



Evaluation Study

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Education Sector in Bangladesh: What Worked Well and Why under the Sector-Wide Approach?

Operations Evaluation Department

Asian Development Bank

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

Currency Unit – Taka (Tk)

	1989	1993	1999	2005	2008 (as of 8 Nov 08)
Tk1.00 =	\$0.030372	\$0.025257	\$0.020378	\$0.015529	\$0.014563
\$1.00 =	Tk32.925	Tk39.593	Tk49.073	Tk64.394	Tk68.665

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
ADTA	–	advisory technical assistance
BANBEIS	–	Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information System
B. Ed.	–	Bachelor of Education
BNFE	–	Bureau of Nonformal Education
BRM	–	Bangladesh Resident Mission
CAP	–	country assistance program
CAPE	–	country assistance program evaluation
CAS	–	country assistance strategy
COS	–	country operational strategy
CPS	–	country partnership strategy
CSP	–	country strategy and program
DFID	–	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
DNFE	–	Directorate of Nonformal Education
DP	–	development partner
DPE	–	Directorate of Primary Education
DPEO	–	District Primary Education Office
DSHE	–	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
EA	–	executing agency
EFA	–	Education for All
EIRR	–	economic internal rate of return
ELCG	–	Education Local Consultative Group
EMIS	–	education management information system
GEP	–	General Education Project
GER	–	gross enrollment rate
GOB	–	Government of Bangladesh
GPS	–	government primary school
HRD	–	human resources development
IDA	–	International Development Association
JICA	–	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LGED	–	Local Government Engineering Department
M&E	–	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	–	Millennium Development Goal
M. Ed.	–	Master of Education

MOPME	–	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MOE	–	Ministry of Education
NAEM	–	National Academy of Education Management
NAPE	–	National Academy of Primary Education
NCTB	–	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NER	–	net enrollment rate
NFE	–	nonformal education
NFEP	–	Nonformal Education Project
NGO	–	nongovernment organization
NORAD	–	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPRS	–	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
OED	–	Operations Evaluation Department
OSP	–	operational strategy paper
PCR	–	project completion report
PE	–	primary education
PEDP-I	–	Primary Education Development Project
PEDP-II	–	Second Primary Education Development Program
PESP	–	Primary Education Sector Project
PIU	–	project implementation unit
PLCEP	–	Post-Literacy and Continuing Education Project
PLU	–	program liaison unit
PMU	–	program management unit
PPER	–	project performance evaluation report
PPTA	–	project preparatory technical assistance
PRSP	–	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSQL	–	primary standard quality level
PTA	–	parent-teacher association
PTI	–	primary teacher training institute
QAE	–	quality-at-entry
RNGPS	–	registered nongovernment primary school
SAPE	–	sector assistance program evaluation
SARD	–	South Asia Regional Department
SBA	–	school-based assessment
SBM	–	school-based management
SBPMS	–	school-based performance management system
SE	–	secondary education
SE-SDP	–	Secondary Education Sector Development Plan
SEDP	–	Secondary Education Development Project
SESDP	–	Secondary Education Sector Development Project and Program
SESIP	–	Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project
SIDA	–	Swedish International Development Agency
SLIP	–	school level improvement plan
SMC	–	school management committee
SPESP	–	Second Primary Education Sector Project
SSC	–	secondary school certificate

SWAp	–	subsector-wide approach
SWOT	–	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
TA	–	technical assistance
TCR	–	technical assistance completion report
TEVT	–	technical education and vocational training
TQISEP	–	Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project
TTC	–	teacher training college
UNICEF	–	United Nations Children’s Fund
UPEO	–	Upazila/Subdistrict Primary Education Office
UPEP	–	upazila primary education plan
URC	–	Upazila Resource Center

NOTES

- (i) The fiscal year (FY) of the Government ends on 30 June.
- (ii) In this report, “\$” refers to US dollars.

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The guidelines formally adopted by the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) on avoiding conflict of interest in its independent evaluations were observed in the preparation of this report. E. Breckner, T. Kabir, and S. Lohani were the international consultants employed to conduct necessary field work and prepare subsector assessments in their respective areas under the supervision of S. Hutaserani (Team Leader), who subsequently prepared this report based on the consultant drafts and other sources of materials. J. Simon (domestic consultant) provided research assistance. To the knowledge of the management of OED, there were no conflicts of interest of the persons preparing, reviewing, or approving this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background. Economic growth, poverty reduction, and human resources development (HRD) have been key strategic thrusts of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) over the past two decades. The GOB's HRD priorities were placed on basic education, covering primary education (PE) (grades 1–5) and nonformal education (NFE), and later extended to cover grades 6–8 in secondary education (SE). During the early 1990s, only 35% of the country's adult population was literate, and heavily skewed between males and females (44% versus 22%) as well as between urban and rural areas. The PE gross enrollment rate (GER) was only 68%, and the cycle dropout rate was as high as 60%. The GOB's commitment to improving basic education was reflected in its adoption of the Education for All (EFA) agenda in the early 1990s, which provided the basis for assistance from various development partners (DPs). The EFA was upgraded to a national action plan in 2003. The plan was derived from the GOB's long-term Perspective Development Plan (1980–2000), part of which aimed at eradicating illiteracy by 2000 (subsequently changed to 2006 and then to 2015). It is consistent with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to halve poverty and achieve substantial HRD improvements by 2015. With continued joint GOB and DP efforts, universal GER has almost been reached with gender balance, but the institutional capacity and quality aspects have not improved much (e.g., low adult literacy rate of 55% and high cycle dropout rate of about 50%). These aspects emerged as the key issues that need to be further addressed.

Objectives and Goals. To help in addressing these issues, this sector assistance program evaluation (SAPE) aims to (i) assess the combined performance of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) and other key DPs' assistance in the Bangladesh education sector during 1989–2007, including the DPs' combined performance in the ongoing subsector-wide approach (SWAp) modality jointly adopted in the Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II); and (ii) apply a *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats* (SWOT) analysis to identify positive and negative factors during the design and implementation stages—both within and beyond DPs' control—to explain the reasons behind what worked well and what did not work well. Based on these SWOT factors, the SAPE goals are to (i) provide findings to be used as an input in the preparation of the DPs' joint country assistance evaluation, (ii) derive lessons to guide DPs' future operations; and (iii) identify recommendations to be used in the preparation of ADB's next country partnership strategy for improving future ADB performance in Bangladesh's education sector.

Scope. The SAPE assesses the combined performance of four DPs' education strategies and assistance programs in Bangladesh—ADB, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency of the Government of Japan—because they are the ones involved in preparing joint country strategies for Bangladesh for the period 2006–2009. The DPs' products and services evaluated in the SAPE are both education strategies and assistance programs for Bangladesh. The products and services included in the latter are loans; advisory technical assistance (ADTA) grants; policy dialogue; partnerships; and economic, thematic, and sector work. Since this is a sector-level evaluation, these products and services are assessed together as a package, rather than as individual projects.

Subsector Coverage. The SAPE focuses on assessing the combined performance of the four DPs' education strategies and programs in Bangladesh's PE subsector, because PE (i) is a major strategic priority of the GOB; (ii) exhibits strong cooperation among these four DPs and other DPs; and (iii) accounts for the largest investment by the GOB and DPs combined—almost \$2 billion for the ongoing PEDP-II SWAp. The SAPE also evaluates the performance of

ADB alone in the NFE and SE subsectors, because (i) coordination among DPs in these two subsectors is not as strong as that in PE; and (ii) most of the ADB assistance programs in these two subsectors were provided separately, like those of other DPs.

Time Coverage. The SAPE period starts from 1989 for education strategies and from 1990 for education programs until end-2007, so that it is long enough to trace the (i) historical evolution of the four DPs' education strategies for Bangladesh, and (ii) historical performance of their corresponding programs. The SAPE starting point of 1989 reflects the year in which ADB's first "official" country operational strategy (COS) for Bangladesh started. It provided strategic direction for ADB's country assistance program (CAP) for 1990–1993, during which ADB loans for Bangladesh's education sector accounted for almost a quarter (23%) of the total ADB loans for the sector from the beginning (1978) up to the planned 2011. During the SAPE period (1989–2007), ADB had four official country strategies—the 1989 COS, 1993 COS, 1999 COS, and 2005 country strategy and program—which guided subsequent periods of CAP loans and grants: 1990–1993, 1994–1999, 2000–2005, and 2006–2011, respectively.

Approach. The SAPE uses the "bottom-up (subsector/program level)" and "top-down (DPs' strategic and country level)" evaluation approach, with equal weights. The former consists of four criteria: (i) relevance; (ii) efficiency; (iii) effectiveness (achievement of outcomes or **bottom-up results**, inclusive of those related to institutional development, governance, and gender impacts); and (iv) sustainability. The latter consists of three criteria: (i) contributions of DPs' bottom-up sector outcomes to the country's achievement of long-term development results/impacts or MDGs (**top-down results**); (ii) strategic relevance of DPs' education strategies for Bangladesh, based on three subcriteria: (a) relevance to the country's education issues, (b) relevance to the GOB's education plans, and (c) consistencies among DPs' education strategies; and (iii) strategic positioning/coherence of DPs' education strategies, based on four subcriteria: (a) DPs' subsector focus and selectivity based on comparative advantage by component or geographical area, (b) DPs' partnerships through appropriate modalities to create synergies, (c) DPs' long-term continuity to create a critical mass of beneficiaries, and (d) client perceptions of DPs' performance in the education sector.

Top-Down Assessment. The SAPE rates the DPs' overall top-down combined performance as **successful** due to the combination of (i) **partly successful** contributions of their bottom-up sector outcomes to the country's long-term development results/impacts or MDGs (e.g., adult literacy and poverty reduction have not improved much); (ii) **strategic relevance** of their education strategies (e.g., in relation to the country's key education issues, the GOB's education subsector priorities, and consistencies among their own strategies); and (iii) **satisfactory positioning** of their education strategies (e.g., good focus and selectivity in the design of their education strategies, good partnerships to create synergies, long-term continuity to create a critical mass of beneficiaries, and good client perceptions of their performance). The **partly successful** rating of the country's achievement of development results indicates that while major bottom-up outcomes in terms of increased enrollment access have largely been achieved, they are not sufficient to contribute to substantial increase in adult literacy. This points to the need to focus more on improving the quality aspect of education. The **successful** rating of the DPs' education strategies implies that they provided good directions for their programs to follow.

Bottom-Up Assessment: PE Subsector. DPs' joint support to PE can be divided into three investment cycles. The first cycle started in 1990 (jointly supported by 10 DPs), with ADB and IDA as the major DPs. The DPs' focus was divided by component and geographical area. The DPs' investments included six subprojects, with separate project implementation units (PIUs). The second cycle started in 1997 (jointly supported by eight DPs), with ADB and IDA as

the major DPs. The DPs' focus was again divided by component and geographical area. Their investments consisted of eight subprojects, with separate PIUs. But this time, the DPs agreed to operate under the GOB's common policy framework. The third cycle (the PEDP-II, started in 2003), jointly supported by 11 DPs, uses a SWAp modality, with ADB taking the lead role. In this cycle, there is only one program management unit (PMU), the activities of which were designed to be integrated into the executing agency's (EA) normal operations. The SAPE rates the DPs' performance in the three cycles combined as **successful** (*relevant, less efficient, effective, and likely sustainable*). The **relevant** rating is due mainly to good design in terms of focus and selectivity, long-term continuity, and partnerships and synergies with appropriate choice of modalities evolving from the project type, to the project type with a common policy framework, and then to the SWAp. The **less efficient** rating is due mainly to long implementation delays in (i) the second cycle caused by delayed budget approval, underprocurement, and the lack of institutional diagnosis of EA capacity, thus shifting back to the use of the project-type modality instead of the SWAp as originally planned; and (ii) the ongoing PEDP-II cycle caused by too big a SWAp (\$1.815 billion) with too many DPs, resulting in difficulties in managing and harmonizing diverse expectations and requirements (e.g., many procurement procedures), hence high transaction costs among DPs. The **effective** rating is due to significant achievement of subsector outcomes, especially in terms of increased access and gender balance, resulting in almost universal PE and a large critical mass of beneficiaries. However, although institutional management capacity and quality of students have not improved much, many of the indicators are evolving with positive signs of progress under the ongoing PEDP-II. The **likely sustainable** rating is due to (i) the DPs' long-term continuity of support to facilitate further achievement of outcomes and consolidate whatever has been achieved in order to sustain the results; (ii) sufficient GOB budgetary support, particularly in terms of the high share of the total development budget for education allocated to PE (62.5%), although the corresponding recurrent budget share is much less (33.9%); and (iii) institutionalized PMU activities as part of the EA's normal operation system.

NFE Subsector. ADB provided two NFE projects. The first one was completed successfully, and the second one has just been resumed after several years of suspension due to the abolition of the EA by the GOB. The SAPE rates ADB's performance in the two projects combined as **partly successful** (*relevant, less efficient, less effective, and likely sustainable*) so far. The two projects had good design, but the SAPE rates them together as **relevant**, rather than highly relevant, in view of the discontinuity of the EA. The **less efficient** rating is due to long implementation delays associated with the suspension of the second project, hence delayed progress in the NFE subsector. The **less effective** rating is because some outcomes were not achieved during the first project, which would have been achieved under the second project had there not been discontinuity. The **likely sustainable** rating is mainly because the second project has already resumed (after the GOB's establishment of the new EA) and is likely to build on the achievement of the first project, with efforts putting to strengthen institutional capacity of the new EA through an ADTA.

SE Subsector. ADB has provided four SE projects. The first two were completed successfully, whereas the last two are ongoing, with the last one having just started. The SAPE rates ADB's performance in the four projects combined as **successful** (*relevant, less efficient, effective/evolving, and likely sustainable*). The **relevant** rating is because, despite the design drawbacks encountered by some SE projects, the first one helped GOB draft the Secondary Education Sector Development Plan, which is still in operation and provided the basis on which the subsequent projects were built, while the fourth (ongoing) one was designed to have an appropriate modality—a combination of project and policy-based loans—to address key policy and institutional reforms needed. The **less efficient** rating is due to implementation delays in

the past projects. The **effective/evolving** rating is due to some substantial outcomes achieved in terms of access and gender balance. Although the institutional capacity and quality aspects have not been improved much, they are evolving, with good prospects of being achieved under the two ongoing projects. The **likely sustainable** rating is due to (i) the long-term continuity of ADB successive investments; and (ii) sufficient GOB budgetary support, with a relatively high share of the total recurrent education budget allocated to SE (53.8%), although the institutional aspect of sustainability has not been achieved much due to high turnover of trained staff which is being addressed in the ongoing policy-based loan.

Overall Top-Down and Bottom-Up Assessment. Although ADB's bottom-up performance in the NFE subsector is rated as only *partly successful*, its *successful* performance in SE and the DPs' combined *successful* performance in PE have contributed to ADB's **successful bottom-up** performance. At the top-down level, while the contribution of the bottom-up sector outcomes to the country's achievement of long-term development results/impacts is rated as *partly successful*, the DPs' combined performance in the other two criteria (strategic relevance and positioning of their education strategies) are rated as *relevant* and *satisfactory*, respectively, rendering **successful top-down** performance and, in turn, **overall successful top-down and bottom-up performance combined**.

However, the rating scale of 1.8 for the overall **successful** performance is not considered high (borderline), implying that there remains scope for improvement, particularly in terms of education quality and institutional capacity. The DPs' combined performance in the PE subsector, together with ADB's performance in the NFE and SE subsectors, over the past two decades have worked well in terms of increased access and gender balance in enrollment, which did not require much time to achieve by their nature. The GOB's conducive policy and institutional environments (e.g., strong ownership/commitment to the EFA agenda) are found to be among the positive reasons (*opportunities*) supporting these achievements. By contrast, the DPs' combined performance did not work well in terms of improving education quality and institutional capacity, and to some extent equity in access (e.g., literacy rate, cycle completion rate, and enrollment rate by the poorest groups remained low). This was due partly to some *risks/threats* associated with the GOB's nonconductive policy and institutional environments (e.g., weak decentralization, rigid project proforma and regulations, lack of professional education cadre, lack of appropriate teacher development programs, and fragmentation of education management information system [EMIS] between PE and SE), which will take time to improve. On the DPs' side, the following factors are found to be key positive reasons (*strengths*) and negative reasons (*weaknesses*) affecting their overall performance in the education sector:

- (i) **DPs' Strengths or Value Addition.** Much of the success achieved to date has been the result of the DPs' good education strategies in terms of relevance and positioning/coherence, which provided appropriate directions for the DPs to design well-coordinated, focused, and long-term assistance programs. The DPs have, in turn, translated their education strategies into generally well-designed assistance programs, in partnership with GOB, by providing long-term continuity of support using appropriate modalities, with more focus and selectivity within a particular subsector to create synergies and a critical mass of beneficiaries. These are the DPs' key strengths or value addition of their education strategies and assistance programs over and above the financing provided.
- (ii) **DPs' Weaknesses.** While the overall sector rating is *successful*, the rating scale is not considered high, due mainly to the *less efficient* ratings in all three subsectors, associated with long implementation delays caused by the following

weaknesses of the DPs: (a) weak design of the EMIS and monitoring system; (b) lack of a sector analysis of issues and directions for improving the entire education sector, linking different subsectors in an integrated manner and suggesting effective mechanisms for close coordination; (c) ad hoc and inefficient use of ADTA grants, rather than using them at the early design stage to help address the EA's capacity gaps and the needed institutional and policy reforms; and (d) high transaction costs associated with complicated implementation arrangements, especially through the big SWAp introduced in the PEDP-II during the time when the EA's capacity was not sufficient to handle it and when initial necessary conditions for harmonization were not put in place. Questions thus arise as to whether or not the SWAp is the best modality and why.

Is SWAp the Best Modality? To answer this question, the SAPE synthesizes its key findings below:

- (i) **What Is a SWAp and Why Is It Expected to Be one of the Best Modalities?** A SWAp is a systematic approach allowing DPs to work together in partnership with a government by pooling resources to support sector/subsector-wide development in an integrated manner under the government's common policy framework. It requires good sector analysis, policy framework, and expenditure plan. Based on global experience, it is expected to be one of the best modalities when it is designed and implemented properly, as it should help increase efficiency in implementation by (a) avoiding duplicative and piecemeal efforts, thus increasing synergies in achieving outcomes; (b) increasing harmonization of DP and government implementation procedures (e.g., procurement; accounting; reporting; and a common PMU integrated into the EA's normal operations, rather than separate PIUs), thus reducing transaction costs on both sides; and (c) encouraging the government and DPs to coordinate closely through special mechanisms for policy dialogue and fiduciary risk management led by the government, thus reducing transaction costs among DPs, since it helps reduce program monitoring costs. Experiences in some countries showed that SWAps tended to have high transaction costs at the beginning, which became lower only after key priorities were identified jointly by DPs and the governments.
- (ii) **What Worked Well in the PEDP-II SWAp and Why?** While its overall rating is **successful**, there are areas in which the SWAp worked well and did not work well. It worked well in terms of being a **relevant** modality, because it evolved as a natural step, in the early 2000s, based on the DPs' long-term experience of having close coordination in PE, starting from the first investment cycle in 1990 through the project-type modality, and then in the second investment cycle in the late 1990s through the project-type modality within the GOB common policy framework. It is also an appropriate modality because it allowed the DPs to coordinate more closely using pooled funding resources and to engage the GOB to take the lead and drive the program for improving the PE subsector. It is also found to be an **effective** modality in achieving many access- and gender-related outcomes by jointly identifying key priorities to mainstream implementation arrangements, while some quality and institutional capacity outcomes are evolving with positive signs of progress. The PEDP-II SWAp's **strengths**, which are part of the reasons for making the program effective/evolving, are as follows: (a) it has a single PMU (rather than separate PIUs as in the first two investment cycles), the activities of which are integrated into the EA's normal operations to

ensure EA ownership and sustainable capacity after completion; (b) it enables the DPs to have stronger coordination during implementation (compared with the modalities used in the first two investment cycles) through consortium meetings, with the project liaison unit (PLU) playing an active role in facilitating the process; (c) it allows for regular joint reviews and monitoring; and (d) there is a consensus that the PEDP-II has enhanced GOB leadership and ownership and opened up many priority areas (e.g., inclusive education and decentralization) that have remained the country's big challenges to improving quality, institutional capacity, and equity in access for a long time.

- (iii) **What Did Not Work Well in the PEDP-II SWAp and Why?** Theoretically, while a SWAp is expected to help increase efficiency in implementation, the opposite is found for the PEDP-II SWAp, as it is rated as *less efficient* due to the long initial delays in implementation of about 2 years and high transaction costs among DPs (although it helped reduce transaction costs for the GOB). This is due to the following **weaknesses**: (a) the program size is too large to manage, with as many as 11 DPs and a wide extent of activities involved; (b) an institutional analysis was not provided at the design stage to diagnose the EA capacity areas that should be developed prior to SWAp implementation; (c) ADTA was provided alongside program implementation, rather than up front at the design stage to equip the EA with the necessary kinds of capacity to implement the complex SWAp; (d) DPs' and the GOB's procedures could not be fully harmonized, since different procedures had to be continued (e.g., procurement and funds flow) under the SWAp; (e) separation of the PLU from ADB's Bangladesh Resident Mission blurred the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the lead DP (ADB), the consortium chair, and other DPs; and (f) inclusion of the SWAp's consortium functions in the PLU blurred mutual accountability between the lead DP and the consortium, and also required BRM to get overly stretched with support to the consortium.
- (iv) **Lessons: How to Make SWAp Work Better.** While the PEDP-II SWAp has some weaknesses, it also has some strengths that have contributed to achieving many evolving outcomes, ensuring GOB leadership and ownership, and mainstreaming important priorities for long-term sustainability. Thus, it can be considered as the right modality for the PEDP-II despite its weak implementation efficiency due to its large program size (although there should have been economies of scale from large programs) and complicated implementation arrangements, hence high transaction costs among the DPs. Since high transaction costs among the DPs have emerged as a major weakness of the PEDP-II SWAp, the following lessons are drawn as a guidance for the DPs on how to reduce the transaction costs under their ongoing or future SWAps in order to make them work better: (a) design the program size to be manageable, with an appropriate number of DPs in relation to the extent of activities, depending on the DPs' availability of staff and resources, the extent of procedural harmonization, and the EA's initial institutional and staff capacities; (b) provide ADTA at the design stage to strengthen the EA institutional capacity prior to implementing a SWAp; (c) target ADTA for analytical studies and technical support to ensure efficient joint annual reviews; (d) focus on strengthening the EMIS for improving the results framework to monitor and report on progress; (e) collectively strengthen the results framework to meet all the DPs' reporting needs so that a single report can be prepared annually, not quarterly, to assess

progress and support policy dialogue; (f) adopt more stringent partnership agreements (including further harmonization of implementation procedures) among the participating DPs under GOB leadership; (g) set up the SWAp administrative unit (such as the PEDP-II PLU) within the resident mission of the lead DP, rather than outside, as in the PEDP-II case, in order to avoid any confusion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the lead DP; (h) separate the consortium functions from the lead DP functions as a self-contained arrangement (as in the SWAp in the health sector) to enhance mutual accountability; and (i) include special arrangements to expeditiously address critical cases like corruption without jeopardizing regular implementation.

Other Lessons. In addition to the SWAp-related lessons drawn above, the following are generic lessons not related to the SWAp:

- (i) In designing future projects/programs, the choice among different modalities should depend on (a) the EA's institutional and staff capacities, (b) the DPs' availability of staff and resources, (c) the extent of project/program activities, and (d) the key situations or issues within that particular subsector (e.g., if the subsector is in need of many policy and institutional reforms, then a policy-based modality in combination with a project-type modality might be an appropriate choice; but if the EA has had good implementation experience and DPs have been coordinating closely before, then a SWAp of an appropriate size might be the proper choice to pool resources).
- (ii) Many of the achievements in the overall education sector have been the result of DP partnerships among themselves and with the GOB through long-term continuity of support using appropriate modalities, with more focus and selectivity in a particular subsector, to create synergies and a critical mass of beneficiaries. These strengths should be replicated in the design of future projects/programs.
- (iii) Lack of a comprehensive sector analysis of issues and directions for improving the entire education sector, linking different subsectors in an integrated manner, is found to lead to a lack of effective mechanisms for close coordination between the two ministries handling PE and SE to ensure smooth transition of the curriculum from one level to the next. Close coordination between PE and NFE is also needed, since the latter includes postliteracy and continuing education, some beneficiaries of which could enter the formal PE system later. This weakness should be addressed during the design of future projects/programs.
- (iv) While access and gender targets have been largely achieved, the quality and institutional capacity aspects, together with the equity in access by the poorest groups, have not improved much, with the following issues remaining: (a) lack of a common framework for curriculum, teacher development, financing, and management; (b) lack of practical partnership arrangements to engage nongovernment organizations in the provision of PE and NFE to meet the EFA targets and to increase more equity in access; (c) weak decentralization as reflected in weak capacities at the district, upazila, and school levels, and lack of direct financing to schools; (d) weak capacities of the two education ministries in results-based management, performance-based financing, monitoring, and reporting; (e) lack of professional cadre and a career path, with high vacancies;

and (f) fragmentation of EMIS functions between PE and SE and within PE. These issues should be addressed in the design of future projects/programs.

Recommendations. Based on both the SWAp and non-SWAp lessons identified above, the following are recommendations mainly for consideration by ADB Management:

Recommended Actions for ADB (Ongoing Projects)	Responsibility	Time Frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collectively strengthen the results framework to meet all the DPs' reporting needs so that a single report can be prepared for all DPs. Based on the results framework that is now evolving through the results-based management approach recently introduced by the EA (to report on PEDP-II progress and provide a basis for pursuing policy dialogue in the quarterly DP coordination meetings with MOPME), all the DPs should work together to strengthen such results framework to meet their reporting needs in order to avoid separate reporting. 	BRM in collaboration with the PEDP-II DPs and EA	Mid-2009
Recommended Actions for ADB (New Projects in the Pipeline)	Responsibility	Time Frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a comprehensive sector analysis for improving the entire education sector, linking different subsectors in an integrated manner jointly with the GOB and other DPs. This sector analysis could be done through economic, thematic, and sector work or ADTA to develop a common framework for curriculum, professional development, financing, and management to ensure synergies across different subsectors, within a holistic and longer-term vision. It should be used as an input for the preparation of future projects/programs in the pipeline—see section (iii) under “other lessons.” Build on past success by focusing on issues related to quality, equity, and institutional capacity in the design of future projects/programs. Most of the six issues identified in section (iv) under “other lessons” should be addressed in the design of future projects/programs in the pipeline. Build on experience of the PEDP-II SWAp for the design of future SWAp programs. Most of the nine issues identified in section (iv) under “lessons related to SWAp” should be addressed in the design of future programs in the pipeline if the SWAp modality is chosen. 	<p>SARD and BRM, in collaboration with the PEDP-II DPs, EA, and ELCG</p> <p>SARD and BRM</p> <p>SARD and BRM</p>	<p>During the design stage of the new projects/programs for PE and SE in the pipeline</p> <p>During the design stage of the new projects/programs for PE and SE in the pipeline</p> <p>During the design stage of the new projects/programs for PE and SE in the pipeline</p>

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ADTA= advisory technical assistance, BRM = Bangladesh Resident Mission, DP = development partner, EA = executing agency, ELCG = Education Local Consultative Group, MOPME = Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, PE = primary education, PEDP-II = Second Primary Education Development Program, SARD = South Asia Regional Department, SE = secondary education, SWAp = subsector-wide approach.

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