UNICEF should have a clear strategy for involvement in PBAs and SWAps
- Highlight UNICEF’s strengths, for example the capacity to fill the ‘missing middle’ and the ability to operate flexibly to ‘fill the gaps’ not covered by broader programmes
There is a growing body of knowledge on who is excluded from education systems and even why, but much less on how they can be included, particularly in large sector programmes. Work will be needed on what will bring children into the system, how to retain them, how the system is monitored, and what educational transactions within it will afford a discrimination-free and successful outcome for these children.

**Evidence bases at regional level:**
- Regional study to review how issues of social inclusion are being addressed in education SWAps
- Regional policy workshop to address inclusion through SWAps
- Utilize regional study at country level to improve planning as well as monitoring

**Country level – general:**
- Hold country level workshops examining country-specific issues
- Circulate and discuss more with government and country level partners
- Encourage donor partners to evaluate their own procedures
- In countries where SWAps have still not started, begin the groundwork
- Bring in government at the very start of the SWAp process.
- Bring in the voice of stakeholders in SWAp reviews
- Support improvement of indicators and monitoring
- Use TA to ensure that nothing is lost in transitions
- Use pilots strategically for policy development
- Carry out more in-depth case studies
- Mainstream best practice

**Country level – within UNICEF:**
- Maximize UNICEF’s strengths for the benefit of the sector rather than for projects
- Ensure that UNICEF staff are technically informed at the policy level, and have a mix in their teams relevant to the context
- Split sector coordination roles and UNICEF programming
- Ensure necessary capacity building of UNICEF staff
This Regional Meeting for UNICEF South Asia on Social and Gender Disparity in Education SWAps and PBAs set out to examine the degree to which gender and social disparity has been adequately captured in SWAps or Programme-Based Approaches, and to discuss how UNICEF can play a role in promoting this.

The crux of the discussion was to situate gender and social exclusion in SWAps and PBAs against the broader backdrop of the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness. As part of the discussions, the meeting needed to come to some agreement about the following:

- **System coherence**: UNICEF needs to follow a coherent policy both within and without the UN partnership and other donor agencies.
- **MDGs**: UNICEF must identify how to progress towards the achievement of the MDGs’ education indicators, and ponder how these can deepen the quality of our progress towards the MDGs’ results.
- **Results-based management**: UNICEF needs a clear understanding on what we mean by this and how to maximize the resources and move forward.
- **Human rights-based approach**: It is important to take this approach to programming, or the issues of gender and social inclusion will not be addressed.
- **Partnerships**: How UNICEF can move with this, especially on better linkages between government sectors and public and private sectors.
- **Capacity building**: Building capacity at all levels including governmental and non-governmental entities will change the realities on the ground.

The meeting was originally planned as an internal meeting to discuss how UNICEF will situate itself within the modalities of SWAps and Programme-Based Approaches (PBAs). However, it was quickly realized that there were benefits to be gained from including a small number of partners from other agencies as resource persons and participants so that broader discussions on SWAps and PBAs could ensue. For completeness, particularly as regards the role of UNICEF, this report also includes inputs from the following day, 22 February, which was given over specifically to an internal discussion of UNICEF positioning in SWAps.

The essential question for the meeting was to determine how UNICEF can uniquely contribute to the issues of gender and social exclusion and how it can do so in the context of SWAps and PBAs.

The traditional method of reporting on each session in a linear fashion has not been followed here. Rather, the report has been structured around the main issues that arose during the course of the meeting, with reference to the many and varied inputs as they relate to those issues. It is hoped that this method of reporting will help to clarify the issues, and provide participants with a more useful tool for taking them forward during programme discussion and implementation at country level. The meeting programme and list of participants is included as Annex A.
Poverty reduction has become a major focus of the international development debate in the last few years. Poverty reduction strategies are now the basis for World Bank and IMF concessional lending and many countries are in the process of developing or have developed PRSPs. A consequence of this is that for many donors now the preferred forms of development assistance in the social sectors, and also in the productive sectors such as agriculture and forestry, are Sector-Wide and Programme-Based Approaches (SWAps and PBAs). These approaches typically support a single policy and expenditure programme, often as a mechanism to implement the PRSP process. The trend towards sector approaches was also strengthened on the basis that projects alone were not having the desired impact as a sustainable approach to reaching all beneficiaries.

Emphasis to date in many SWAps and PBAs has been on developing funding mechanisms and modalities, coordination mechanisms, monitoring systems and indicator development at the macro-level. Less emphasis has been put on developing effective strategies for equity outcomes in the sector. Without this, though, marginalized groups lose both some of the benefits previously gained from project assistance, as well as potential future benefits of a sound and inclusive sector approach.

Based on UNDP, World Bank, IMF and OECD estimates (2000), South Asia has 46 million primary school-age children out of school, about 60 per cent of whom are girls. Children from low castes and particular ethnic and language groups form other groups of the hard-to-reach, and girls from these groups face a double disadvantage. Services in several South Asian countries are frequently disrupted by conflicts and natural disasters, such as the tsunami, all of which affect participation in education as a long term process, and compete in the national budget with the delivery of social services.

At the same time, several countries in South Asia are engaged in the process of developing more broad-based programme approaches in the education sector, often beginning with the primary and basic education subsector. This move would seem to derive from two current development philosophies: government ownership and simplification of procedures. Around the world there exists a wide range of funding modalities, each with variations in planning and implementation capacity. However, there is as yet little concrete evidence from the field to suggest that the new modalities are even moderately successful in addressing the needs of girls and marginalized children, or being adequately responsive to external events such as natural disasters and conflicts.

Scattered evidence to date suggests that SWAps are not particularly strong in poverty-reduction emphasis, or social inclusion. SWAps often involve cost-recovery processes and the effects of these on women and children in poorer households are often not considered.

Experience of participation in the planning process varies around the region. In global terms, in low income, highly aid dependent countries civil society groups may be poorly represented in national policy discussions.

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1 More recent calculations by ROSA estimate that in the period 1999–2001, there were 40 million children out of school of whom 60 per cent (24 million) were girls.
and thus have a limited voice in the centralized planning often undertaken for SWAps.

Examining SWAps from the point of view of overcoming social exclusion would entail asking whether the simplification of procedures actually frees up resources, and whether they are allocated to activities which benefit the education of marginalized children. It would also entail asking questions around conditionalities, decision-making, and models of inclusion.

References
3.1 The New Aid Environment

Paulette Nichols (Senior Programme Officer, Strategic Planning and Programme Guidance, Division of Policy and Planning, NYHQ) introduced the theme of the New Aid Environment.

There have been a number of milestone meetings held in the last couple of years to create the new aid environment, starting in 2002 with the Monterrey Consensus. The most recent and significant one was the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in February 2005, where the Paris Declaration was adopted.
was signed by governments and donors agreeing on a harmonized manner of aid. Two aid modalities designed to support implementation of the aid harmonization emerged from these milestone meetings:

1. **SWAps** – characterized by basket or pooling funds to particular sectors; and
2. **Budget Support** – general or direct support to government development budgets.

A consensus is emerging on these new aid modalities, as shown below:

### A New Aid consensus

- MDG-based national development plans as framework for cooperation
- Strong national ownership, grounded in strengthened capacity
- Increasing use of budget support as one option
- Use of national systems (procurement, audit, reporting etc.)
- Greater predictability of aid flows
- Mutual accountability
- Performance-based/results-oriented

SWAps can mobilize greater attention on the issues of content and improve orientation of policies that:

- ensure a pro-poor focus;
- embed a rights-based approach in sector development;
- accelerate progress regarding access and quality of service delivery;
- track disparities; and
- address the gap between MDG targets and the current situation.

Two particular advantages of SWAps can be highlighted:

- Governments are in charge of leadership and hence have greater ownership of the process.
- There is a perceived reduction in the sector costs resulting in more cost effectiveness and efficiency.

In the few countries where donors are providing general budget support, typically the contribution is less than 50 per cent of the total bilateral aid. Maintaining a mix of old and new modalities is both a consequence of a transition between modalities and a form of risk mitigation.

### 3.2 What are SWAps, PBAs, …?

A UNDP definition of a SWAp was quoted by Gabriele Köhler as:

‘Programmatic approach for a sector or cross-cutting thematic field, supporting achievement of a coherent set of nationally determined goals.’

SWAps have conceptually, operationally and politically evolved through a number of meetings and benchmark events which focused on Human and Social Development, Poverty Reduction and the commitments of the MDGs. In parallel with the aid effectiveness debate of bilateral donors, within the UN there has been a strong drive from projects to programmes and to a results-based approach.

The purpose of SWAps is to increase government responsibility and ownership as well as reduce transaction costs and
promote efficiency. Conditionality is discouraged, though on occasion it is used as a part of good governance so that governments have to enhance social inclusion.

Amanda Seel, in her presentation and in her accompanying paper prepared for the meeting (since revised and published by UNICEF/UNGEI as an Issues Paper; see References at the end of this chapter), devoted a substantial effort to clarifying the concept and evolution of SWAps. She emphasizes that a SWAp is an approach and a process, rather than a specific product following a rigid ideal. Sometimes the looser term ‘Programme-Based Approach’ is now preferred, to describe coordinated programmes which support a coherent, costed policy framework and plan for the education sector (or basic education subsector), but do not follow the full SWAp model as originally conceived.

The original impetus for this development came from a growing disillusionment with project approaches. Harrold (World Bank, 1995), in his definitive paper on ‘Sector Investment Programmes’, described most projects (particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa) as ‘small islands of success in a sea of failure’, with poor government ownership. Donors tended to control resource decisions, staff incentives, technical assistance and financial/reporting procedures. Long term impact on education outcomes or broader poverty reduction was often negligible.

Sector Investment Programmes (SIPs) were conceived as a means to accelerate progress towards overall poverty reduction in the medium term. SWAps aim to support governments in planning coherently for the whole sector within the context of an overarching realistic and costed policy framework, backed by concurrent attention to macro-economic stabilization and public service reform. Funding was to be provided flexibly as a part of government budgets, with governments and ministries of education able to make choices about resource allocation. Financial procedures were to be harmonized and the monitoring of education at sector and programme level integrated to meet diverse reporting needs. Donors would give up their control over specific project interventions, but gain participation in education policy dialogue and broader budget framework negotiations. It was envisaged that increasing the overall resources available to education and improving their effective use through a SWAp will accelerate progress towards the achievement of the education MDGs and thus to the reduction of poverty.

‘SWAPs can ensure sufficient attention to operational procedures within a supportive policy environment to ensure that resources reach those for who they are intended, recognizing that the poor are those who are the first to suffer when systems are inefficient and non transparent, with available resources tending to be deflected to first serve the less poor.’ (Harrold, 1995)

As theory has evolved into practice, the concept of a Sector Investment Programme has given way to a more flexible concept of the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp). The word Approach, implying a general direction and a process, is significant here. More recently, the term Programme-Based Approach has also been adopted, to allow for situations in which general SWAp
principles are being followed but the scope is not sector-wide:

‘The defining characteristics of a SWAp are that all significant public funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all public expenditure, however funded.’ (ODI, 2000)

A further description of a SWAp given by ODI (2000) has now become widely used as a definition (adapted by the CIDA-managed website ‘Extranet on Programme-based Approaches’):

A SWAp includes support that:
- Is sector wide in scope;
- Is based on a clear sector and strategy framework;
- Is based on long-term plans;
- Includes host country ownership and strong coordinated partnership with external agencies;
- Is developed and implemented with the involvement of, and partnership with, all local stakeholders;
- Includes the involvement of all main external agencies;
- Is based on common implementation arrangements and effective donor coordination;
- Relies on local capacity; and
- Includes provision for results-based monitoring.

Much of the recent writing on SWAps emphasizes the importance of process and adaptation to context. As is expressed in the Cambodia Education Sector Donor Report 2003:

‘the concept of, and more importantly the practice and implementation of, a SWAp cannot be uniformly prescribed. Rather, the approach evolves over time and the pace and depth of the transition towards a “pure” SWAp is dependent on highly context-specific factors.’

It has also been realized that a ‘pure’ SWAp is not appropriate everywhere. Indeed, this was not the original intention (though the principles of partnership and coordination always remain relevant). SWAps are clearly less appropriate in fragile states and emergency contexts, though there is still a case for as coordinated an approach as possible, for example between UN agencies and NGOs that seek to work in these contexts. It is vital that such agencies retain their capacity to manage ‘hands on’ projects in such contexts. There are also countries, for example China, where high levels of capacity and low levels of donor dependence mean that discrete technical assistance projects can work successfully and SWAps are not necessary. The large population countries of South Asia could benefit from a more coherent and harmonized approach to aid to education, but with a different approach needed to policy dialogue than in Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.3 SWAps in Education and the UN

Focusing specifically on SWAps in education, Gabriele Köhler emphasized that while SWAps do not usually dwell upon content issues, it is important to decide what UN agencies wish to preserve
as priority substantive issues, especially among the UN, donors and other partners:

- Firstly, along with the guiding principles such as Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), relevant quality education should be ensured.
- Secondly, SWAps should serve for financial reform, efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- Lastly, the issue of participation should be ensured. The voices of all the children and relevant professionals should be included in education policy and strategy development.

Discussion during the meeting on this issue of SWAps in education highlighted the following related issues that need to be built into the design of a SWAp:

- Rights to protection from abuse and exploitation should be added into the rights of education in the SA region as many girls experience this gender-based violence and trafficking that prevents their rights to an education.
- Access to relevant and appropriate education is critical for quality education to maximize the impact of education. Girl friendly education must be costed for effective implementation.
- The contribution of I/NGOs and the role of civil society, including communities, is an issue that needs to be addressed in order to make the impacts of SWAps more efficient.
- Public sector reform is needed: for example, proper salaries for existing teachers, incentives to serve in difficult environments, and for the recruitment of new teachers, in light of increased enrolment.
- Knowledge information: There is a wealth of studies and research conducted by many agencies and sharing and utilization of such information for policy development is critical.
- Inclusiveness: It is important to include both organized and unorganized stakeholders to maximize the impacts of SWAps.

3.4 The Role/Approach of Countries and Development Partners in SWAps

Amanda Seel presented analysis on SWAps/PBAs using case studies from twelve countries – including four from South Asia – demonstrating the varied range of approaches within the basic themes (Table 1).

Evidence from these case studies is discussed in Seel (2006); here, we focus on the broader issues of the role that development partners generally, and UNICEF specifically, have played in supporting SWAps/PBAs to become ‘equity-sensitive’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>NAME OF PROGRAMME</th>
<th>PROGRAMME SCOPE</th>
<th>DESCRIBED AS A:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH ASIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Universal Elementary Education (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan)</td>
<td>Elementary Education Sector</td>
<td>PBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) 2003–09</td>
<td>Primary Education Sector (excluding NFE)</td>
<td>SWAp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP) II and EFA2005–15</td>
<td>Primary and Basic Adult</td>
<td>PBA progressing to a SWAp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Education Sector Development Framework and Programme (ESDFP)</td>
<td>Whole Education Sector</td>
<td>SWAp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE EAST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Basic Education Development Strategy (BEDS) 2003–15, within the EFA Plan 2002–15</td>
<td>Basic Education Sector</td>
<td>Sub-Sector Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.E. ASIA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Primary Education For Disadvantaged Children (PEDC) Targeted Budget Support (TBS) for Decentralized Implementation of EFA Plan</td>
<td>Targeted interventions in Primary Education Primary, Lower Secondary and Basic Adult Education</td>
<td>PBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP)</td>
<td>Whole Education Sector</td>
<td>SWAp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Education Strategic Investment Programme (ESIP)</td>
<td>Whole Education Sector</td>
<td>SWAp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>Basic Education Sub-Sector Programme (BESSIP)</td>
<td>Basic Education Sector</td>
<td>Sub-Sector Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)</td>
<td>Whole Education Sector</td>
<td>SWAp</td>
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<tr>
<td>LATIN AMERICA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>National Education Plan 2001–15 and National Education Strategy</td>
<td>Whole Education Sector</td>
<td>PBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amanda Seel went on to identify a range of challenges related to achieving equality in educational access and outcomes, as described in the following subsections.

3.4.1 Acting as ‘champions’ of equity and gender issues
Development partners can sometimes play the role of ‘champions’ of gender and equity issues, to help ensure that they are on the agenda early in the SWAp process. There are some dangers in the championing approach: for example, an issue might come to be associated with a particular donor, rather than being a shared issue. Where this problem has been overcome, it appears to have been through the ‘champion’ development partner taking care to bring other development partners on board, as well as identifying and supporting national leaders on the issue as soon as possible. Care also needs to be taken to avoid fruitless debate about the relative importance of different equity issues (e.g. gender versus disability), or of different strategies (e.g. ECCE versus primary school construction).

‘Championing’ should play the role of supporting national ‘champions’ to develop and use concrete evidence and well-founded arguments to encourage different actors in the SWAp to take on board key equity issues, and be able to support the development of a well-informed, evidence-based strategy.

3.4.2 Supporting attention to equity in specific plan-preparation processes, including consultation, research and analysis
Development partners can be in a position to offer specific support to aspects of SWAp development, both technical and financial.

3.4.3 Documenting learning from existing initiatives to inform SWAp development
One situation that appears to be improving with time is ensuring that SWAps and PBAs do not start ‘from scratch’ but make full use of existing learning and experience.

3.4.4 Taking the opportunity of policy dialogue forums to bring equity issues into focus
One of the initial tenets of a SWAp was that development partners would give up project control and move into ‘policy dialogue’. There are examples of development partners having been proactive in using this dialogue to encourage greater attention to gender and disadvantaged groups.

One significant issue is that, as SWAps have developed as a dominant modality, the staff profiles of development agencies are changing. Development partners that are key financing partners tend to have fewer education professionals and more people with generic skills in sector level analysis, often covering a number of sectors. By contrast, agencies that have traditionally had a technical and project focus (and cannot become significant funders) might struggle to find a role in policy dialogue, especially in the formative stages of a SWAp where discussions on mechanisms and funding modalities tend to dominate. While there is of course a crucial need for dialogue of this nature, it is also important that decisions made are educationally sound.

More thought perhaps needs to be given as to whether there is now a ‘missing middle’, i.e. a weak link in ensuring that policy decisions are educationally sound and grounded in reality. It could be argued that
there remains an important technical role for some development partners, not so much in implementing projects as in supporting research, analysis and ground-truthing, to ensure that strategic negotiations have a sound basis. It would seem clear that in many contexts UNICEF might be well-placed to take on this ‘intellectual challenge’, and is already seeking to play this role with regard to gender and equity issues to some extent.

3.4.5 Supporting piloting of strategies and interventions to address the educational needs of specific disadvantaged groups

An initial ‘purist’ approach in some of the Africa SWAps has given way to one in which it is realized that it can be useful to retain some project-type interventions within a SWAp, particularly in order to test out innovations, very often in the area of reaching the ‘last 10%’ of hard-to-reach children who have not responded to general strategies to expand educational access. It is also being realized that, while the need for donors to manage specific projects might have lessened, there is still a need for technical assistance for specific tasks, for which development partners can usefully consider their comparative advantage.

As Virtue (2005) points out, what is essential for development partners (including NGOs) who support pilots and targeted programmes within a SWAp/PBA, is that these are properly planned as pilots from the beginning, keeping within funding levels that will be sustainable, with a clear idea of what is being tested and how impact will be measured. Pilots are only useful if they are well documented and evaluated, including in terms of cost effectiveness vis-à-vis other alternative strategies.

3.4.6 Supporting equity in joint review processes

Foster and Mackintosh-Walker (2001) find that ‘joint reviews conducted as a part of the SWAp process have generated analysis and debate that has helped sharpen the focus on poverty’. However, they add that reviews are not always well organized with sufficient information and rigorous analysis.

Discussion

Discussion during the meeting on the role of development partners highlighted the following points:

- **Reaching the most disadvantaged children costs more**, but UNICEF should promote this.
- **Don’t ‘Get the policies right and then form a SWAp’**. It could be disadvantageous to wait for policy to be developed before starting SWAps – some agreement for ongoing work plans and pilot programmes is needed.
- **How to identify all stakeholders** is critical.
- **Donor agencies offer assistance in their own manners according to their prioritized areas and in different ways.** One of the advantages of SWAps is that agencies can contribute with their special expertise on behalf of all. Strong support from HQs is needed for this.
- **The issue of finance** was not included in this session but is a very important topic to be included in future SWAps debates along with technical issues in education.
3.5 What Constitutes Effective SWAps/PBAs?

In his presentation on policy analysis around SWAps and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Social Policy, Mahesh Patel addressed issues such as scaling up for more effective aid, simplified donor policy with common arrangements, multi-donor commitments, and delivering aid in fragile states.

However, critics from civil society warn of the following needs:

1. Ownership by government;
2. Inclusion of human rights issues; and
3. Participation by socially excluded people.

Mahesh considered further the states’ parties responsibilities and general budget support alerts, noting that:

- Inequalities and exclusion processes are areas in which governments should take action.
- States parties’ responsibilities are sometimes overlooked in UNICEF.
- Exclusion of certain people in the state is not a violent action by the state but a ‘silent violence’.
- The increasing disparity in most developing countries is a growing challenge.
- Human rights approaches are needed for social justice. Plans and budget support need to give greater effort to this.
- The private sector in education plays a very active role but their way of engagement should be strategically considered so as to prevent a two-tiered system. Providing licenses to private schools can be one means of regulating them.

SWAps can help to improve aid effectiveness, but government procurement and audit procedures need to be brought up to acceptable global standards.

**Discussion** during the meeting highlighted the following main points for effectiveness of SWAps/PBAs:

### Legislative Action in SWAps to reduce disparities

- **Children** – Birth registration, BMS, school nutrition, discrimination, institutional care, free & compulsory education, participation.
- **Women** – Discrimination in education, legislative action on property rights, labour markets (rights through education).
- **Ethnic Groups** – Birth registration, education access, migration, nationality discrimination.
- **National** – Salt iodization, accountabilities.

### States Parties Responsibilities and Human Rights Lessons Learned

**States Parties Responsibilities:**

- **Respect** – discrimination & exclusion are rights violations.
- **Protect** – management of private sector is explicitly a state responsibility in human rights law.
- **Facilitate & Fulfil** – non-coverage based non-provision may be linked to gradual realization.

**Human Rights Lessons Learned:**

- Top-down, bottom-up, and meso-level participation.
a. Conceptualizing issues
- It is necessary to emphasize ‘conceptualization’ of Education SWAps. SWAps should include policy dialogue.
- It is necessary to tailor-make SWAps to fit the situation (and not the reverse). There may not be the same model for SWAps everywhere. One size does not fit all! Alternative modalities of funding are possible.
- ‘Politics of new aid modalities’ – so that government really is in the driver’s seat.
- Community must be involved at all levels of conceptualization and implementation.

b. Implementing issues
- There is need for good coordination and communication between partners. Willingness to compromise.
- Reality on the ground in policy implementation is needed.
- SWAps need to address retention and quality achievement.
- Country-level experiences in SWAps and programme-based approaches are important.
- Addressing of social/gender disparities through SWAps is vital.
- The importance of Public Sector reform needs to be stressed.
- How to develop in ways that are non-threatening? Change management is a real issue here. Need to address human resource issues.
- Need for immediacy of technical assistance is actually added in some cases to assist government. Does technical assistance stay outside or inside? There are serious implications for the levels of change in the way that TA is provided.

- There is need for transparency of contracting and purchasing.
- Be realistic!

c. M & E issues
- M&E should be a partnership, and can be a capacity building exercise.
- There is need for monitoring tools to look closely at the situation of disadvantaged groups – girls, ethnic groups, and other minorities.
- Government needs to acknowledge that there is social exclusion.
- Monitoring needs to be carefully planned – ‘we get what we measure’, as emphasized by Lynn Bennett in her later presentation. It also needs to be carried out within a rights-based monitoring framework, as stressed by Koto Kanno.
- There is need to obtain disaggregated data and use it effectively and efficiently.

Further discussion following the presentations brought out the important point that inter-sectoral approaches in collaboration with other ministries are also essential, for example in the issues of water and sanitation and child labour as brought out in a mind mapping exercise led by William Fellows.

Other issues raised pointed to the need to continue strengthening government capacities, reducing the dependence on external resources and maintaining high level commitment for ensuring the education budget.

Finally, issues of overarching concern were highlighted as:
Advocacy: It is very difficult to ask government to increase the allocation of the budget in education sector. However, we should continue to advocate this on evidence-based analysis.

Ownership issues: These should be continued to be debated by government and development partners including UNICEF.

Harmonization for what?: On the critique of Paris Declaration by INGOs, harmonization is not everything. The major concern among INGOS is the measurement of achievements.

3.6 Is There Still a Place for Projects?
Many speakers during the meeting addressed the issue of whether there was still a place for ‘traditional projects’ in a SWAp/PBA environment.

Amanda Seel reiterated that ‘pure’ SWAps are not appropriate everywhere, and that this was never the intention when developing the concept. As discussed in Section 3.4.5, an initial commitment to pure SWAps in Africa has given way to the retention of project-type interventions, particularly to test out innovations; though as pointed out earlier by Virtue (2005), such interventions should be planned as pilots from the beginning, with clear ideas of what is to be tested and how impact will be measured.

According to Paulette Nichols, there is still a significant amount of development assistance delivered through ‘old’ modalities globally as well as in South Asia. The important question is how donors can maximize the impacts of aid and achieve the results in the situation of maintaining old and new modalities. During the transition period, there are two challenges:

1. To ensure that the work done in projects is not lost.
2. To ensure that the two modalities do not work at cross-purposes – strengthening partner governments, not undermining their capacity.

Discussion during the meeting on this issue highlighted the following points:

- Co-existence of old and new modalities: There will be no total transition to new aid modalities such as SWAps in this region. However, the objective of the SWAps is to mitigate risks and promote coordination in the sector.

- Results-based management and SWAps: Agencies tend to give up their individual outputs/outcomes when they join in SWAps. It may therefore be difficult to evaluate achievements at individual project levels; however, programmes can be evaluated on higher national policy levels.

- Transparency, accountability and public sector reform: Some of the issues in public sector reforms are beyond one sector’s capacity. For UN, UNDAF maybe the best entry point for the government to address the issue of public sector reform and strengthen these areas.

Feedback from groupwork stressed the importance of pilots, but saw few that were planned properly for sustainability or evaluated appropriately. Examples of good practice were:
Adoption of community schools;
Social audits;
SMCs/PTAs;
Early childhood development.

However, pilots need to be planned as part of engagement with SWAps and should demonstrate:

- Harmonization of technical assistance;
- Harmonization of research;
- Incorporation of a framework to encourage developmental activities, especially through field NGOs;
- Testing of learning outcomes.

References


THE EVIDENCE FOR SWAps

KEY POINTS

From the literature:
- Much work has been done on macro-level poverty reduction
- SWAps and PBAs have strong potential for addressing social and gender inequality
- Some significant increases in enrolment and decreases in gender gap have been observed
- National policy frameworks potentially provide the ideal context for mainstreaming commitments to the promotion of gender equality and girls’ education
- There is enhanced trust between government and poor communities due to strengthened transparency

Practical lessons learned:
- Engagement of multiple stakeholders is a major challenge
- Coordination issues are complex
- Joint audits are needed
- Different procurement processes cause problems, including waste and duplication
- Improvement of human resource environment is a priority
- Issues must be resolved at senior level

Sri Lanka
Moving towards SWAps. Emphasis on local level action with involvement of School Development Committees

Cambodia
SWAp programme began in 2000. Enormous impact already in terms of gender equity and social inclusion

Bangladesh
PEDP now in second phase. Many improvements in terms of gender equity and social inclusion

India
Three SWAps models to date. Much progress in school construction, development of EMIS, collection of school based data, strengthening the community for school management

Nepal
Moving towards a school sector approach – joining primary and secondary
4.1 From the Published Literature

Some evidence-based findings from the published literature were provided by Amanda Seel:

- SWAps and PBAs appear to have a strong potential for better addressing social and gender inequality in education. However, this is only likely to be realized where these issues are reflected in policies supported by analysis and prioritization.
- Gender and equity issues are dependent on individuals and donors.
- It is too early to know the impacts of SWAps but it is observed that there are significant increases in enrolment and decreases in gender gap (Uganda, India and Zambia), and decline in the average distance to school (Uganda). However, high dropout rates are observed in some countries due to poor quality of education.
- There is much work on macro-level poverty reduction, with some on gender (DAC study), though with limited other dimensions of equity and conflict and emergency issues.
- There are examples of SWAps enabling resources to be mobilized; for example the case of a school construction programme (Uganda).
- There is also evidence of enhanced trust between government and poor communities due to strengthened transparency.
- However, there are also negative cases where children are ‘slipping through the net’.

In a background paper, Derbyshire (2005) examined gender equality in the context of SWAps and concluded that national policy frameworks potentially provide the ideal context for mainstreaming commitments to the promotion of gender equality and girls’ education. National policy is the epitome of mainstream development and effectively promoting and addressing gender equality issues in this context would have enormous significance and impact. SWAps provide a context where:

- gender analytical information, sex disaggregated data and gender-aware consultation processes can inform national sector-wide policy and planning processes;
- policy commitments to gender equality should be backed up with substantial budgets, effective processes of monitoring and capacity building;
- the long-term time frame acknowledges the complex processes of change involved.

However, Derbyshire concluded that the potential of national policy frameworks for promoting effective gender mainstreaming is greater than achievements to date. Whilst all national education sector plans reviewed include some mention of gender issues, the breadth and depth is hugely variable. She highlighted the following problems that occur consistently:

- Staff with responsibility for promoting gender equality and girls’ education are not centrally involved in sector level policy development, and the educational planners and consultants who are, do not necessarily have the expertise, training or mandate to ensure effective gender mainstreaming.
- There are huge differences in the quality and nature of the evidence base.
There are often significant gaps in sex disaggregated data, and inequalities highlighted by sex disaggregated data are often not examined by appropriate gender analysis.

- The donor voice in advocating gender equality goals is inconsistent – to the frustration of partner organizations and staff concerned with equalities issues.
- Gender mainstreaming is often poorly understood by policy makers and planners, and there is confusion about whether gender should be targeted or mainstreamed.
- Action to promote gender equality that is included in national policies and plans tends to focus on access to education rather than on issues of quality or outcome.
- Action to promote gender equality is too often vague, and not backed up with appropriate budgets or monitoring indicators.
- There is little monitoring and evaluation on gender-related learning outcomes, the teaching workforce, educational management, or quality standards.
- Systematic planning for capacity building is generally neglected and this is worst in the least gender-aware contexts.
- Commitments to gender equality at the national level are subject to ‘policy evaporation’.

### 4.2 From the Field

Country presentations were made by Sri Lanka, India, Cambodia and Bangladesh, all countries with experience in SWAps/PBAs. The impact due to the SWAp/PBA is summarized here and expanded upon in the country boxes that follow.

- **Sri Lanka** is moving to sector-wide support – the planning process has continued through 2005, and the framework is to be implemented starting in 2006. They are moving towards broader development partner buy-in and involvement, with emphasis on local level action through the involvement of School Development Committees. Challenges are to rationalize rural/urban teacher deployment and to build the stock of key subject teachers (English, maths, science):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Still in infancy – started in 2004, planning process in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework to be implemented starting 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving into sector-wide having started with WB support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blend of bottom-up and top-down planning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on increasing participation at each level – school, zonal, provincial, central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving towards broader donor/development partner buy-in and involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on local level action with involvement of School Development Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges in rationalizing deployment – teacher shortages in rural/peripheral areas, particularly plantation sector and north east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge is building stock of key subject teachers – English, maths, science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion** following the presentation highlighted that there is a well established cultural background that promotes universal primary education – so if a
SWAp is defined as strong government ownership, then in practice this is the way that Sri Lanka has been operating for many years.

- There have been three SWAps models in India: a Joint UN programme: Jamshala; District Primary Education Programme (DPEP): 1990–2006; the current SWAP – Sarva Shiksa Abhiyan (SSA): 2002–10. DPEP has achieved much progress in improved access by constructing schools, development of EMIS, collection of school based data, and strengthening the community for school management.

Many challenges remain, however. These include huge inter- and intra-district disparities; the need for fuller addressing of caste issues; issues of the urban deprived; and quality issues. There are four major target groups identified as gaps: girls, working children, children with disability and scheduled caste / tribal children.

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**THE PROJECTS**

**Primary Education Programme 2003-2007**

- **Project 1**
  - Quality Education
  - Gender Sensitive Quality Package
  - DPEP III/BEP

- **Project 2**
  - Disparity Reduction among Focus Groups in Education
  - Girls’ Education
  - Scheduled Caste/Tribal Children Education
  - Working Children Education
  - Urban Deprived Children Education

- **Project 3**
  - Education Analysis & Research
  - Data Analysis and Research
  - Assessing, Measuring and Evaluating Learning Achievements

**Janshala and PEEP**

Within the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan framework
A SWAp programme began in Cambodia in 2000, aiming to reduce transaction cost, to have pro-poor and pro-girls outcomes through free education and provision of scholarships, increase average teacher salaries, increase decentralization and ensure better monitoring. There has been enormous impact in terms of gender equity and social inclusion:

**Bangladesh** has an enormously rich experience in SWAs/PBAs, with its huge Primary Education Development Programme, currently in its second phase (PEDP II). There are four components: capacity building, quality improvement in schools and classrooms, quality improvement through infrastructure development, and improved access to quality schooling. There have been many improvements in terms of gender equity and social inclusion, while challenges remain in the areas of high dropout rate, low attendance rate and incomplete enrolment.

**Focus on Equity**

- A key challenge is that those who enrol, about 1/3 do not complete primary cycle and attendance is about 62%
- Need to enrol those who are not yet enrolled (81% NER) and ensure much higher completion of those who enrol
- Combined strategies and action plans that address enrollment, retention, cycle completion and learning

**What has been done so far?**

- Gender Strategy and Action Plan approved and ready for implementation
- Strategies and action plans for special needs education, vulnerable groups and indigenous groups drafted but need urgent approval and implementation
- Task Forces established for Indigenous Children, Special Needs Children, Quality, and Innovation Grants
- Primary School Level Quality (PSQL) standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) agreed and baseline almost ready including qualitative aspects

Nepal’s BPEP II was a largely a programme-based approach with some donors contributing to a ‘basket’ fund; and the current programme, EFA 2004–09, is moving further towards a SWAp, with closer integration of the primary and secondary subsectors, as described by Samphe Lhalungpa.

**Ian Pett** stressed the push and pull factors inherent in sector-wide approaches that meant thinking both sector-wide and well as sector-deep. While two goals of SWAp are
coherence and efficiency, the pushes and pulls encountered in multi-partner arrangements can often produce unacceptable administrative burdens upon government and civil society.

**Practical lessons learned:**

- **Pilots:** While innovation piloting and research done on the margins of main activity is positive, continuous piloting and experimentation done without rigorous assessments provide an administrative burden that is often huge in practical terms.
- **Governance:** Engagement of multiple stakeholders needs management in an efficient way. This is a major challenge. Possibly consider some kind of triage: government led, or strong coordination mechanisms within donors.
- **Trade fairs:** Exchange ideas and information with lots of partners engaged.
- **Practical issues:** Coordinating issues are complex. Reporting cycles, planning cycles, including all formats, must be made more systematic.
- **Auditing issues:** Programmes can be in a state of constant audit. Joint audits need to be agreed upon.
- **Implementation aspects:** Maintenance issues, replacements, consumables, need standardization.
- **Procurement:** Procurement processes can create huge practical difficulties. Some donors will not accept common processes. Different procurement processes lead to a range of difficulties, including different supplies’ schedules.
- **Construction:** There is a lot of waste and duplication. Local materials replacement makes a huge difference to end users. Again the procurement process comes in (local providers, bidding language, contractual guarantees = total constraints to local providers). This means a loss to communities and to end users. There is need to negotiate the procedural issues or this can undermine the whole effort with the regulator, purchaser and provider.
- **Human resource poor environment:** Finances are relatively easy and can change with political will. But the human resources environment takes ages to change. Treat this as a priority!
- **Community involvement:** This often means cheap labour. How does it get decided? It should be part of a national framework and should be analysed.
- **Timing:** The longer time it takes to procure means that some children lose a generation – but speedier procurement risks poorer construction of schools, curriculum, learning materials.
- **Balance:** We must be more hard headed. This requires working at senior level to take on these issues. There is not enough mainstream service pragmatically defined and delivered systematically. When we move into a SWAp environment, the country may have less manoeuvrability.
4.3 Highlights of Country Presentations

Country Presentation: Sri Lanka

Three per cent of GDP (10% of government budget) has been devoted to the education sector by showing the progress of SWAps. The Education Sector Development Framework Programme (ESDFP) was initiated by the World Bank with all the donors involved to the present. The ESDFP is characterized by the principles of a participatory approach to multi-year planning and budgeting, as well as a holistic sector-wide approach with government and donor partnership.

Four Themes / Components

There are four themes in ESDFP, each of which has major components as follows:

- **Promoting equity by enabling all children to access complete basic and secondary education:** tuition free with free text books and uniforms, meals provided, school attendance committee initiative for promoting school networks, special education and non-formal education provided, basic facilities, reduced teacher shortages.

- **Enhancing the quality, economic impact and social relevance:** curriculum improvement at secondary level to fit the knowledge needed for the world of work, examination reforms, timely delivery of textbooks, and peace and value education.

- **Enhancing the efficiency and equity of resource allocation:** evidence-based, bottom-up and top-down planning approach and implementation of a Public Expenditure and Quality Education Tracking System (PEQETS).

- **Strengthening education governance and service delivery:** decentralization of management, implementation of a human resource development strategy.

Experiences to date and challenges

ESDFP started from 2004 and was still in its planning stage till 2005. The capacity development programme will start from 2006. The shortage of teachers in rural areas has remained as one of the challenges and developing a stock of subject teachers has been planned.

Presented by Madhura Mangalika Wehella, Deputy Director of Education, Planning and Performance Review Division, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka
Country Presentation: India

Current education policy and challenges
Government has committed 6% of GDP in the education sector. Policies are very conducive to the implementation of a SWAps programme for the universalization of elementary education (UPE). There are a number of girls’ education initiatives, such as residential camps, model cluster schools and women’s empowerment initiatives. Through the EMIS, target areas have been identified and resources have been more efficiently allocated.

Many challenges remain, however. These include huge inter- and intra-district disparities; the need for fuller addressing of caste issues; issues of the urban deprived; and quality issues. There are four major target groups identified as gaps: girls, working children, children with disability and scheduled caste / tribal children.

There have been three SWAps models in India:

1. A Joint UN programme: Jamshala
Five UN agencies and the Government of India, and 9 State Governments initiated this project seven years ago and handed it over last year to the Government of India. It was a kind of model programme to create SWAps. The total cost was 20 million dollars and the money was routed through UNICEF.

2. District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) 1990–2006
This was a multi-donor funding (including World Bank, DFID, and EU) programme which focused on improvement of access and quality. UNICEF was a pooling partner only at state level, where 6 million dollars was directly funded to the Bihar State government. DPEP has achieved much progress in improved access by constructing schools, development of EMIS, collection of school based data, and strengthening the community for school management. However, quality issues have remained a challenge.

UNICEF is not a pooling partner, but participated in the planning process and joint review mission (once in 6 months) and policy dialogues. It has been observed that SWAps have not been fully covering quality issues in education and student assessment. Together with the long-term issue of girls’ education, there are three areas UNICEF has to work on:

- Quality toolkits to improve the quality of education and monitoring;
- CRC school monitoring tools; and
- Quality Mapping tools.

Presented by Chetana Kholi, Education Project Officer, UNICEF India Country Office
Country Presentation: Cambodia

SWAps definition and mechanisms in Cambodia
A SWAp started from 2000 with the initiative of government in collaboration with donors and NGOs. For the programme there are three phases: 1st phase 2000–05, 2nd phase 2004–08, and 3rd phase 2006–10. The SWAp aims to reduce transaction cost, to have pro-poor and pro-girls outcomes through free education and provision of scholarships, increase average teacher salaries, increase decentralization and ensure better monitoring.

SWAps in Cambodia have been defined as having three characteristics:

- A single sector policy and expenditure programme;
- Government leadership; and
- Progressive use of government financial procedures which is very close to the definition of ODI.

Impacts of SWAps in gender and social inclusion
In the last five years, enormous impacts have been observed in terms of gender equity and social inclusion:

- In terms of gender disparity, there has been a higher rate of increase of net enrolment rate among girls, as well as a reduction in the net enrolment rate gender gap, the number of out-of-school girls, and girls’ repetition rate in primary education.
- In terms of social inclusion, scholarships for girls and disadvantaged groups, and abolishment of registration and illegal fees have been implemented. The fastest rate of NER increase has been among children from lowest income families.

Role of UNICEF in SWAps
UNICEF has been contributing to SWAps mainly in the following ways:

- Conceptual coherence by conducting policy informing studies and debates;
- Convening role for donor coordination bridging Ministry and donors;
- Capacity development of Ministry and NGOs; and
- Implementation of ESSP programmes.

Some of the opportunities for UNICEF to be involved in SWAps are in scaling up the pilot projects, and advocacy on UNICEF’s agenda sector wide; while challenges remain in terms of attributing the results of UNICEF contribution, and that the harmonization process is not always compatible with UNICEF.

Presented by Perseveranda So, Head of Education, UNICEF Cambodia Office
Country Presentation: Bangladesh

Bangladesh Primary Education
There are several factors which make primary education in Bangladesh unique: a huge number of schools and teachers, very active existence of NGOs, impressive growth and robust indicators; but also high dropout rates and low learning achievements remain as challenges. There is a separate Ministry in charge of Primary and Mass Education.

PEDP II
PEDP II has a total financing plan of 1.8 billion for 6 years of which 1.1 billion is provided by government financing and the rest funded by 11 donors (UNICEF not participating). The donors contributing to the pooled fund administered by ADB join the common auditing, joint annual reviews and thematic missions. PEDP II has four components:

- Capacity building;
- Quality improvement in schools and classrooms;
- Quality improvement through infrastructure development; and
- Improved access to quality schooling.

Some of the lessons learnt are:

- Decentralization is a cross-cutting issue unlikely to succeed if the focus is only on one sector.
- Government commitment not only from one Ministry is important, but related Ministries must be fully on board.

Focus on equity in PEDP II
There have been many improvements in terms of gender equity and social inclusion by implementing SWAPs: such as increase of girls and poorest children’s enrolment by the stipend programme, school nutrition program (WFP) and development of an Inclusive Education Framework which covers gender, children with special needs, indigenous and vulnerable children. On the other hand, challenges remain in the areas of high dropout rate (30%), low attendance rate (62%) and incomplete enrolment (NER 81%).

Key progress and challenge
Harmonization in the areas of financial management for pooled funding and procurement; common reporting; Annual Operation Plan as key planning and financing instruments; policy dialogue with the Ministry, and quarterly dialogue with the executing agency. These have been observed as progress. On the other hand, some issues such as highly centralized systems within the Ministry, and still weak policy dialogue, remain as challenges of PEDP II.
Some of the major challenges for equity issues are the following:

- Government indecision meant a long policy dialogue with donors.
- Lack of officers with technical background in education within the Ministry led to non-practical programming such as the scholarship programme.
- There is a huge gap between policy and practice.
- Many schools are discriminatory to disabled children, contradictory to the government policy.
- Non-Formal Education (NFE) is not included in the PEDP, which is a big omission.
- Expertise of NGOs from NFE should be included in the formal school programmes.
- Inclusive education aims to bring children into school, but more attention should be given to quality issues as well.

Presented by Brajesh Panth, ADB Bangladesh, and James Jennings, UNICEF Bangladesh

References

**Key Points**

- Key preconditions for success are government commitment to sector policy change and to ownership of the agreed sector policy framework.
- Donor coordination is essential to ensure that individual donors’ strategies do not conflict and that all key areas within the sector receive adequate support.
- The task of identifying the impact of contributions from an individual donor within a SWAp is almost impossible.
- The potential benefits of sector-wide approaches are certainly greater than benefits accruing from conventional project-based support but the associated risks are often greater.
- Reliance on high levels of institutional capacity and commitment involves strengthening existing capacity at a number of levels.

**Need to ensure:**

- Vital work occurring in a project or programme framework is not lost in the transition.
- ‘Old’ and ‘new’ modalities do not work at cross-purposes.

**Examples of good practice:**

- Inclusive education
- Removal of cost barriers
- Bilingual education
- Literacy centres
- Community awareness programmes
- Monitoring and disseminating programme outputs

**Examples of bad practice:**

- Admission to schools without adequate support
- Affirmative action programmes that prevent social mobility
- Government policies that do not address specific needs of disadvantaged groups

**Meet the needs of the disadvantaged through:**

- Inter-sectoral policy dialogue
- Engagement with government
- Learning from other countries
Few reservations were expressed in the meeting of SWAps as a policy approach, though as discussed above SWAps should not be seen as the sole donor support modality.

Paulette Nichols identified a fiduciary risk associated with budget support, but felt that this was offset by the opportunity to engage in policy dialogue with partner governments and the potential improvements in government performance that come from the process. Where a shift between modalities is taking place, the donor community, the partner government and the UN system must balance the requirement of working together with ‘old’ and ‘new’ aid modalities to ensure that:

1. Vital work occurring in a project or programme framework is not lost in the transition requiring a change management strategy.
2. ‘Old’ and ‘new’ modalities do not work at cross-purposes. While budget support programmes are intended to strengthen partner governments, ‘old’ modalities may effectively undermine their capacity.

Amanda Seel balanced what she called ‘theoretical potential’ against ‘theoretical risks’:

**THEORETICAL POTENTIAL**
- Coherent framework for the programme, subsector or whole sector – conducive to the better analysis and mainstreaming of gender and other equity issues.
- Costing of alternatives, prioritization and targeting (avoiding duplication, contradictory policy and approaches, wish lists, wastage).
- New partnerships for addressing equity – environment in which the energies and expertise of different government partners, civil society and development partners can be maximized by working in the same direction towards clear goals.

**THEORETICAL RISKS**
- So much attention fixed on the mechanisms and form of a programme that content might take second place.
- Few countries will meet “ideal” wider context of macro-economic stability, action on corruption, civil service reform, decentralization etc. – risk that increased inputs won’t achieve desired results.
- Focus on an overall sector policy framework and plan might create a centralizing tendency.
The history of DFID’s transition from traditional projects through more broadly based integrated education projects to full SWAps has been traced in a background paper by Al-Samarrai et al. (2002). They summarize some key issues drawn from experience:

(a) Key preconditions for success are government commitment to sector policy change and to ownership of the agreed sector policy framework. The process of producing a sector policy framework takes time and cannot be easily accelerated. SWAps involving budgetary support are still not possible in many countries.

(b) Donor coordination is essential to ensure that individual donors’ strategies do not conflict and that all key areas within the sector receive adequate support. This requires a shift in aid management resources and attention from project administration towards negotiation of sector strategy and resource allocations.

(c) The task of identifying the impact of contributions from an individual donor within a SWAp is almost impossible. Donors have to be content with system-wide monitoring. This is not problematic when this is done effectively and in a timely manner.

(d) The potential benefits of sector-wide approaches are certainly greater than benefits accruing from conventional project-based support but the associated risks are often greater. Appropriate assessment and monitoring systems help considerably to reduce the risks of providing support of this kind.

(e) Reliance on high levels of institutional capacity and commitment involves strengthening existing capacity at a number of levels. This focus on the whole system can delay impacts on beneficiaries. Comprehensive assessment of impact is only possible in the medium to long term.

During groupwork, one group examined policy and strategy issues and recognized that there were many existing policies in place. These included:

- Inclusive education strategy;
- Abolition of cost barriers (school fees); scholarships for the poor, ethnic groups and girls;
- Bilingual education;
- NFE literacy centres/functional literacy centres/CLCs and relaxed entry criteria for teaching training in remote communities.

Good practice also abounds as seen in female literacy programmes, community awareness programmes, monitoring and dissemination of programme outputs and building best practice using communities.

Practices that disadvantaged children were seen in:

- Admission to school without adequate support;
- Compulsory education without support to schools and families;
- Special education affirmative action programmes that prevent social mobility.

Ways of meeting the needs of the disadvantaged were identified as:

- Inter-sectoral: engage other sections in policy dialogue and identification of issues and strategies;
● Engagement with government (Ministry of Finance); and
● Learning from other countries (twinning, technical cooperation).

The need to listen to the voices of stakeholders was particularly stressed by another of the groups. Stakeholders were identified as children, parents, teachers, communities, PTAs, NGOs, civil societies, Ministries of Education, line departments, donors, media. The group felt that considerable work was already being done in targeting primary and secondary education, formal education and some positive work in NFE, but that no consultation was undertaken with primary stakeholders. Communities were sometimes used as modalities but for implementation purposes were not involved in planning. The group felt that action to help address these needs was required in:

● Better information and communication;
● Helping disadvantaged groups to be destigmatized;
● Enhancing the level of female/disadvantaged participation;
● Promoting ownership (providing enabling environment);
● Viewing needs through the eyes of the disadvantaged.

Often government policies do not address specific needs of disadvantaged groups. It was felt that voices should be heard in SWAps at two levels: planning; and sharing the outcome with stakeholders.

A fourth group looked at communications, seeing the need for work in communications at all levels from family through schools and communities, sub- and district level and at national level. Current modalities included working with journalists, DEOs and the unorganized sector in communications. Each country gave examples of best practice – or at least ways in which their countries used communication methods. These included use of radio, posters and logos by government, UN and INGO programmes. Many were designed to change behaviour. Other examples benefited the vulnerable and disadvantaged through seeking their feedback and capacity building through their participation in message development etc.

Practices that disadvantaged stakeholders included:

● Centrally prepared and developed messages using language that is not understood and not appropriate;
● Messages that ‘talk down’ to the disadvantaged;
● Preparing newsletters ‘from the top’ when people being addressed are not literate or do not participate in crafting the message; and
● Communication strategies not addressed to specific target groups.

Best ways of addressing SWAps were to develop strategic communication plans addressed to and involving specific target groups. The plan should be comprehensive, based on behaviour change.

References
KEY POINTS

Social Inclusion
There are two major barriers – access and quality

Working children and remote communities: The challenge is to monitor these and to provide adequate financial resources

Minorities and ethnic groups: There is need for proper recognition and independent mechanisms to ensure community involvement

Caste and religion: No child should be excluded on the grounds of location, caste, ethnicity, gender or abilities to acquire relevant knowledge, learning skills and complete their education

Children with disabilities: There are large gaps in understanding of the needs of such children by both teachers and the wider educational system

Gender as a special priority: Quality and availability of data which are globally comparable and standardized remain as challenges

Equity in Access and Quality:
- SWApS often do not address the voices of the excluded
- To date, the focus has been more on gender parity than on equality

- Need to define a basic level of quality
- Need long-term vulnerability analysis
- Huge gap between global policies and reality on the ground
- Communication strategy is essential for reaching the excluded
- There will never be enough qualified teachers – need for multigrade teaching
- Resources for vulnerable and disabled children should be separately prepared and strategized
- Special needs includes highly gifted children – should be scholarships so that they can cross the ‘social border’
- Current SWApS models relying on external consultants do not help with capacity building of governments
6.1 SWAps and Social Inclusion
On disparity in education, Amanda Seel’s study of twelve countries concluded:

- There are two major barriers to achieving equality in education: access and quality.
- One cannot just address poverty, but must see it as a complex interaction of poverty, gender and social exclusion.
- There are a number of strategies for addressing disparity and inequality in education, such as: free education, collection of sex disaggregated data to strengthen monitoring, ensuring strong linkages back to specific gaps and capacity strengthening therein.
- The twin tracking of gender mainstreaming is required along with attention to specific model projects that deliver a gender responsive approach.

- Monitoring of such aspects has not been properly implemented yet in many countries.

Lynn Bennett, Lead Social Scientist, World Bank, Nepal presented a summary of the Nepal Gender and Social Inclusion Assessment conducted by World Bank and DFID (see References). While this study did not focus specifically on education, nor on funding modalities, nevertheless it provides a comprehensive baseline survey of the existing social inclusion situation and constraints in Nepal.

She shared an analytical framework to show the multiple and overlapped dimensions of social exclusion. Again, while this framework was developed to reflect the situation in Nepal, nevertheless it will resonate with the social, cultural and political structure in most South Asian countries.
The study emphasized the need for monitoring, and the difficulties of establishing effective indicators and tools: ‘What you measure is what you get …’.

**Working children and remote communities**

**Discussion** during the meeting highlighted monitoring, which is currently poorly implemented by Ministries of Education. It should be carried out by parents, communities, civil society and children themselves. A challenge for SWAps is to monitor adequately these socially excluded groups, and financial resources are needed to prepare a package of indicators that should include cross-sectoral needs-based education data.

**Minorities and ethnic groups**

**Discussion** during the meeting focused on an urgent need for proper recognition of ethnic groups for social cohesion and a disaggregated census to capture their numbers and locale. A national set of indicators up to and at the school level is needed to identify ethnic minorities and independent mechanisms are needed to ensure community involvement in SWAps.

**Caste and religion**

**Presentations and discussion** during the meeting stressed that no child should be excluded on the grounds of location, caste, ethnicity, gender or abilities to acquire relevant knowledge, learning skills and complete their education. For example, in Nepal, the enrolment rate (age 6–10) of girls among Terai middle castes and Muslims is well behind that of boys; for Muslims, both boys’ and girls’ enrolment rate is lower than for other castes; and Muslim girls’ participation in formal secondary school has remained low at 23%. In India, great strides have been made, though the need for fuller addressing of scheduled caste issues is recognized.

**Children with disabilities**

**Discussion** during the meeting highlighted the large gaps in understanding and dealing with the whole gamut of social exclusion, including disabilities, by both teachers and the wider educational system. Stigmatization is rampant. There should be indicators drawn from school surveys, educational policy, including the level of facilities in school to handle disabilities, and most importantly the attitude of parents.

**6.2 SWAps and Gender as a Special Priority**

**Koto Kanno**, UNESCO Representative, Nepal, presented methods of measuring gender equality within a rights-based monitoring framework (see below).

She concluded that quality and availability of data which are globally comparable and standardized remain as challenges.

**Discussion** during the meeting recognized gender as a cross-cutting issue still needing specific targeting in South Asia, and concluded that monitoring aspects needed to show improvement, better define the purpose of the monitoring, be flexible to the differing needs of the community and not duplicate already initiated projects but work in the spirit of real partnership.
6.3 SWAps and Equity in Access and Quality

This was an important area for discussion. To date, the focus has been more on gender parity than on equality; however, we are more aware now of how to measure equality.

Reaching the most disadvantaged requires additional cost, strategies and innovative approaches. Defining the ‘disadvantaged’ needs contextualizing – are all dropouts ‘disadvantaged’, for example? There is a risk of putting the disadvantaged at more risk – SWAps often do not address the voices of the ‘excluded’. We must ensure that children do not suffer while donors and governments are trying to get systems in place.

Technical assistance can be considered as a parallel process for addressing disparities, though there needs to be further debate and sharing of models. We must ensure that modalities are transformative, not just ‘comfort changes’.

The following key points were particularly highlighted in discussions:

- **Quality education**: It is important to define what we mean by quality education. In particular we need to discuss what level of quality should be assessed as basic.

- **Poverty and vulnerability**: Vulnerability analysis is needed to know which people could send their children...
to school last year but could not do so this year. Such a longitudinal trace can help causalities to be identified.

- **Gaps**: We should take into account that there is a huge gap between global guidelines/policies and on-the-ground reality/practices.

- **Communication strategy**: A communication strategy is essential for reaching the excluded, and for encouraging all children to attend school.

- **Teachers**: There will never be enough qualified teachers. That is why multigrade pedagogy is important.

- **Resources**: Resources for vulnerable children and disabled children should be separately prepared and strategized. Disabled children are heavily resource dependent and often they are ignored.

- **Special needs**: Among the children with special needs, there are also those who are highly gifted. Where such children are from poor families, they should be given scholarships for higher education, and through education to cross the ‘social border’.

- **Capacity development**: Current SWAps models often rely on external consultants; this is not beneficial for the capacity development of the governments.

**References**
The forces against harmonization and alignment are often more powerful in fragile states:
- the range and number of instruments and actors (aid and non-aid) is greater than in ‘normal’ situations
- some of the instruments used in fragile states mitigate against coordination by their nature (project-level aid and humanitarian aid especially)
- there can be a lack of strong, legitimate government leadership

But so are the arguments for it:
- absorptive capacity is low, and is made worse by unharmonized and unpredictable aid; it is even easier to overwhelm a fragile state government than in other circumstances
- political pressure for reform from donor governments requires high levels of coordination to avoid recipients playing governments off against each other
- as many people are closer to the edge of survival, the costs of failure are higher
- the arguments about transaction costs apply equally to relations between donors and UN/non-state actors as to between donors and recipient governments

Mechanisms needed to:
- Provide synergy between donors and government
- Agree on the goals
- Be flexible over conditionalities

Schools as neutral places
Need for codes of conduct
Use disasters and conflicts as opportunities for positive change
Differentiate emergency responses – disasters and conflicts need different responses
Involve NGOs – they better represent disadvantaged groups
Several presentations addressed the issue of SWAps in difficult environments. The objective was to identify issues of SWAps in fragile states and to identify what they needed for preparedness and response to the sudden onset of natural disasters.

**Madura Mangalika Wehella**, Deputy Director, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, discussed whether it was possible for governments to have emergency funds in place. As it is unlikely that such funds could be included in long term or immediate term plans, there needs to be in place a system of emergency planning for fragile states or those that face frequent emergencies.

A central team or task force should be established comprising all relevant persons from line ministries and the donor community. Long term, medium term and short term plans need to be formulated and, for this to happen, government and SWAp donors need to work better together.

If children are affected, efforts should be made to get them back to schools and to provide the needed resources to ensure that they do not suffer from neglect or abuse. Monitoring is required to ensure that those who are genuinely needy are actually receiving the services. To do all this a mechanism is required to:

- Provide synergy between the donors and government;
- Agree on the goals;
- Be flexible over conditionalities, MoUs, etc.

SWAp donors need to support capacity building at subnational level as well, to ensure that services are sufficiently decentralized.

**Yasmine Haque**, Senior Programme Officer, UNICEF Sri Lanka Office, also looked at the role of SWAps in preparing for emergency. It is a highly political issue, and in addressing dimensions of preparedness, we need to be looking at the neutral ground, such as schools, health centres and the places where people are displaced. Emergencies provide the opportunity to build on the occasion, seeing schools as centrepieces of the community where services are available.

We need to get to know more about emergencies and how schools can be made into more neutral places. Systematic emergency preparedness needs to be formulated with codes of conduct for humanitarian agencies, and identifying specifications, services and local providers. For example, such policy measures as the School Friendly Construction Guidelines could be distributed to governments. The challenge is to maintain flexibility and ensure appropriate resource availability.

**Keith Leslie**, Save the Children USA–Nepal, looked at the role of NGOs/INGOs in conflicts and emergencies. Working with NGOs in the last few decades has posed real problems and SWAps could potentially assist in the future. Conflict has created chaos in terms of school security. How can NGOs work for children and communities while they and their staff are caught in crossfire and conflict jeopardizes programmes run by NGOs? How do we work on SWAps and PBAs and not become a party in the conflict? In SWAps we are looking at the education system as a whole, but support from the government is often absent, particularly in the regions.

It is important to involve NGOs in this SWAps discussion as they better represent the disadvantaged people. While the CRC is signed, where is accountability and how can staff reach people from disadvantaged groups securely? Although INGOs are seen as cost-effective, they
are seldom represented at SWAp planning meetings with government.

Susan Clapham, Health Advisor, DFID Nepal, examined how donors manage their engagement in fragile states. Donors can set programmes of work in countries in conflict, but are driven by results and judge performance against agreed outcomes. How can results be measured when the larger political dynamics of conflict impinge upon sector programmes?

SWAps could address social inclusion in the conflict as in conflict there are opportunities for some positive change to occur and challenge old structures – ‘The genie can not be put back in the bottle’ syndrome. UNICEF and donors can be there to raise the critical social inclusion issues, challenging mindsets, backed by conditionalities and based on DAC principles. But overall, SWAp donors do not know how to ensure that resources reach the poorest twenty-five per cent.

In a background paper, Leader and Colenso (2005) emphasize that one of the primary lessons of the aid effectiveness debate, that the quality of aid matters as much as the quantity, is just as relevant for fragile states, and maybe more so. The forces against harmonization and alignment are often more powerful in fragile states:

- The range and number of instruments and actors (aid and non-aid) is greater than in ‘normal’ situations.
- Some of the instruments used in fragile states mitigate against coordination by their nature (project-level aid and humanitarian aid especially).
- There can be a lack of strong, legitimate government leadership.

But so are the arguments for it:

- Absorptive capacity is low, and is made worse by unharmonized and unpredictable aid; it is even easier to overwhelm a fragile state government than in other circumstances.
- Political pressure for reform from donor governments requires high levels of coordination to avoid recipients playing governments off against each other.
- As many people are closer to the edge of survival, the costs of failure are higher.
- The arguments about transaction costs apply equally to relations between donors and UN/non-state actors as to between donors and recipient governments.

More importantly, there are greater opportunities for harmonization and alignment in fragile states than may often be understood, in particular through using the notion of ‘shadow alignment’ – i.e. the practice whereby development partners work in a way that is compatible with government systems even if they do not work through them (ODI, 2005). Achieving this depends in part on the instruments that development partners choose to use, and some instruments seem to promote harmonization and alignment more than others. The various types of pooled funding – MDTFs, social funds and joint national programmes – can all promote harmonization, and to a lesser extent alignment, whereas project-based and humanitarian aid can play heavily against it. It would also seem that technical cooperation should be more demand driven than is often the case in fragile states; the type of ‘Technical assistance account’ recommended by Collier and Chauvet (2004) could provide an opportunity for greater donor harmonization and alignment behind recipient priorities.

Leader and Colenso present these conclusions in tabular form as follows (Table 2).
### Table 2: Aid instruments in fragile states (Leader and Colenso, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUMENT</th>
<th>IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SERVICE DELIVERY</th>
<th>BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS</th>
<th>POLITICAL REFORM</th>
<th>GOOD DONORSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme aid</td>
<td>Pro: Government has quick access to un-earmarked funds, which it may channel to meet immediate needs, dependent on policy choices and capacity (<em>ARTF in Afghanistan; TSP in Timor Leste</em>)</td>
<td>More predictable revenue helps government control fiscal policy better; can build capacity and insulate fiduciary risk when channelled through Trust Fund (<em>e.g. Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Sudan</em>)</td>
<td>Can help legitimize state and political process; better macroeconomic stability can lead to better social and political stability</td>
<td>Strong on alignment; potentially strong on harmonization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Con: Can be slow, blunt instruments; unlikely to provide quick, targeted, flexible responses to urgent needs; capacity problems</td>
<td>No guarantee that it will lead to improvements in policies &amp; institutions; fiduciary risk</td>
<td>Government determines use of funds, so unlikely to support other reformers; fungibility (military spending may make conflict worse)</td>
<td>Predictability depends on use of conditionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical cooperation</td>
<td>Pro: May be useful if used with other instruments</td>
<td>May be very useful to support policies and systems development post ‘turnaround’; can play a role in averting ‘relapse’</td>
<td>TC to agencies outside government may support domestic reform</td>
<td>TC can be provided on-budget, aligned or shadow-aligned; pooled TC funds support harmonization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Con: Designed for advisory services, rather than service delivery</td>
<td>Recent evidence suggests not effective without government will and commitment; diminishing returns in the mid- to long-term</td>
<td>Unlikely to help catalyse change within government; not effective without government will and commitment</td>
<td>Frequently donor-driven; may be unpredictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>IMMEDIATE NEEDS/SERVICE DELIVERY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Pro: Can be quick, targeted and flexible</td>
<td>Can support systems development, particularly when linked to TC</td>
<td>Can help catalyse reform directly; or indirectly through demonstration effects of alternative ways of working</td>
<td>Project aid can be aligned and harmonized, but it may be harder due to excessive external management control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Con: May be driven by external and national, rather than local, interests</td>
<td>May rely on external management agents; can focus on delivery, rather than long-term institution building</td>
<td>Excessive external influence and control may limit involvement in domestic reform processes</td>
<td>Much project aid is not well aligned or harmonized or long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social funds, CDD</td>
<td>Pro: Demand driven, means can be focused on real community needs</td>
<td>Can strengthen local accountable institutions, and promote participation in higher level planning processes</td>
<td>Can promote accountability of local power holders, and possibly contribute to broader state-building</td>
<td>Pooled funding promotes harmonization, a national approach reduces multiple donor ‘community based approaches’. If outcomes government priority can promote alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Con: Can be slow, requires extensive facilitation and support, and some sense of ‘community’</td>
<td>Can lead to parallel structures</td>
<td>Elite capture can reinforce local power holders</td>
<td>Donor pressure to deliver too fast can undermine quality process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint programmes</td>
<td>Pro: National and strategic approach more possible</td>
<td>Relationship to gvt can be negotiated to ensure gvt lead where appropriate</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Promotes harmonization, and maybe alignment or shadow alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Con: Many stakeholders. Can be slow to get going</td>
<td>Relationship to gvt systems can be unclear</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- TC: Technical Cooperation
- N/A: Not Applicable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS</th>
<th>POLITICAL REFORM</th>
<th>GOOD DONORSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-donor trust funds</td>
<td>Pro: Could be used to promote rapid, more coordinated response. Can be good for recurrent expenditure on e.g. govt salaries</td>
<td>Can be focus for DBS, with supervision and TC to reduce risk, can promote capacity building</td>
<td>Widely used for DDR. Access to funds can be conditional on or promote e.g. civil service reform</td>
<td>Promotes harmonization, and maybe alignment or shadow alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Con: Slow</td>
<td>Governance arrangements can dis-empower gvt.</td>
<td>Can overshadow key role of local communities and NGOs. Can get out of sync with political process</td>
<td>If too slow and cumbersome can cause frustration amongst donors and gvt alike</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Funds</td>
<td>Pro: Can provide additional finance for a range of instruments, including service delivery instruments</td>
<td>Research, advocacy, TC functions may help build systems and capacity; potentially useful demonstration effects of alternative service delivery</td>
<td>Potential to influence political / institutional reform through policy dialogue, advocacy</td>
<td>Some GFPs are being oriented to support country-led approaches (e.g. FTI, GFATBM)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Con: Many GFPs not designed for this; earmarking limits flexibility</td>
<td>Risk of creating parallel structures and high transaction costs</td>
<td>Little evidence on supporting political change; most GFPs not designed for this</td>
<td>Risk of creating parallel structures and high transaction costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian aid</td>
<td>Pro: Rapid, can secure access in unstable situations, can work around state, can secure ‘neutral’ space for e.g. health services</td>
<td>Tends to build parallel systems, can be useful if state systems not able or willing to focus on poverty</td>
<td>Humanitarian advocacy can be part of a broader protection strategy</td>
<td>Poolled fund under OCHA could enhance harmonization</td>
</tr>
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<td>Con: Short-term focus, commodity-driven, not often focus on livelihoods</td>
<td>Parallel structures often un-strategic, uncoordinated, not sustainable and not contribute to longer-term state-building</td>
<td>Arguably, humanitarian aid can undermine social contract</td>
<td>Project focus and competitive fund-raising can encourage or justify lack of harmonization</td>
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</table>
A discussion highlighted the following points:

- **Differentiate emergency responses:** Disasters and conflicts need different responses. Ministries of Education do very little for conflict, but could do more for disasters such as the tsunami. Conflict situations are more complicated; natural disasters are easier and form one of UNICEF’s strengths.

- **Target social inclusion:** In supporting basic service provision, we should not be diverted from supporting, and reinforcing, government initiatives to promote social inclusion.

- **Planning modalities:** Some kind of emergency planning would be helpful; for example, mechanisms such as donor pooled contingency funds.

Further discussion concluded that there was very little evidence on SWAps/PBAs in difficult environments, but stressed that preparedness could be accommodated into SWAps if the political will were there. Conflict response at strategic level is more problematic for SWAps, but again can be accommodated if there is political will. The need for emergency preparedness should be factored into SWAps and applies to government/donors as well as communities and teachers.

**References**


8

UNICEF ROLE AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

KEY POINTS

Current engagement in SWApS:
- Gender mainstreaming and a focus on girls
- Integration of cross-sectoral perspectives
- Expanding stakeholder participation and collaboration in planning
- Inclusion of disadvantaged or underserved populations in sector plans
- Piloting of models for scaling up through sector plans
- Capacity building particularly at decentralized level for planning, implementation, and monitoring

Comparative advantages:
- Risk analysis
- Monitoring conditionalities for impact on children
- Providing evidence-based research and documentation
- Operation at decentralized level
- Capacity building
- Human rights-based organization
- Results oriented approach
- Technical link – the ‘missing middle’

Challenges:
- Capacity building for UNICEF staff
- Clear guidance and support on administrative procedures and options in new financing modalities
- Consolidation of the evidence base on successful initiatives at the local level
- Strengthened partnerships and enhanced synergies
- Development of strategies to ensure that key concerns for intersectorality are maintained and enhanced through sector-wide approaches
- Vigilance and continued capacity to ensure that a focus on long-term planning and systems approaches does not crowd out essential targeted measures for disparity reduction
8.1 UNICEF Current Engagement in SWAps

Gabriele Köhler informed the meeting that in 2004, some 25 UNICEF country offices reported some level of involvement in education SWAps or SWAps development. While the degree of engagement varies, common themes emerge around human rights-based approaches and support for policy development, planning processes, stakeholder participation, and implementation of sector plans. Key UNICEF inputs include advocacy, technical assistance, modelling, and some degree of funding or provision of supplies to support the following:

- Gender mainstreaming and a focus on girls;
- Integration of cross-sectoral perspectives;
- Expanding stakeholder participation and collaboration in planning;
- Inclusion of disadvantaged or underserved populations in sector plans;
- Piloting of models for scaling up through sector plans;
- Capacity building – particularly at decentralized level for planning, implementation, and monitoring.

Amanda Seel and Susan Durston identified specific roles being played by UNICEF as including:

- Policy dialogue through Thematic Working Groups and Country Groups / Joint Reviews;
- Lead in development of the SWAp (Bangladesh);
- Capacity-building of governments;
- Leadership in convening development partners (Bangladesh), acting as a neutral broker between host government and multilateral/bilateral agendas;
- Provision of a forum for development partners to develop relationships with each other and government;
- Assistance to governments in defining and harmonizing technical assistance;
- Gap-filling (due to greater flexibility of being outside the pool), particularly for better targeting;
- Channelling of funds of other development partners – but not overall ‘lead’ in terms of financing;
- Ongoing technical/project-type support to specific components – mainly Child Friendly Schools, community participation;
- Support to NGO participation and organization;
- Research studies, championing, support to consultation with and monitoring by civil society (e.g. education journalists in Nepal);
- Involvement in Joint Review missions, which are sub/sector wide, and contribution of analysis and field evidence and selection of issues and themes and cross-sectoral/cross-cutting themes;
- Leadership in emergency response and the potential for coordination moving into reconstruction and development context (Pakistan, Sri Lanka);
- Piloting (all countries).

During discussion, it was concluded that the concept of SWAps is positive in that it gives government ownership. On the negative side is that agencies, including UNICEF, lose some influence over their specific agendas unless they fit with those of all the development partners in the SWAp. However, agencies can gain
influence over policy by being involved in the policy dialogue from the beginning.

There is a ‘double bind’ here: if SWAps are successful, funding will tend to go directly from donors to the programme country, further diminishing UNICEF/UN/NGO influence. It is therefore particularly important that UNICEF and other agencies identify their comparative advantages in order to make best use of scarce resources.

8.2 UNICEF Comparative Advantages

Some comparative advantages or value added of UNICEF in SWAps include:

1. Completing risk analysis and mitigating risks;
2. Monitoring conditionalities for impact on children, particularly excluded groups;

Particular strengths of UNICEF include:

- Governments and development partners trust UNICEF as a result of previous long and continuous engagement.
- UNICEF develops credibility through remaining in-country when many other bilaterals leave in difficult times.
- UNICEF usually has specific strengths vis-à-vis government capacity and strengths of other donors.
- UNICEF has clear structures for policy dialogue.
- UNICEF can complement the work of UNESCO, through operating at sub-national level as well as being located in more countries.

- Other donors are often strong on SWAps structures and agency policies but weaker on implementation experience and technical capacity. UNICEF can provide much-needed expertise in these areas.

Other areas of UNICEF emphasis are:

- **Decentralization**: This is one area UNICEF supports strongly, believing it will contribute to reducing disparities. But the real impact of decentralization on children varies. Once the education sector is funded at the district level (through fiscal decentralization), UNICEF can help to enable poor districts to benefit and disadvantaged households to afford the costs of education.
- **Capacity building**: Capacity building is a key for ensuring the effectiveness of SWAps. Capacities should be analysed and gaps identified for the UN and donors to come in to build capacity of the government. It should be also recognized that donors are also in a learning stage and capacity gaps are not only for the governments but also for donors. It is important to clarify the meaning of capacity development—it does not simply mean hiring consultants.
- **The role of UNICEF as a human rights-based organization with a results-oriented approach**: One of UNICEF’s contributions to SWAps is to advocate UNICEF issues in the sector-wide approach. In India, UNICEF has been in and out of SWAps because one their concerns is whether SWAps really reach every child. UNICEF should contribute to
SWAps, ensuring that its results-based and human rights-based approaches are included.

- **A technical role for UNICEF:** As pointed out by Amanda Seel earlier, more thought perhaps needs to be given as to whether there is now a ‘missing middle’, i.e. a weak link in ensuring that policy decisions are educationally sound and grounded in reality. It could be argued that there remains an important technical role for some development partners, not so much in implementing projects as in supporting sound research, analysis and ground-truthing, to ensure that strategic negotiations have a sound basis. It would seem clear that in many contexts UNICEF might be well-placed to take on this ‘intellectual challenge function’, and is already seeking to play this role with regard to gender and equity issues to some extent.

### 8.3 Challenges

Challenges for UNICEF, with its relatively small budget and limited staff, were identified by Gabriele Köhler as including finding sufficient space in the decision-making and implementation processes and strategically positioning itself so as to continue making a significant impact.

Meaningful participation in sector-wide approaches alongside other major actors with greater financial weight will depend on clear definition of its comparative advantages and ability to offer a ‘total resource package’ to accompany governments in the development, implementation, and monitoring of their education sector plans.

Operationalization of UNGEI partnerships at country level offers significant potential for strengthened collaboration around efforts to influence the wider national education development processes and to mainstream gender concerns within SWAps and FTI processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The UNICEF Menu!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crumbs</strong> – UNICEF as a non-SWAp donor risks getting what is left over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appetizers</strong> – UNICEF can initiate innovative activities and gather evidence that is cutting edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spices</strong> – UNICEF can add value to all initiatives</td>
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She summarized the main challenges as:

- Capacity building for UNICEF staff to prepare them to adapt effectively to rapidly changing development assistance environments and engage in policy dialogue at the wider sectoral level;
- Clear guidance and support on administrative procedures and options in new financing modalities, joint programming, and leveraging of resources for children;
- Consolidation of the evidence base on successful initiatives at the local level in order to present the case for scaling up/replication through national plans and sector-wide approaches;
- Strengthened partnerships and enhanced synergies – including through UNGEI, within UNCTs, in alliance with civil society organizations and children and young people themselves – to bolster UNICEF’s presence at the table
and to expand the range of participation and views represented by various education stakeholders, including at decentralized levels;

- Development of strategies to ensure that key concerns for intersectorality (beyond the Ministry of Education), human rights-based approaches, gender sensitivity and mainstreaming, equity, local level empowerment and quality in education are maintained and enhanced through sector-wide approaches that embrace both formal and non-formal delivery modes for education;

- Vigilance and continued capacity – from the human rights point of view – to ensure that a focus on long-term planning and systems approaches does not crowd out essential targeted measures for disparity reduction in cases where the rights to education are not being fulfilled, including in situations of emergency and fragile states and for the most marginalized and vulnerable children.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

KEY POINTS

UN reform and SWApS – defining UNICEF’s position:
- UN reform and harmonization must allow for flexible participation of UN agencies in SWApS and PBAs
- UNICEF should have a clear strategy for involvement in PBAs and SWApS
- Highlight UNICEF’s strengths, for example the capacity to fill the ‘missing middle’ and the ability to operate flexibly to ‘fill the gaps’ not covered by broader programmes
- Define contexts in which it might make sense for UNICEF to take a lead role, or participate in a pooling arrangement

Evidence bases at regional level:
- Regional study to review how issues of social inclusion are being addressed in education SWApS
- Regional policy workshop to address inclusion through SWApS
- Utilize regional study at country level to improve planning as well as monitoring

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Country level – general:
- Hold country level workshops examining country-specific issues
- Circulate and discuss more with government and country level partners
- Encourage donor partners to evaluate their own procedures
- In countries where SWApS have still not started, begin the groundwork
- Bring in government at the very start of the SWAp process.
- Bring in the voice of stakeholders in SWAp reviews
- Support improvement of indicators and monitoring
- Use TA to ensure that nothing is lost in transitions
- Use pilots strategically for policy development
- Carry out more in-depth case studies
- Mainstream best practice

Country level – within UNICEF:
- Maximize UNICEF’s strengths for the benefit of the sector rather than for projects
- Ensure that UNICEF staff are technically informed at the policy level, and have a mix in their teams relevant to the context
- Split sector coordination roles and UNICEF programming
- Ensure necessary capacity building of UNICEF staff
Several next steps were identified which would involve different aspects of the issues as well as actors at various levels.

9.1 UN Reform and SWAps – Defining UNICEF’s Position

UN reform and harmonization must take into account participation of UN agencies in SWAps and PBAs. Particular attention should be given to flexible procedures so that they can individually or jointly participate with minimum procedural restraints. (For example, UNICEF currently can only fund through governments and so cannot participate in pooling arrangements which are managed by one of the development partners.)

As previously noted, it is often difficult at country level to synchronize UN reform processes and structures with the process of individual agencies’ engagement in SWAps, particularly where UN agencies have different regulations.

As also noted, there are several ways of participating, ranging from pooling funds to joining broad-based partnerships, and the meeting heard examples of the dynamics within different situations on the ground which would suggest the need for local assessment of the way forward.

Despite these local conditions, nevertheless the meeting suggested that UNICEF HQ should prepare a clear strategy and guidelines which would:

a) highlight UNICEF’s strengths, for example the capacity to fill the ‘missing middle’ – bridging technical and strategic issues – and the ability to operate flexibly to ‘fill the gaps’ not covered by broader programmes;

b) define the contexts in which it might make sense for UNICEF to take a lead role;

c) define the contexts in which it might make sense to participate in a pooled funding arrangement;

d) highlight UNICEF’s mandate and how it could be played out in a SWAp for the benefit of children’s rights.

On the basis of the discussion of the meeting, especially the third day, a set of notes and suggestions was sent to HQ for inclusion in UNICEF’s overall position paper on SWAps. (See Annex B for the notes and suggestions sent, and Annex C for UNICEF’s position paper.)

One of the benefits of UN reform and an UNDAF process would be to ensure that the multi-sectoral programmes and policies with which the many UN agencies are involved in a country promote and support the issue discussed in this meeting, the issue of inclusion in education, as many of the solutions lie outside the sector itself.

9.2 Increasing the Evidence Base and Generating Support to Policy and Practice

Based on the Lead Paper and the ensuing discussion during the meeting, it was decided to reinforce the suggestion from the regional education adviser, Susan Durston, that a regional study be carried out to review the issues of social inclusion in individual countries and how the educational needs of excluded groups were being addressed in education SWAps and PBAs.
This has been translated into a **regional study** led by UNICEF Regional Office in which Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are participating and will result in a **regional policy workshop**, with the involvement of governments, and guidelines on strategies to address inclusion through SWAps (see the outline attached as Annex D).

At **country level** the study could be carried out with other partners and infused into SWAp processes. It would be utilized to improve planning as well as monitoring, and the output timed to coincide with the **Annual Joint Review Missions** and the **MTRs** of two of the countries’ education plan periods. The process should also refer to the broad partnership approach to meeting the needs of marginalized groups, and the financial modalities involved.

### 9.3 Improving the Process on the Ground

In addition to the study above, which would lead to improvements in process and impact, many useful suggestions were given at the meeting for action at **country level**.

#### 9.3.1 General

- Hold country level workshops similar to this regional workshop but examining issues that pertain to specific countries.
- Circulate and discuss more with government and country level partners. Define what is capacity development and needs in different contexts (e.g. does it include organizational development) and harmonize with others; build capacity through giving real responsibilities.
- Encourage donor partners to evaluate their own procedures: **real donor harmonization needs behaviour change.** There are many structural and process issues.
- In countries where SWAps have still not started, begin the groundwork – for example, criteria and standards need to be developed. *(Document this so that countries like Bhutan can learn from others and utilize when the time is ripe. Similarly, Pakistan will have new sector strategies following the earthquake, which can pave the way for a SWAp.)*
- Bring in government at the very start of the SWAp process.
- Bring in the voice of stakeholders in SWAp reviews.
- Support the improvement of indicators and the process of monitoring.
- Use TA to ensure that nothing is lost in transitions.
- Use pilots strategically for policy development (which implies agreed piloting structures from the outset). Examine possible actions that can be taken forward at country level.
- Carry out more in-depth case studies.
- Mainstream best practice and strengthen institutional structures for scaling up and innovation. There is need to feed this into the global arena. Collate and share documentation.
- Organize exchange visits and in-country workshops with a range of stakeholders.

#### 9.3.2 Within UNICEF

- Maximize UNICEF’s strengths, e.g. communication, for the benefit of the sector rather than for projects (policy advocacy, parental rights, etc.).
- Ensure that UNICEF staff are technically informed at the policy level, and have a mix in their teams relevant to the context.
- Within UNICEF on the ground, split sector coordination roles and UNICEF programming. This would require full-time involvement of a person, so a separate post might be needed. Agencies requesting UNICEF to take a lead or full-time involvement (on their behalf and otherwise, such as in the FTI) should be prevailed upon to fund such a post.
- Ensure necessary capacity building of UNICEF staff.
The meeting examined the assumption that the new aid modalities, termed SWAps and PBAs, which come with their mechanisms of pooled funding, sector budget support, etc., can make a difference to education systems and the children they serve. The lead paper indicated that this is not necessarily the case, particularly for excluded groups, and that clearly strategies for meeting these needs are either not well understood and researched or not implemented for other reasons.

Many large donors are keen on these approaches but have also not examined sufficiently their own processes of engagement, both to ensure that the needs of particular children are met at the same time as strengthening capacity of governments to run their own systems. UNICEF’s dilemma is also where to ‘best fit’ within these major needs and forces.

There is a growing body of knowledge on who is excluded from education systems and even why, but much less on how they can be included, particularly in large sector programmes. Work will be needed on what will bring children into the system, how to retain them, how the system is monitored, and what educational transactions within it will afford a discrimination-free and successful outcome for these children.

As discussed in the meeting, situations change, and a SWAp is subject to the sudden onset of emergencies, protracted emergencies, changes in the robustness and democratic nature of governments, and changes of governments in donor countries on which they often depend. The SWAp designed in peacetime in a country which then slides into conflict brings its own concerns both for delivery of the service, and as donors reassess the fiduciary and other risks, and endanger the aid flows to the sector. Evidence suggests that it is the marginalized in these contexts who are likely to lose out.

It is therefore ever more imperative to understand the processes at work, and to make a determined effort to make sure that socially excluded groups have the best possible chance to fulfil their right to an education.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction


Defining the Issues: SWAps, PBAs and Disparities


Monitoring, Targeting and Impact


UNESCO. Gender-Sensitive Education Statistics and Indicators: A Practical Guide. pp. 6–9.

**Addressing Disparities: Lessons Learned From the Field**


**Who Plays Which Roles within SWAps and PBAs?**


**Harmonization and Collaboration: Making It Work for the Disadvantaged**


Ireland Aid (2000). *Seminar on Sector Wide Approaches with a Focus on Partnership, June 2000*.

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**SWAps in Difficult Environments**

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# Programme

SOCIAL AND GENDER DISPARITY in EDUCATION SWAps and PBAs  
REGIONAL MEETING for UNICEF SOUTH ASIA  
20-21 February 2006  
Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu

## MONDAY, 20 FEBRUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>09:00 – 09:30</td>
<td>Arrival and Registration</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Chair:</strong> Esther Guluma, Deputy Director, UNICEF, ROSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:30 – 10:30</td>
<td>Opening remarks from UNICEF ROSA</td>
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<td>Cecilia Lotse, Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia</td>
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### SESSION 1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the meeting  
Susan Durston, Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF South Asia

**New Aid Modalities:** Paulette Nichols, Senior Programme Officer, Strategic Planning and Programme Guidance, Division of Policy and Planning, NYHQ

**Plenary**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 – 11:00</td>
<td>TEA / COFFEE BREAK</td>
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<td>11:00 – 13:00</td>
<td>SESSION 2: DEFINING THE ISSUE – SWAps, PBAs AND DISPARITIES</td>
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<td><strong>Chair:</strong> Susan Durston, Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF, ROSA</td>
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Presentations and plenary discussion:

**Social Inclusion in SWAps and PBAs: initial questions**  
Gabriele Koehler, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF, ROSA
Addressing Social and Gender Disparity through SWAps and PBAs in education: What is the evidence and the way forward?
Amanda Seel, consultant

**Plenary**

13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 15:30 SESSION 3: MONITORING TARGETING AND IMPACT
*Chair: Yasmin Haque, Senior Programme Officer, UNICEF Sri Lanka*

Tools for Measuring Gains in addressing disparity: Views from the Field
Dr. Lynn Bennett, lead Social Scientist, World Bank Nepal
Koto Kanno, Representative, UNESCO, Nepal

**Groupwork**

15:30 – 16:00 TEA / COFFEE BREAK

16:00 – 17:30 SESSION 4: ADDRESSING DISPARITIES: LESSONS FROM THE FIELD
*Chair: James Jennings, Chief, Education, UNICEF, Bangladesh*

Experience from SWAps in South Asian Countries:
Madura Mangalika Wehella, Deputy Director of Education, MOE, Sri Lanka
Chetana Kohli, Education Project Officer, UNICEF, India
Samphe Lhalungpa, Chief, Education Section, UNICEF, Nepal

Attempts to address disparities in the Cambodian SWAp:
Presentation and comment on the evaluation
Persy So, Education Programme Officer, UNICEF Cambodia

**Questions from the floor**
TUESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY

09:00 – 09:30       Wrap up of Previous Day

09:30 – 11:00       SESSION 5: WHICH ROLES WITHIN SWAps AND PBAs?
    Chair: Samphe Lhalungpa, Chief, Education Section, UNICEF Nepal

    The experience of Bangladesh by Brajesh Panth, ADB
    Bangladesh, James Jennings, UNICEF Bangladesh

    Group work

10:45 – 11:15       TEA / COFFEE BREAK

11:30 – 13:00       SESSION 6: HARMONIZATION AND COLLABORATION:
    MAKING IT WORK FOR THE DISADVANTAGED
    Chair: Gabriele Koehler, Social policy Advisor, UNICEF, ROSA

    Implications of the Paris Declaration: Paulette Nichols, Senior Programme Officer, Strategic Planning and Programme Guidance, Division of Policy and Planning, NYHQ

    Harmonising procedures in SWAps and PBAs: Ian Pett, Advisor for Child Survival and development, UNICEF ROSA

    Discussion from participants

    Collaboration with other sectors: William Fellows, Advisor for Water and Sanitation, UNICEF ROSA

13:00 – 14:00       LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 15:30       SESSION 7: SWAps IN DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENTS
    Chair: Ian McLeod, HIV/AIDS Advisor, UNICEF, ROSA

    Panel discussion: Dina Crassati (UNICEF HQ), Yasmin Haque (UNICEF Sri Lanka), Susan Clapham (DFID Nepal-Health Sector)

15:30 – 16:00       TEA / COFFEE BREAK
16:00 – 17:30  
**SESSION 8: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR FUTURE PROGRESS**  
*Chair: Susan Durston, ROSA*  

*Input by Amanda Seel, consultant, based on the deliberations during the meeting*

17:30 – 18:00  
**Conclusion and Closure**  
Cecilia Lotse, Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

18:30  
**RECEPTION FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE ISSUES PAPER SERIES “BETTER EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA” WITH THE FIRST PUBLICATION.**

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**Outcome of Day 1 and 2:** Identification of issues and strategies for improved inclusion of the disadvantaged in sector-wide and programme-based approaches to education.
List of Participants

AFGHANISTAN
1. Gul Wahidi, Project Officer – Education, UNICEF Kabul

BANGLADESH

BHUTAN
4. Ruby Noble, Project Officer – Education, UNICEF Thimphu

INDIA
5. Chetana Kohli, Project Officer – Education, UNICEF New Delhi

MALDIVES
6. Ameena Mohamad Didi, Project Officer – Education, UNICEF Male’

NEPAL
7. Samphe Lhalungpa, Chief - Education, UNICEF Kathmandu
8. Sumon Tuladhar, Project Officer – Education, UNICEF Kathmandu

GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL
9. Indra Bahadur Kunwar, Section Officer, Planning Division, Ministry of Education & Sports
10. Ram Swarup Sinha, Director, Department of Education, Sanothimi, Ministry of Education

PAKISTAN
11. Tariq Saeed, Project Officer – Education, UNICEF Lahore

SRI LANKA
12. Yasmin Haque, Sr. Programme Officer, UNICEF Colombo
13. Padmini Ranaweera, Project Officer – Education, UNICEF Colombo

GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA
14. Madura Mangalika Wehella, Deputy Director of Education, Ministry of Education

RESOURCE PERSONS
15. Amanda Seel, Consultant
16. Brajesh Panth, ADB, Bangladesh
17. Kiran Bhatia, Adviser – Gender & Socio Cultural Research, UNFPA/CST, Kathmandu
18. Eduard Jonstra, Adviser on Statistics & PDS, UNFPA/CST, Kathmandu
19. Lynn Bennett, Lead Social Scientist, World Bank, Kathmandu
22. Susan Clapham, Health Adviser, DFID, Kathmandu

SWAps PARTNERS INCLUDING DONOR COUNTERPARTS IN NEPAL
23. Mohan Aryal, World Bank
24. Fredi Munger, Team Leader, ADB
25. Krishna R. Pandey, Sr. Project Implementation Officer, ADB
26. Andrew Hall, Economic Adviser, DFID
27. Else N. Moller, Counsellor, DANIDA
28. Shiva Bhusal, Sr. Programme Officer, DANIDA
29. Elin Gjedrem, Second Secretary, Embassy of Norway
30. Keith Leslie, Save the Children US
31. Koto Kanno, Representative, UNESCO
32. Kristin Iversen, ED Programme Expert/ Gender Focal Point, UNESCO
33. Pramila Ghimire, Programme Officer/ Education Focal Point, WFP
34. Krishna Lamsal, Programme Officer, JICA
35. Jayanthi Subba, Education Adviser, FINNIDA

UNICEF REGIONAL OFFICE
36. Esther Guluma, Deputy Regional Director
37. Susan Durston, Regional Education Adviser
38. Gabriele Koehler, Regional Adviser Social Policy
39. Ian Pett, Regional Adviser, Child Survival and Development
40. Adele Khudr, Child Protection Officer
41. William Fellows, Regional WES Adviser
42. Teresa Stuart, Regional Programme Communication Adviser
43. Satish Raj Pandey, Project Officer, Maternal Health WRLH
44. Michiko Ono, Asst. Programme Officer
45. Nancy Spence, Consultant
UNICEF and SWAps in the Education Sector

In South Asia there are varying types of SWAps programme-based approaches:

- Nepal has a primary subsector SWAp (five pooling donors, many funds outside the pool) and a secondary subsector programme (two donors). UNICEF is considering putting its funding for central level into the pool as there is an inner and outer circle of donors.
- Bangladesh has a subsector programme, PEDP II, where UNICEF funds are parallel.
- Sri Lanka has a World Bank-led sector programme. The government is pressurizing all donors to fund through budget support.
- India has the SSA – a very different arrangement within a federal set-up.

As an agency with continuing engagement in the sector, UNICEF has a comparative advantage. However, country contexts are very different and global guidelines should be flexible enough to allow country-level decisions on the type of engagement. The following is a synthesis of ideas on roles and implications of engagement in SWAps.

Roles Currently Being Played by UNICEF

- Policy dialogue through Thematic Working Groups and Country Groups / Joint Reviews
- Lead in development of the SWAp (Bangladesh)
- Capacity-building with government
- Leadership in convening development partners (Bangladesh); acting as a neutral broker between host government and multi/bilateral agendas

Advantages of Engagement in SWAps

Through participating in SWAps, UNICEF can:

- Influence policy of government and development partners
- Bring the voice of children into the policy framework (who else would?)
Mainstream and scale up priority issues — equity, quality
Understand the bigger picture and act more strategically.

Many agencies are not present below national level. In those countries with a decentralized political structure, a straight-jacket approach may not work. UNICEF is well-placed to lead development of SWAP in provinces/states where others are not present.

Factors Affecting UNICEF’s Role and Potential Effectiveness
- Previous engagement has proved vital — trust, etc.
- UNICEF develops credibility through remaining in a country when others such as bilaterals leave in difficult times
- UNICEF’s specific strengths in a country vis-à-vis government capacity and strengths of other donors
- Structures for policy dialogue — inclusive and clear structure (Cambodia, Uganda) versus inner and outer circles (Nepal, Vietnam?)
- Role and capacity of UNESCO — which is not strong in most countries
- The wider donor mix — i.e. presence of donors who are strong on SWAps and could be strong on agency policy but weak on implementation experience; presence/absence of donors with strong technical capacity. Many donor agencies now have development professionals rather than technical education experience
- Donor relations and dynamics (though UNICEF is also a part of this).

Possible Implications
- Capacity to play the ‘lead challenger’ (intellectual challenge function). Filling the missing middle — bridging technical and strategic issues. Should UNICEF pick up pieces which are not funded and/or have a strategic line? (Crumbs — UNICEF as a non-SWAp donor risks getting what is left over; Appetizers — UNICEF can initiate innovative activities and gather evidence that is cutting edge; Spices — UNICEF can add value to all initiatives)
- UN reform and harmonization must take into account participation of UN agencies in SWAps and PBAs. Particular attention should be given to flexible procedures so that they can individually or jointly participate with minimum procedural constraints
- SWAps should be seen as a coordinated and comprehensive approach and the discussion should not focus on funding and/or administrative modalities
- SWAps versus more traditional approaches is not an either/or!
- Within UNICEF on the ground, splitting sector coordination roles and UNICEF programming. This would require full-time involvement of a person, so a separate post might be needed. Agencies requesting UNICEF to take a lead or full-time involvement (on their behalf and otherwise, such as in the FTI) should be prevailed upon to fund such a post
- Maximizing UNICEF’s strengths, e.g. communication for the benefit of the sector rather than for projects (policy advocacy, parental rights, etc.)
- UNICEF staff to be technically informed at the policy level, and have a mix in their teams relevant to the context
- Defining what is capacity development and needs in different contexts (e.g. does it include organizational...
development) and harmonizing with others
• Specific capacity needs for supporting governments in SWAp preparation, management of change
• Definition of contexts in which it might make sense for UNICEF to take a lead financing role (e.g. smaller countries, donor orphans). However, does UNICEF have the capacity or want to focus on financial management?
• Definition of contexts where it makes sense for UNICEF to pool funds (even a small amount) in order to join the inner circle of donors (e.g. Nepal)
• Recognition that at present UNICEF can only fund through government, not through other development partners (so that, for example, in Bangladesh pooling funds would not be possible as ADB manages the funds)
• Using pilots strategically for policy development, implying agreed piloting structures from the outset
• Mainstreaming best practice, and strengthening institutional structures for scaling up and innovation
• Unpacking initiatives such as Child Friendly Schools in terms of actual policies/strategies, linking to ideas of school-based development / minimum standards) plus better monitoring/evidence. (Mainstreaming processes rather than project scale-up)
• Working with development partners with strong SWAp experience and capacity
• UNICEF is well placed to keep gender and equity issues on the agenda. Support to quality research and studies on equity/gender issues (as in Rwanda with DFID)
• Guidance on processes for addressing gender and equity in SWAps – building on DAC guidelines, focusing on processes, practical issues, examples of good practice. UNGEI could play a facilitative role
• Can UNICEF stand back and join with others monitoring on sector indicators, rather than outputs related to inputs?
• Contributing RBM methodology and focus on MDGs.
• Branding – is UNICEF willing to lose its branding in the interests of joint action?
• UNICEF as generator of knowledge – based on identification of key gaps – access to latest 'cutting edge' thinking
• Should UNICEF be a conduit for other donors or a strategic partner?
• Those in SWAps would not go back to the project approach!!
## I. Introduction

### A. Background

1. This is the third paper UNICEF has presented to the Executive Board on sector-wide approaches (SWAps). The first was presented in 2001, followed by a progress report in 2003 (E/ICEF/2001/10 and E/ICEF/2003/6). Additionally, at the request of the Executive Board in decision 2001/11 (E/ICEF/2001/6) and discussions emanating from the 2003 paper, UNICEF has regularly reported on progress achieved through the Executive Director’s annual reports to the Executive Board. The submission of this document was delayed because of the need for extensive consultations.

* The submission of this document was delayed because of the need for extensive consultations.

** E/ICEF/2006/10.
Executive Board, country programme documents, mid-term reviews and country programme evaluations.

2. The UNICEF experience with joint programmes, including SWAps, is discussed in another paper presented to the 2006 annual session of the Executive Board, “Report on the implementation experience of joint programming and joint programmes by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF since 2004” (E/ICEF/2006/13) and the Addendum detailing the UNICEF experience (E/ICEF/2006/13/Add.1). The joint programme modality of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) shares many objectives with those of SWAps, including enhancing coordination, effectiveness and efficiency in supporting national goals and reducing transaction costs for Governments. Joint programming guidance encourages United Nations agencies to participate in SWAps, but so far there is little evidence of such involvement.

B. Brief history and definition of SWAps

3. A SWAp is defined as an approach in which all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy, strategy and expenditure plan under Government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on Government procedures to disburse and account for all funds.¹

4. SWAps became a social development modality in the early 1990s, and since then, the number of countries using SWAps has accelerated. By 1999, and in recognition of the need for a comprehensive look at the entire range of development sectors, a related instrument, the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), had been introduced. These two instruments can be complementary, with the latter providing an overall framework for the former. Generally, national sector programmes are anchored within the overarching framework of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

5. It is important to view the SWAp as a dynamic process rather than an end point, and one that varies considerably across different countries. A SWAp is clearly not equivalent to pooled financing or to general budget support. Nevertheless, there is no full agreement in the development community as to whether pooled funding is an essential element of a SWAp and whether some form of government-managed, flexible funding mechanism (whether a pooled donor fund that is kept separate from other government funds or sector budget support that is merged with other government budgets) should be included in the definition or rather regarded as an option.

6. Nevertheless, a consensus is emerging that SWAps should include a commitment to move toward this sort of funding arrangement as and when national systems are considered adequate. Hence, a mechanism for flexible, sustainable and predictable funding is usually included among the elements of a SWAp.

7. An essential element of a SWAp (and of a PRS) regardless of the funding mechanism is a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). A multi-year public expenditure planning instrument, an MTEF is used to set out future budget requirements for public services and to assess the resource implications of future policy changes and any new programmes.

C. Recent trends in the global environment
8. In September 2005, world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and the need to mobilize “the international community at the local, national, regional and global levels”.2 Recent trends in the donor community under the initiative of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) had fed into and had given context to this landmark commitment. In 2003, world and development leaders met in Rome at the High-Level Forum on Harmonization in an effort to harmonize and align development assistance around national policies and strategies. In 2004, a round-table discussion took place in Marrakesh, Morocco, addressing the need to manage for development results, and was followed in 2005 by the Paris High-Level Forum on aid effectiveness. The outcome of that meeting, referred to as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, established that development assistance works best when fully aligned with national priorities and needs.3

9. UNICEF, as a UNDG member, supports and promotes harmonization and alignment initiatives and is also part of the UNDG working team on the application of the Paris Declaration at country level. SWAps are a part of these initiatives, helping to improve development effectiveness, and United Nations reform more specifically, through support to harmonization and the alignment of the United Nations country teams (UNCTs) with other key development actors. Recent reports on SWAps by other agencies confirm a continued strong interest in these instruments.

10. In February 2005, UNDG articulated its position on sector support, highlighting the important role the United Nations can play in conceptualizing and supporting the implementation of sector programmes.4 A notable feature of that paper is the commitment to amend by end-2005 any policies and regulations, for example, basket or pooled funding, that prevent agencies from fully participating in sector support arrangements. In April 2005, the DAC Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET) — the joint donor and programme country working group on poverty impact assessment — issued a working paper5 discussing a range of factors driving the need for improved collaboration on

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2 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/60/L.1).
poverty reduction modalities, including SWAps. Following this, in May 2005, UNDG agreed to an action plan for follow-up to the Paris Declaration, including plans to develop new guidance on SWAps and direct budget support (see footnote 3). As a result, in December 2005, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued draft programme and operational guidelines, “UNDP Role in a Changing Aid Environment: Direct Budget Support, SWAps, Basket Funds”, which is expected to be finalized in 2006 and will constitute an important input to the UNDG guidance to be issued later this year on these issues.

11. The different methods of funding and budget support have various implications. In the Paris Declaration, bilateral donors showed a renewed commitment to predictable funds given to general budget support (GBS) rather than sectors. To some extent, when a change is made from sectoral support to GBS, the motivating factor to develop sectoral (rather than PRS) strategies may be diminished. However, the move to GBS is neither universal nor irreversible. In recent months, for example, several donors have shifted financial support back from GBS to sector-specific budget support, or even projects, in two major countries.

II. UNICEF involvement in SWAps

12. In line with the commitments made in the Paris Declaration, UNICEF continues to support the building of national capacities at sectoral and cross-sectoral levels. In this regard, UNICEF involvement in SWAps has several aims: provide technical advice on child-related issues; advocate for full coverage of services for children; and strengthen the capacity of Governments to exercise effective leadership over development policies, programmes and budgets that are child-centered and oriented to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and to manage resources and improve decision-making for results.

13. In order to further improve its role as a partner in SWAps, UNICEF in 2004 commissioned the Institute for Health Sector Development to analyse the engagement of UNICEF in SWAps. In its report, the Institute established a number of recommendations for organizational policy and staff capacity development, which are being acted upon.

A. Mapping SWAps

14. UNICEF involvement in SWAps has focused primarily on the health and education sectors, and more recently on water and sanitation. Because of the cross-sectoral nature of several critical issues, such as early childhood development, nutrition and HIV/AIDS, it has sometimes been challenging for Governments to reflect such issues fully within SWAps. But over time, ways have been found explicitly to mainstream these themes within health and

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6 “UNICEF at cross-roads: how to be a player in sector-wide approaches and harmonization” (Institute for Health Sector Development, 2004).
education SWAps. On the other hand, children protection issues, such as prevention of violence against children and women, child labour and orphaned and vulnerable children, have been mainly reflected in PRSs rather than SWAps. These issues had been incorporated into 14 of approximately 55 PRSs completed by the end of 2004.

15. Although most SWAps have been developed and implemented by African countries, SWAps have also been developed in Asia, in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and to a lesser extent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Initially, most SWAps were process-intensive, often linked to sector reforms, particularly in health and education. The past few years, however, have witnessed a significant rise in attention to the allocative efficiency and impact of SWAps. This shift in focus has been prompted by the need for countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as the target year draws near, by the accelerated efforts required of countries lagging in progress on the Goals, and by the increased emphasis on managing for development results. Processes, of course, are not ends in themselves but rather means to achieve improved and sustained outcomes in health, nutrition, education or water, sanitation and hygiene.

16. In all regions, education has led the other sectors in the number of SWAps, followed by the health sector. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, where the approach is more developed and the experience richer, SWAps have branched out to include even more sectors.

B. UNICEF involvement by region and country

17. UNICEF is committed to supporting national authorities in whichever development planning mechanisms they adopt. Given the close relationship and complementarity of the SWAps and the PRS, UNICEF involvement in both is reported here.

18. **East and Southern Africa.** Twelve countries are implementing or developing SWAps, primarily in the areas of health and education, but also in water and sanitation and agriculture (see the annex). An evaluation of the role of UNICEF in education SWAps in 12 countries was undertaken during 2005, complementing the health SWAp study of 2004. An education SWAp resource pack that was developed helped to strengthen UNICEF staff capacity in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. New partnerships were forged with the World Bank with the aim of securing long-term sustainable strategies. These included plans for supporting vitamin A Supplementation in national policies, with budget allocation through PRSs and SWAps. In October 2005, the UNICEF Kenya country office decided to contribute to a sector budget support pooled fund in Kenya.

19. Malawi has a fully functioning SWAp in health, one in education that is just reaching implementation, and one in water and sanitation that is being formulated through a national task force chaired by UNICEF. UNICEF is fully
engaged in the Malawi health SWAp and in 2005 became the sole procurement agent for antiretroviral and began chairing the health donor group. In Mozambique, SWAps have been established in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and agriculture. In 2005 UNICEF became vice-chair of the Partners Forum for the HIV/AIDS SWAp and the multilateral focal “donor” for the health SWAp. Ethiopia currently has two SWAps, in the health and education sectors. In Madagascar, UNICEF played a lead role in providing technical support to the Ministry of Health to develop a Millennium Development Goals-friendly, outcome-oriented MTEF in health, using the innovative Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks approach.

20. Ethiopia operates two SWAps, in health and education. In education, two action plans have been fully implemented and a third is currently being implemented. UNICEF participated in the development of all three plans, through staff secondment, funding of the programmes and implementation monitoring. UNICEF also contributed to the design of the harmonization plan and signed the Code of Conduct in October 2005 together with 15 other multilateral and bilateral partners. Ethiopia is also moving towards a SWAp in water and sanitation.

21. Fourteen countries in the region have formal PRSs either completed or in draft. In addition, Angola has an interim PRS, and Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa have national poverty reduction strategies. UNICEF involvement in PRS or national strategy development was comprehensive and included commenting on drafts (16 countries), attending meetings (14 countries), advocacy for integration of children’s rights (14 countries), and provision of data (11 countries). UNICEF was also involved in collaborating with or supporting some Governments in drafting or reviewing the documents (8 countries).

22. **West and Central Africa.** SWAps continued to be implemented in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Senegal, with strong UNICEF support. Health SWAps were also launched in Cameroon and Mauritania. The preparation for an education SWAp is under way in Benin, the Gambia and Ghana, with UNICEF involvement. The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal are at various stages of preparation for their revised PRSs. Other countries, including Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau and Togo, have yet to prepare a full PRS. However, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo have started the preparation of full PRSs with UNICEF involvement. UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Government of Mauritania in the revision of its PRS.

23. **East Asia and Pacific.** Cambodia is developing a second education SWAp. UNICEF is taking a lead role in coordinating support to this process, providing a donor coordination adviser and technical assistance for sector plan development, which includes facilitating inputs from more than 50 education non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the SWAp partnership. Lao People’s Democratic Republic has a PRSP and is working towards an
education SWAp. Solomon Islands has an education SWAp, with some UNICEF involvement. In Papua New Guinea, UNICEF has contributed to the strengthening of the Health Sector Investment Programme by providing technical guidelines for monitoring service delivery and the development of advocacy and training materials, particularly in safe motherhood and child health programmes. UNICEF and the Asian Development Bank co-hosted an education SWAp meeting in Hanoi in November 2004, inviting key donors supporting five countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam). Among the outcomes are plans for follow-up workshops of donors and Government partners in three countries and a publication of the proceedings. UNICEF is contributing PRSs in most countries, but not always in the context of an existing PRS specified by the World Bank/Asian Development Bank.

24. **South Asia.** SWAps are not used in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, but the country has an interim national development strategy, equivalent to an interim PRS, which was developed in 2005 with UNICEF participation. Bangladesh has a vibrant collaboration in SWAps between the Government and its partners. UNICEF is a member of the consortium on health, nutrition, and the Population Sector Programme led by the World Bank. In Bangladesh, the content of the health SWAp has now been expanded so that infant and young child feeding is mainstreamed into the national health, population and nutrition programme. Also in Bangladesh, a new SWAp in primary education for 2006-2009 was developed in 2005 with UNICEF as chair for the donor group.

25. UNICEF is involved in the health sector SWAp in India, especially in the subsectors of sanitation, Integrated Management of Childhood Illness, and safe motherhood. UNICEF also collaborates with the World Bank in the areas of nutrition, education and water and sanitation.

26. An underlying intention of the health sector strategy approved in Nepal in 2003 was to move the health sector towards strategic planning and a SWAp. The sector is slowly moving towards joint planning, monitoring and review. UNICEF participates in the monthly meetings of the External Development Partners, supporting the SWAp process. In Sri Lanka, UNICEF is collaborating with the World Bank to promote joint planning and programming by key donors in the education sector.

27. **Middle East and North Africa.** There are currently no formal SWAps. However, the recently established cluster/sector working group approach to humanitarian coordination is working well in Iraq, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Sudan. UNICEF is the coordinator for the education, nutrition and water and sanitation sectors and for the child protection subsector in Iraq. The role varies depending on the country context and partners involved.

28. **The Americas and Caribbean.** Few countries have SWAps. Bolivia has an education SWAp, for which UNICEF has provided technical assistance and
aligned its cooperation with the sector strategy. In Honduras, the Education for All initiative is in the process of becoming a SWAp.

29. **Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.** SWAps have not been applied widely in the region. So far, only Kyrgyzstan has a SWAp, in the health sector, for which UNICEF is one of the signatories. However, SWAps are also planned in education (Tajikistan and Turkey) and are being considered in Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro). Eleven countries have a PRS. UNICEF involvement in the development, review or implementation of the strategies has varied, but has generally taken advantage of the opportunity to advocate for a specific focus on child poverty, the inclusion of *A World Fit for Children* or Millennium Development Goals indicators, and use of data from DevInfo or multiple indicator cluster surveys. To strengthen a child focus in the PRS, UNICEF undertook an analysis of Millennium Development Goals/medium-term strategic plan indicators in the PRSs of three countries (Albania, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan). This included mapping of PRS policies for child and youth poverty. Five of the six country studies on child poverty undertaken in 2005 have been completed. The child poverty report on the Russian Federation, launched in 2005, has contributed to wider policy dialogue at the national level.

30. **Across regions, a specific way that UNICEF is mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into sector processes is through engagement with the Bold Initiative to Abolish School Fees, which seeks to support and promote fee abolition in countries ready to undertake this policy shift. This move, integrated into sector processes, will benefit vulnerable children. However, evidence in countries that have abolished fees indicates that orphaned children, including those orphaned by AIDS, do not benefit proportionately. Therefore, UNICEF is seeking to ensure that children made vulnerable due to HIV/AIDS are taken into account in school fee abolition plans. UNICEF is also promoting the integration of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and paediatric care support and treatment into SWAps.**

### C. Involvement of other United Nations agencies

31. **The involvement of United Nations agencies in SWAps is generally consistent with the agencies’ mandates.** There is usually a core group of supporting agencies, with others joining as needed. UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are normally involved in support to health SWAps and are sometimes joined by UNDP or the World Food Programme (WFP). In education SWAps, the partners usually include UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with complementary involvement by other agencies as befits the situation in each country.

32. **Experience has shown that in many countries (Ethiopia, for example) the combined strength of the UNCT working together has improved the quality of**
policy dialogues in the health and education SWAps and that this contribution is highly appreciated by both Governments and bilateral donors.

D. How others view UNICEF participation
33. In many countries, UNICEF has served as “honest broker”, bridging different viewpoints of Governments and donors, particularly concerning the need to combine an outcome-driven approach with a systems-strengthening approach, in the promotion of accelerated and sustained progress towards the Millennium Development Goals with support from both “outcome-oriented” and “systems-oriented” partners. UNICEF can sometimes also assist in filling gaps: for example in Bangladesh, UNICEF provided immediate funding for much-needed vaccines when SWAp funding was delayed. The appreciation of donors is reflected in the coordination support role UNICEF is assigned to play in many SWAps, as described in preceding paragraphs.

E. Good practices
34. Following years of conflict and instability, during which development assistance was focused on emergency relief and rehabilitation, Cambodia in 2000 initiated the development of a SWAp in education in 2000. The process was supported by the Asian Development Bank and UNICEF, with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, through provision of technical advisory and capacity-building assistance. A specific component of the UNICEF country programme focused on ‘SWAp readiness’. Key aspects included an initial series of SWAp workshops and ongoing medium-term technical advisory support focused on donor-Ministry coordination and partnership processes as well as change management, sector-wide planning and monitoring in the central Ministry and provincial education offices. This support has continued through 2000-2005.

35. In Zambia, the successful components of the UNICEF-initiated Programme for the Advancement of Girls’ Education have been incorporated into the Zambia Education Sector Framework, including the re-entry policy for girls who have been pregnant to return to school and the community participation initiative.

36. UNICEF has played a significant role in East and Southern Africa in advocating for the provision of water and sanitation facilities in schools. At the policy/strategy level, a key result has been the adoption of national guidelines and standards for the provision of water and sanitation in all school construction and rehabilitation. This had led to greater provision of facilities, which in turn has contributed to reduced incidence of water-borne disease. UNICEF has provided technical support combined with evidence-based advocacy across different Ministries, in accordance with responsibilities for water and education.

37. In Mali and Ghana, the Accelerated Child Survival and Development Programme (ACSD) has been mainstreamed into health SWAps, MTEFs, basket funding and budget support. In Ghana, ACSD is being scaled up
nationally, influencing the allocation of funds through SWAps towards child health. In Mali, ACSD forms the backbone of the second phase of the National Health and Development Programme 2004-2009, which incorporates PRS goals and the MTEF budgeting for accelerated child survival. Similar trends are being observed in other ACSD flagship countries.

38. In Uganda, an evidence-based strategy for addressing emergency obstetric care was adopted by the Government and the SWAp partners.

39. The 2004 study by the Institute for Health Sector Development mentions the MTEF as an area where UNICEF is not seen to be particularly active or qualified. In fact, in countries where UNICEF and the World Bank have jointly promoted the use of the Marginal Budgeting for Bottleneck concept and tool in SWAps or related development instruments (PRS and MTEF), this has positively influenced the priority accorded to maternal and child health and nutrition outcomes in results-based budgeting. Examples of these countries include Benin, Ethiopia, India, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania and Rwanda, where, in most instances, health budgets have been significantly increased.

40. In response to strong Government interest in developing SWAps in the education sector, UNICEF is building staff capacity to engage effectively in education SWAps and PRSs. A first capacity-building exercise and workshop on sector investment programmes, SWAps and Scaling Up in Education was organized in East and Southern Africa in 2003, an example that has since been followed in East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia and West and Central Africa. The exercises and workshops have permitted a sharing of experiences and best practices and have allowed multisectoral issues, including early childhood development and child protection issues, to find their way into both SWAps and PRSs. In several countries, UNICEF has contributed to capacity-building by assisting Governments in defining and harmonizing technical assistance or by supporting gender analysis through disaggregated data collection and analysis.

41. UNICEF engagement in programme work has aimed to influence national plans and priorities to encompass a concern for the “whole child” (i.e., including but also beyond sectoral considerations). UNICEF involvement in the SWAp process allows the raising of important issues, such as child protection (e.g., child labor, institutional care for children, violence against women and children), early childhood development, gender and children’s rights, and the encouragement of civil society participation, including that of children.

42. At the global level, UNICEF has consistently advocated for more outcome-oriented, Millennium Development Goals-aligned, health sector reforms, SWAps and PRSs. For example, in January 2004 at the High-Level Forum on the Health Millennium Development Goals, in Geneva, UNICEF proposed 10 principles for developing Millennium Development Goals-oriented health systems and policies and PRSs. These principles were subsequently promoted in other forums, including the High-level Forum on the Health...
Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the Government of Japan, in June 2005. The need to better align SWAps and the PRSs with the Millennium Development Goals and to focus on sustainable results was again highlighted by the Executive Director during the High-Level Forum on the Health Millennium Development Goals in Paris, in November 2005.

F. Challenges

43. Establishing a recognized role at the policy table is not easy for UNICEF in some countries where Governments do not encourage the participation in decision-making forums of agencies that do not have a financial “stake” in the decisions being made. In those countries, if UNICEF does not contribute to the SWAps funding pool, the organization may not be invited to decision-making meetings.

44. Becoming substantially and credibly involved in the PRS and SWAp processes is also staff-intensive. In country offices with limited staff capacity, this may pose a significant challenge, although in larger offices (and those whose programmes were already more policy-oriented), that challenge has so far been met. Furthermore, still too few UNICEF staff have the full competency profile to position UNICEF credibly in upstream policy discussions. This is recognized and is being addressed through specific competency improvement training programmes in social policy (see below).

45. There is evidence that other resources previously raised from bilateral donors at country level are declining. A number of bilateral donors that have been traditional sources of other resources have decided to provide direct budgetary support under a SWAp or PRS arrangement. The more advanced and institutionalized a SWAp, the less likely some donors may be to support UNICEF cooperation and assistance to the Government in the sector. Although UNICEF activities might be supported by funds the Government has mobilized for a sector, that arrangement can put UNICEF in the position of being “contractor to government”, which is not the organization’s proper role. At the same time, other resources that are not raised at the country level are generally earmarked and need to be tightly accounted for, and this poses another dilemma of having to proceed in ways that are not congruent with a sector-wide approach. In some cases, bilateral donors will ask UNICEF to participate more fully in pooled funding mechanisms and at the same time require that earmarked funds provided to UNICEF country offices receive separate detailed accounting for directly attributable results.

46. UNICEF experience has shown that mainstreaming cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary areas such as nutrition, integrated early childhood development and HIV/AIDS into SWAps has generally been a useful activity, though it presents a difficult role for a United Nations agency. Mainstreaming is important, for example, in nutrition, which has tended to be marginalized when
included as part of a health SWAp. Vitamin A supplementation activities are often the most visible nutrition component of health SWAps, with over 20 countries now including vitamin A supplementation in PRSs and SWAps. At the 33rd Session of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition, in March 2006, it was noted that nutrition needs to be mainstreamed into such instruments as PRSs and SWAps in a way that clearly positions nutrition at the core of the development agenda.

47. Responding effectively to HIV/AIDS requires a multisectoral response. Therefore, the concept of an HIV/AIDS SWAp does not exist. However, the principles behind SWAps, including supporting nationally led planning, coordination and processes mechanisms, have led to the development of the “three ones” principle.

G. Lessons learned

48. Strategizing for UNICEF contribution to SWAps has been assisted by a very useful review of the United Nations System role in light of the Paris Declaration, which was carried out for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs using Malawi and Mozambique as examples. UNICEF agrees with the recommendation of the report that the United Nations should not act as a donor and should not make direct financial contributions to the general budget support. This would add little value and would potentially undermine the impartial and multilateral character of the United Nations, which is so important to its convening role. The report underlined that the United Nations agencies are technical and/or advocacy agencies rather than donors. The report also stated — and again UNICEF supports a similar conclusion — that the new aid environment evidenced in the sectoral and inter-sectoral planning and funding mechanisms presents a great opportunity for the United Nations system because of its universal mandate and the synergistic and complementary nature of the mandates of individual agencies that make up a UNCT.

49. A commonly raised question is whether SWAps have been successful in achieving sector-specific human development outcomes. The success of SWAps is often considered in light of the SWAps primary purpose as being mechanisms for coordination and dialogue and not programmes of activities in their own right. There also exists a widespread tendency to equate sector reforms with SWAps and to hold SWAps responsible for the development outcomes expected from sector reform. A SWAp focuses on the management of external assistance and the flow and use of external and domestic resources to achieve agreed targets and is usually adopted as part of a larger set of reforms. It needs to be judged by the extent to which it ensures greater harmonization, alignment and transparency and by how it contributes to improved policy development, monitoring performance and rapid remedial action when outcomes are not in line with plans and expectations.

50. Nevertheless, even for the more realistic and appropriate goal of demonstrating the effectiveness of SWAps in achieving greater coherence and transparency
and in reducing the burden of multiple project management procedures on Governments, more systematic cross-country evaluations are needed. Improvements in institutional harmonization and alignment attributable to the adoption of a SWAp should also be able to show a clearer link to development outcomes.

51. Two aspects of SWAps are often perceived by UNICEF country office staff to be neglected. The first is attention to the issues of content, orientation and quality of sector policy. Instead, many SWAps emphasize procedures for donor coordination and harmonization and the initial planning process. In particular, staff have indicated that more emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring a pro-poor focus in sector policy, embedding a rights-based approach in sector development, accelerating progress in access and quality of service delivery, and addressing the gaps between the Millennium Development Goals targets and progress made. The second neglected aspect is NGO/civil society participation in the SWAp dialogue and the opportunity to contribute to increased empowerment and accountability in service planning and delivery.

52. To summarize, the SWAp process has led to greater dialogue and trust, a sharper focus on a selected number of key sector priorities and closer links between policy and implementation. However, weaknesses still include an overemphasis on details in planning and on the development of procedures; limited NGO/civil society participation; weak performance management and a slow shift from emphasizing donor coordination primarily to also considering service improvement and results.

53. UNICEF-assisted country programmes and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) are usually flexible enough to respond to the design of SWAps in each context, to fill critical gaps, and to ensure that leveraging resources and results for children are placed high on the agenda. However, engagement in SWAps is still overly ad hoc. PRSs and SWAps would therefore benefit from strengthened UNICEF operational guidelines and from administrative policies that facilitate extended technical assistance contracts and greater flexibility in procurement.

54. Given its multi- and cross-sectoral perspective, both at the political and at the community levels, UNICEF has a comparative advantage in participating in the formulation and monitoring of human and social development components of PRSs. Most UNICEF country offices are already engaged in the process, but there is a strong case for intensifying this engagement, particularly as sector strategies and PRSs become increasingly intertwined and as sequencing problems from earlier on become less of an issue. In this context, the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the UNDAF needs to be examined as well. While it is agreed that the United Nations agencies can speak with a stronger voice if they act as one, it is also true that representation by a single United Nations agency/agent in the development of PRSs risks
reducing the richness and depth that individual United Nations agencies can bring to the process through direct participation in the dialogue.

55. In some cases, there is room for large-scale system-wide activities that go beyond sectors and are not necessarily featured in SWAps. Multi-disciplinary and intersectoral areas, such as early childhood development, nutrition and HIV/AIDS, are examples of domains where UNICEF can play a significant pioneering role in developing investment models and documenting how this is done. Adjusting the UNICEF business model to achieve a better fit with SWAps and PRSs does not mean that UNICEF can no longer engage in initiatives that require innovation and development before they are integrated into national systems.

56. It is important that UNICEF influence policy upstream in favor of children. However, the organization’s ability to do this has not been fully assessed, and indicators and tools for measuring the impact of this upstream support have not yet been designed. To further strengthen its capacity in this area, UNICEF needs to be able to access additional technical and human resources when required, perhaps through a network of suitably qualified people in the United Nations and outside the organization.

57. Based on its long-term presence at the country level, UNICEF is in a position to support data collection and analysis of the programming environment as a contribution to the development and implementation of SWAps and PRSs.

58. Although monitoring capacities in UNICEF could be stronger, UNICEF is usually in the forefront of support to the monitoring of outcomes and impact. Through the multiple indicator cluster survey methodology, UNICEF has supported bringing the Millennium Development Goals-related data and field results into policy dialogues. This is especially the case with data related to exclusion, including for reasons of gender, ethnicity, place of abode, and other socio-economic characteristics. In addition, UNICEF strongly supports the United Nations team working with DevInfo, a data tool originated by UNICEF, which is being used to strengthen the national planning and monitoring processes. However, as an increasing number of partners turn to UNICEF for guidance and support on data issues, UNICEF needs to strengthen its analytical and technical advocacy capacity further to leverage policies, budgets and results in favor of the Millennium Development Goals and children. UNICEF experience on the ground at the community level needs to be further harvested to provide evidence for policy. This will require UNICEF to place greater emphasis on producing analytic documentation as an input to policy development and the scaling-up of strategies.

59. It is important to acknowledge that SWAps are not suitable in all circumstances. While SWAps or their equivalents are often clearly desirable in relatively stable situations where there are standards of governance and functioning public institutions, there will continue to be situations and countries where a project approach is likely to serve best for some time to come. This is
often the case in emergencies situations, countries in conflict and post-conflict, and in what is generally termed “fragile states”, where public sector institutions remain very weak. Even in these situations, however, the cluster leadership approach adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee principals promotes greater predictability and harmonization of humanitarian efforts in nine critical programme and operational areas, thereby contributing to the shaping of systems and institutions along the lines of sector-wide approaches.

III. Future directions

A. SWAs and the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP)

60. In line with the recently approved MTSP for 2006-2009, UNICEF will substantially increase its emphasis during this period on working, as part of the UNCT and with other partners, in support of national capacity-building, policy development and scaled-up implementation. This work will include coordinated technical assistance and support to national partners, across all focus areas, for the formulation and strengthening of national strategic planning and poverty reduction frameworks that integrate priorities for children and multi-donor coordination frameworks for basic services.

61. A greater emphasis by UNICEF on upstream support to national policy, capacity and partnerships for scaled-up programme delivery may, in some cases, entail a reduction of support to smaller-scale project activities. This should also lead to major reductions in time spent by programme partners on small-scale project management.

62. UNICEF will work with partners to place children at the centre of all relevant national policy and planning tools (including PRSs, SWAs and national, subnational and municipal plans of action for children) and to promote meaningful and appropriate participation by children and young people in decision-making that affects them, at different levels of society.

63. Focus area 5 of the MTSP identifies four key results areas — data collection, policy analysis, policy advocacy and participation — all of which are important contributions to SWAs. The importance of results-based planning and monitoring, and of the positive contribution of UNICEF in this area, has already been mentioned above. During the next four-year period, UNICEF intends to consolidate and strengthen its capacities in results-based planning and monitoring as part of efforts in capacity development and technical support to national development. Accordingly, UNICEF staff are being offered training in policy analysis through a major organization-wide learning programme and regional (and often sector-specific) workshops.

64. MTSP focus area 1, young child survival and development; focus area 2 basic education and gender equality; and focus area 3, HIV/AIDS and children all aim at leveraging policies and resources in support of relevant Millennium Development Goals. Focus area 1 (key results 1 and 3) aims, through support
to PRSs and SWAps, to expand coverage of high-impact health, nutrition and water and sanitation interventions, that effectively focus on the most underserved communities and pool competencies and resources. Focus area 2 supports Education For All (EFA) objectives through engagement with SWAps, PRSs, the EFA Fast Track Initiative, national budget analyses and reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Focus area 3 supports the integration of quality care and support for children affected by HIV/AIDS into national and subnational policies, plans, services and development instruments, and into rapid assessments in emergency situations.

65. The strategies in support of the MTSP in health/nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene, adopted by the Executive Board at the first regular session in January 2006, as well as the new MTSP support strategy in education to be reviewed by the Executive Board at the second regular session, in September 2006, clearly emphasize the need for UNICEF to strengthen its involvement in upstream policy work to leverage results in support of the Millennium Development Goals. These new sectoral global strategies will guide UNICEF engagement in current and future SWAps, PRSs and MTEFs.

66. A strong comparative advantage of UNICEF at the country level is its capacity to interact with Governments and civil society at the interface between policy and implementation and to help to strengthen the necessary dialogue associated with, and interaction between, these two phases. UNICEF will continue to play this role, for example, by providing operational and technical support to the building of capacities for scaling up interventions. In the same vein, UNICEF will assist Governments and civil societies in establishing enabling legislative and policy environments as well as national frameworks that support the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF will continue to support child-related policy analysis, including by contributing the organization’s broad field-based experience, and to offer the products of that analysis in sector-planning (and other) discussions, as invited to do so by Governments.

67. Another area of comparative advantage that UNICEF brings to SWAps is its familiarity with subnational and community planning and monitoring processes. Many SWAps are ministry-oriented or centrally oriented in conception, and as increasing numbers of countries devolve decision-making and responsibility to lower levels of government, UNICEF experience at subnational and community levels can be particularly useful. This approach is also congruent with that taken in the Health and Nutrition strategy and the WHO/UNICEF Global Immunization Vision and Strategy to reduce geographical disparities within countries.

68. In situations characterized by weaknesses in governance, the relative importance of the role of UNICEF in providing more direct operational and technical support may be greater than in situations where UNICEF assistance
will focus predominantly on leveraging policies, capacity development and knowledge generation.

B. Inter-agency collaboration

69. UNICEF was a member of the team that developed the UNDG-wide position on involvement in Programme Support, and is currently chair of the UNDG working group on aid effectiveness, which will develop UNDG guidelines on involvement in Direct Budget Support and SWAps. A recent UNICEF workshop that included the participation of UNDP, UNFPA and WFP identified common issues for the agencies to address in the promotion of effective participation in SWAps, from financial involvement to human resources requirements. In many countries, United Nations agencies have taken a more rational approach to involvement in SWAps by discussing how to ensure that multiple agencies participate in SWAps only if their views and experience complement rather than duplicate the contribution of others.

70. UNICEF will further strengthen its close collaboration with Governments and the World Bank on results-based budgeting through the application of the marginal budgeting for bottlenecks concept and tool. This will require joint capacity-building efforts, oriented both internally and externally, with Government counterparts and other agencies. Application of the concept to further sectors will be pursued.

IV. Conclusion

71. UNICEF has increased its involvement in SWAps as (though sometimes slightly behind the trend) these instruments have become more widely used by countries as an important development planning approach. UNICEF contributions include convening, capacity development, technical and policy advice (in results-based planning and implementation, especially cross-sectoral, field-based and community or subnational government levels), support to data collection and use, and monitoring and evaluation. UNICEF works closely with its United Nations sister agencies, and will continue to do so, both to share the challenge of involvement in SWAps and to ensure that the broad viewpoints and international experience of development, including normative considerations, are made available to national authorities for planning. To improve staff capacity in this area, UNICEF has set up networking and training opportunities for staff to help them to overcome several knowledge and skills gaps.

72. One of the priorities of the MTSP is to ensure the enhanced and systematic involvement of UNICEF in both PRSs and SWAps, in conjunction with national counterparts, the World Bank and United Nations partners, in order to influence strategic investment decisions that are oriented to the achievement of the
Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF is uniquely positioned to proactively lead and cultivate effective sector-wide partnerships to leverage resources, assistance and results for children where required. The organization’s participation in United Nations reform and other collaborative arrangements is guided by the imperative of harnessing the power and potential of partnerships to produce results for children.

V. Draft decision
73. It is recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board
1. Welcomes UNICEF efforts and thorough analysis to systematize its contribution to sector-wide approaches in support of poverty reduction and national development frameworks to reach the Millennium Development Goals;
2. Recommends that UNICEF provide regular updates on this issue as part of the results frameworks included in the Annual Report of the Executive Director.
### Annex

**Countries with SWAps in sectors of concern to UNICEF, 2005**

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*Italicized countries: SWAps planned or under development. * Informal or subnational.*

*Source: UNICEF country office annual reports.*
ANNEX D CONCEPT NOTE: South Asia Case Studies of Processes and Practices Within Education SWAps/PBAs for Strengthening the Addressing of Gender and Social Disparity

Proposed Study

- A series of field research studies on the addressing of gender and equity issues in SWAps/PBAs in 3–4 countries in South Asia
- A synthesis report, summarizing key trends and issues
- Based on the outcomes of the above, Guidelines/Resource Pack/Toolkit for addressing gender and equity issues within SWAps/PBAs.
  (Building on what was done for DAC Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming in SWAps, 2000.)

Background

The concept for the proposed study developed out of the discussions at the UNICEF South Asia Regional Education Meeting that had the theme of ‘SWAps and Disparities’. This theme reflects UNICEF’s commitment to working to achieve good quality accessible education as a right of all children. In South Asia, this rights-based approach forces attention on the large number of girls and children from marginalized/disadvantaged groups who are not enrolled, not attending or not completing school; or who despite being in school are still not fully enjoying their rights to all-round learning and development in a context of protection and non-discrimination. UNICEF in South Asia seeks to position itself more strategically in SWAps/PBAs, to influence thinking and actions to support governments and SWAp partners in different national contexts in developing SWAps/PBAs that are both ‘equity-sensitive’ and ‘equity-effective’.

A Desk Study was prepared to inform the discussions at the Regional Meeting. This explored the coverage of gender and equity in the available SWAp/education programme documents of twelve countries, including four in South Asia. As far as could be ascertained from the documents, while SWAps/PBAs should create a conducive context for more strategic, coordinated and comprehensive approaches to addressing gender and equity issues, in practice this is not necessarily the case. Equity-related priority objectives and indicators are generally being set; however, these often do not look beyond the issue of numerical parity, to questions of ‘equity in quality’. There is variation in the quality of analysis and the degree to which a comprehensive and coherent set of strategies is devised. SWAps/PBAs are not guaranteeing that poor and marginalized adults and children (especially women and girls) are consulted on their perceptions and priorities with regards to education, or are having ongoing opportunities to participate meaningfully in decision-making. The overall approach and emphasis given to gender and equity issues appears to vary considerably, related not only to government capacity and commitment, but also to the mix of development partners, and even individuals, who are prominent in a particular case. There would seem to be scope for both considerably strengthening the systematic prioritization and mainstreaming of gender and equity within SWAps/PBAs and also improving the capacity of development partner groups to support this process in a more coherent and effective way.

1 South Asia, indicatively Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka (subject to further discussion and agreement, including with government and other DPs).
3 For example, sector policy frameworks and plans, PRSPs, background research and analysis, review reports etc.
A number of ways in which UNICEF could support such a process were identified at the Regional Meeting. At the country level, UNICEF might seek to move into more of an ‘intellectual challenge’ function within SWAps/PBAs. This could include providing or sourcing expertise on gender and equity issues, as well as some ‘ground-truthing’ (based on a strengthened approach to ‘policy piloting’), into policy dialogue, planning and monitoring/review processes. This would likely prove particularly helpful and effective in countries where other key ‘players’ in the SWAp do not have either a field presence, nor in-house (or in-country) educational expertise. At the regional level, UNICEF (perhaps under the UNGEI umbrella) could usefully seek to strengthen its ‘knowledge’ role, including the generation of new knowledge/understanding to support all stakeholders in understanding and addressing equity issues within education SWAps/PBAs.

The proposed cross-country study would help to fill a number of gaps in the current understanding of how equity and gender is being addressed, particularly with regards to process issues (e.g. dialogue, planning, consultation, implementation and review) and understanding of how SWAps/PBAs evolve over time. In addition, provided there is sufficient work at the outset to bring in not only the relevant governments but also a range of SWAp stakeholders and development partners, the case studies themselves could provide impetus for reflection on current practice and initiatives for strengthening approaches to equity and improving performance. In addition, general lessons learned could be used to develop guidance that could help to influence the development of ‘equity-sensitive’ SWAps in other contexts. In so doing, the study could be a major way in which UNICEF establishes itself as a strategic player in education SWAps in the region, with a distinct role to play.

**Indicative Content for Country Case Studies**

**Programme Content**
- Gender and Equity concepts and definitions used
- Gender and Equity related objectives and targets
- Gender and Equity related Monitoring indicators
- Specific content re. particular groups, e.g. girls, ethnic/linguistic groups, disabled children, specific vulnerable groups (e.g. urban street and working children)
- Specific strategies covering affordability, accessibility, acceptability and ‘equity in quality’
- PRSP links

**SWAp Processes**
- Wider political processes/factors
- Processes of (initial and ongoing) consultation with civil society and communities, especially disadvantaged
- Analysis (initial and or ongoing) of gender and equity issues (e.g. based on research? Data? Consultation?)
- Policy dialogue structures and processes – appropriateness/ conduciveness
- Processes for joint review

**Structures and Capacity**
- Institutional structures for mainstreaming gender, addressing equity, inclusive education etc.
### (Including positions, lines of responsibility etc.)
- Capacity of key personnel for analysis and addressing of gender and equity issues

### Impacts, Successes and Challenges
- Evidence of progress on reducing disparity and achieving equity/equality
- Lessons learned