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Open and distance learning for basic education in South Asia: its potential for hard to reach children and children in conflict and disaster areas

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OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Its potential for hard-to-reach children and children in conflict and disaster areas

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children

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OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Its potential for hard-to-reach children and children in conflict and disaster areas

**Cambridge Distance Education Consultancy
Von Hügel Institute, St Edmund's College
Cambridge, UK
and
UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia**

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FOREWORD

As we move towards the target date for universal primary education for all, and consider further the needs of children as they move into secondary education, the issue of out-of-school children – the 'hard-to-reach' – becomes increasingly highlighted. The problem is particularly acute in times of conflict or disaster, both common features in South Asia.

Children do not enrol in school, or drop out early, for a wide variety of complex and often interlinked reasons. What is clear, however, is that conventional schooling is rarely the best solution for these children. A more flexible approach to education is essential.

This report examines the reasons why children are out of school, and the role that Open and Distance Learning can play in enabling them to achieve a basic level of education. The report includes case studies of successful initiatives from around South Asia. It is also backed up by in-depth country studies from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The study also provides insights into the personal, political and policy issues involved in provision of basic education for hard-to-reach groups.

The report argues for a broad framework of government policy that supports diverse opportunities and multiple providers within both large-scale and small-scale initiatives. Accreditation of non-formal qualifications is crucially important so that children can enter mainstream education, vocational courses or employment.

This valuable study is directed at policy makers, planners and activists who play a strategic role in basic education, especially when trying to cope with situations of conflict or disaster. It aims to help them consider the invaluable contribution that Open and Distance Learning can make to children's education, and provides guidance on how to implement it in practice in South Asia and beyond.

Daniel Toole
Regional Director
UNICEF ROSA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Accredited Agency
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AIE	Alternative and Innovative Education Scheme
AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan)
AL	Accelerated Learning
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
ALS A&E	Alternative Learning System; Accreditation and Equivalency
APEP	Afghan Primary Education Programme
APPEAL	Asia and Pacific Programme of Education for All
ASCHIANA	Afghan Non-Government Organization for Street Working Children
AusAID	Formerly the Australian Agency for International Development
BAPS	BRAC Adolescent Primary School
BEHTRUWC	Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children
BEP	BRAC Primary Education Programme or Bihar Education Project
BNFE	Bureau of Non-Formal Education
BOS	Bangladesh Open School
BOU	Bangladesh Open University
BPEP	BRAC Primary Education Programme
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
C4D	Communication for Development
CAFS	Continuous Assessment Feasibility Study (Malawi)
CAII	Creative Associates International Inc.
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc.
CEC	Community Education Committee
CEF	Commonwealth Education Fund
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CiC	Children in Crisis
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMES	Centre for Mass Education and Science
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
COPE	Community Organized Primary Education Programme
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity
CREPS	Complimentary Rapid Education Programme for Schools (Sierra Leone)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CWDs	Children with Disabilities
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEMP	Distance Education Modernization Project

DFID	Department For International Development (UK)
DOS	Department of Open School
DPE	Department of Primary Education
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DTEP	Distance Teacher Education Programme
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDI	EFA Development Index
EEC	Education for Ethnic Children
EFA	Education for All
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
EN	Escuela Nueva (Columbia)
FIVDB	Friends in Village Development, Bangladesh
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEI	Gender-specific EFA Index
GNP	Gross National Product
GO	Government Organization
GPS	Government Primary School
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UNOCHA
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
iDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGVE	Integrated General and Vocational Education (UCEP)
ILO	International Labour Organization
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
INR	Indian Rupee
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
JSC	Junior Secondary Certificate
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MCI	Meena Communication Initiative
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MVF	Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIE	National Institute of Education
NIOS	National Institute of Open Schooling (India)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation
NOVIB	Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Dutch organization for international development cooperation, Oxfam affiliate)
NPEGEL	National Programme for the Education for Girls at the Elementary Level
NRBC	Non-Residential Bridge Course
OBE	Open Basic Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OER	Open Educational Resource
OLE	Open Learning Exchange
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

PACE	Post-basic and Continuing Education (BRAC)
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PESP	Primary (Education) Stipend Programme
POS	Pakistan Open School
PREST	Practitioner Research and Evaluation Skills Training
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RISE	Revitalization of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education
RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy
RNGPS	Registered Non-Government Primary School
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF)
ROSC	Reaching Out-of-School Children
RTT	Radio-based Teacher Training, a component of ADEP
SCiSL	Save the Children in Sri Lanka
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SETU	Integrated Citizen Facilitation Centres
SIRIP	Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Programme
SLOS	Sri Lanka Open School
SRC	Socio-Religious Community
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
T4	Technology Tools for Teaching and Training
TED	Teacher Education Department
TESSA	Teacher Education in Sub Saharan Africa
TK	Bangladeshi taka
TRC	Teacher Resource Centre
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education Programme
UEE	Universalization of Elementary Education
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VEC	Village Education Committee
VKC	Virtual Knowledge Centre
VTI	Vocational and Technical Institute

TERMINOLOGY

The terminology in the literature is confusing and often inconsistent. The definitions we will be working with are as follows:

Open learning is any organized educational approach or activity which takes as its starting point an analysis of the needs of the intended group(s) of learners and then seeks in its policies and practices to design the programme in ways that minimize any barriers to learning in terms of either access, or of time and place, pace, method of study, curriculum content or any combination of these. Open learning, therefore, is not so much a particular type of education but rather a set of open qualities, which may exist to a greater or lesser extent in any form of education or training.

Distance education is an organized educational programme, often accredited, where the learner is at a geographical and/or time distance from the learning provider – the educational institution and tutors – and where all or much of the communication between teachers and learners is conducted through electronic or print mediums. To overcome the physical distance and build in interaction, the provider may try to use the two-way potential of, for example, mailed assignment marking, emails, telephone, tele- and video-conferencing, call-in radio or TV, as well as pre-recorded video or audio materials. It may also build in face-to-face components such as bringing dispersed students in for occasional tutored group meetings at a study centre or summer school. Conversely, the central provider can send travelling tutors to the learners or enter into agreements for locally-provided support (e.g. by a formal or community school, or university). An example would be a programme, offered by a national open university, providing initial teacher training at a distance to unqualified school-based teachers. The programme allows the teacher to remain *in situ*, and the chance to experiment with new practices in their immediate classrooms.

The term **ODL** or **open and distance learning** is frequently used as an umbrella term to cover educational approaches that reach learners in places that are convenient or accessible to them, provide learning resources for them, or enable them to qualify without attending school or college in person, or open up new opportunities for keeping up to date no matter where or when they want to study. While understandable, the conflation of the terms can be confusing and in this report we will substitute open learning as the umbrella term, with distance education as one type of open learning.

Basic education – definitions of basic education vary with South Asian countries in terms of the duration and language used to describe the initial stages of formal education. However, most work on the assumption that the formal school system is the delivery mechanism for basic education. Provision for groups who face barriers to accessing the formal system tend to be vague in terms of state commitment and 'alternative' content. We adopt here a UNESCO definition (UNESCO, 2007[1]), which explicitly recognizes the rights of a wider basic education constituency,

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[1] http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001802/180253e.pdf (accessed 14 July 2009).

which can, through discrimination (the different treatment of a group without justification) and exclusion (where groups are unable to access basic education) be prevented from realizing this right. For example, basic education should be guaranteed to a person without explicit reference to their age. The UNESCO definition also refers to 'equivalent basic education' for young people and adults who did not have the opportunity to receive and complete basic education at the appropriate age. The term 'equivalent' was chosen rather than 'comparable', 'similar' or 'alternative' as it places 'emphasis on the results and objectives of education rather than the methods used to achieve them' (*ibid.*, p.7). Groups will remain marginalized without equivalent basic education qualifications, which are widely recognized by parents, employers and government. The UNESCO definition is also a future-oriented approach to basic education. It provides a framework, which reminds governments of the obligations they need to work towards.

Basic education

For the purposes of this definition, basic education covers notions such as fundamental, elementary and primary/secondary education. It is guaranteed to everyone without any discrimination or exclusion based notably on gender, ethnicity, nationality or origin, social, economic or physical condition, language, religion, political or other opinion, or belonging to a minority.

Beyond pre-school education, the duration of which can be fixed by the State, basic education consists of at least nine years and progressively extends to 12 years. Basic education is free and compulsory without any discrimination or exclusion.

Equivalent basic education is offered for youth and adults who did not have the opportunity or possibility to receive and complete basic education at the appropriate age.

Basic education prepares the learner for further education, for an active life and citizenship. It meets basic learning needs including learning to learn, the acquisition of numeracy, literacies, and scientific and technological knowledge as applied to daily life.

Basic education is directed to the full development of the human personality. It develops the capability for comprehension and critical thinking, and it inculcates the respect for human rights and values, notably, human dignity, solidarity, tolerance, democratic citizenship and a sense of justice and equity.

The State guarantees the right to basic education of good quality based on minimum standards, applicable to all forms of education, and provided by qualified teachers, as well as effective management along with a system of implementation and assessment.

Basic education is provided in the mother tongue, at least in its initial stages, while respecting the requirements/needs of multilingualism.

In those States where basic education is also provided by private schools, the State ensures that such schools respect fully the objectives and content as mentioned in the present definition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the impressive rise of enrolment levels in formal schooling, a significant number of hard-to-reach children in South Asian countries continue to have no or limited access to basic education. Barriers to their participation are partly a question of school supply, partly of school quality and partly, for some of them, the inappropriate and inflexible nature of the formal school model itself.

The scale and diversity of their needs can only be met by a diversity of provision and multiple providers, both formal and non-formal. Some provision needs to be small-scale, targeted NGO approaches for particular groups (e.g. seasonal migrant workers), other provision needs to address large-scale general access issues (e.g. schooling in remote areas or second chance provision for older children).

Beyond just access, there is also the need for a life-cycle approach to provision so that these children have progression routes *through* levels and *between* different providers, as well as access to formal or equivalent qualifications. All this implies far more coordinated and joined-up planning than the *ad hoc*, second-best non-formal provision characteristic of the 1980s and 1990s. A coordinated approach, however, challenges old dualities – non-formal education (NFE) v formal, state v non-state – and leads to practical considerations about:

- how best to manage a range of learning opportunities
- how to divide responsibilities between the state and other partners, between national and decentralized levels
- how to facilitate transitions and negotiate articulation between the formal and non-formal sectors
- where to manage accreditation.

Used judiciously, open and distance learning (ODL) can make a strong contribution to strategic planning. One non-negotiable starting point for its use, however, is recognition that children need to learn in a social environment: ODL is not a substitute for direct teaching and face-to-face contact with other children, teachers and carers. Given the right policy and infrastructural framework, ODL can support five areas in basic education, including educational provision in conflict and disaster areas:

- providing para-formal or alternative schooling systems
- supporting successful transition to, and performance within, formal schools
- raising quality by providing ready-made educational resources (formal or non-formal)
- providing networks and training for intermediaries (e.g. teachers, broadcasters, mentors)
- providing communication for development (C4D) strategies (e.g. health, school readiness advocacy).

Any comprehensive and cohesive strategy could usefully employ all of these. Emerging as particularly valuable among them, however, are NFE schooling approaches that integrate closely to the formal system. These either provide a *bridge* to the formal system or operate as a more flexible NFE *substitution* for formal provision but which nevertheless provide a route to formal or equivalent qualifications. Three ODL approaches in particular emerge:

1 *Community school initiatives* (e.g. BRAC in Bangladesh and other similar INGO + MOE + local community partnerships in South Asia)
2 *Open schools* (e.g. the National Institute for Open Schooling [the Open Basic Education programmes, NIOS], India and Open School, Sri Lanka)
3 *Feeder programmes* which link NFE to formal provision (e.g. MVF, India).

Each introduces flexible, open qualities, which remove barriers to participation in basic education for hard-to-reach children and operate (or could operate) at scale. BRAC, for example, has demonstrated that well-developed management systems with centrally-produced, high quality, open learning curriculum resources (for teachers and learners), regular teacher training in child-centred pedagogy and community ownership can result in impressive completion, achievement and transfer rates in under-resourced rural areas.

NIOS has shown that investment in an open schooling framework, based on open learning resources (for teachers and learners), a national delivery system and an external route to national qualifications and examinations, make it possible for:

● other non-formal providers to set up, use and adapt the materials
● schooling to be re-started quickly in emergency zones
● cross-border refugees or the children of families working overseas to continue accessing their own national education in a different country
● formal schools to benefit (from the resources).

MVF's feeder programmes provide a second-chance route back to formal schools and a way out of child labour.

The way that BRAC, NIOS and MVF have all not only diversified their provision (for a wide variety of hard-to-reach groups) but have also become apex organizations (supporting other providers with expertise, training, networking and ready-made resources), provides planners with existing models and infrastructures which could contribute towards developing more coordinated, joined-up basic education provision which reduces duplication of effort.

Given the teacher shortages in the area, ODL could also play a significant role in providing the means for developing a lifelong learning approach to teacher support and training. With careful advance planning, ODL could also play a role in conflict and disaster areas. Teachers and radio broadcasters with training for emergency situations could develop a bank of ready-made educational resources which could be deployed at different stages of emergencies to provide children with immediate educational continuity, whether informal or formal, for example, open-source resources mapped against the national curriculum for students or teachers and radio programmes (ECCE, psycho-social family or child-to-child approaches, and more structured educational programmes).

In summary

ODL provides a means of overcoming certain barriers in basic education: of enabling access to national qualifications outside formal schools, of overcoming geographical barriers (such as radio broadcasting in disaster zones, mountainous regions and small island states), of training large numbers of teachers *in situ* (distance education). It also offers the potential to deliver better value for money, particularly with the economies of scale that can be achieved in high population South Asian countries.

The report makes five recommendations:

1 Educational planners could re-examine the statistical, analytical and conceptual basis from which they work in relation to these groups of hard-to-reach children.
2 Educational planning needs to be built on a comprehensive mapping and evaluation of current provision in terms of its scale and effectiveness. However, a fine balance needs to be achieved between the creation of enabling frameworks (which facilitate inclusiveness and coherence for the learner) and over-bureaucratic frameworks (which drive the NFE sector away from the formal system).
3 Governments need to accept the importance of alternative and flexible routes to access formal qualifications, and to actively establish such a route, which is built on a system of credit accumulation and transfer. This on its own will have a significant impact on opening up access for hard-to-reach groups, and has the potential to provide a route to recognized qualifications for NGOs and other NFE providers.
4 More attention needs to be paid to the potential of ODL in supporting teachers and other intermediaries involved in basic education.
5 Research should be commissioned to ascertain how existing ODL resources and infrastructures, e.g. from Open Schools, could be used in advance planning for conflict and emergency situations.

These recommendations are followed by suggestions for future research in this area.

1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

This report, commissioned by the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, explores the potential of open and distance learning (ODL) in basic education for hard-to-reach children and children in conflict or disaster contexts who cannot access or complete a cycle of basic education. There is a focus on specific ODL approaches providing access to recognized educational achievement. These approaches attempt to address the concern that non-formal and alternative programmes imply second best with little currency within the formal education sector and with employers. Such equity-based programmes raise big policy implications as they blur the normally rather rigid distinctions between formal and non-formal approaches.

The report is based on a combination of desk research and fieldwork in two South Asian countries, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and was necessarily shaped and limited by the time available for the research and the ability to access reliable, up-to-date information. However, in the process of researching this report, we learned that there is a wealth of innovative and successful initiatives that will repay serious evaluation. We have tried to give an indication of their range and diversity but we know that we have only scratched the surface of possibilities, and there is an absence of good international cross-cultural research in this area. We believe that we have been able to offer some evidence that traditional 'formal' models can be adapted to provide learning gains for the poorest and most disadvantaged young people.

For ease of use, the study has been published in two volumes. This first volume, as described in more detail below, provides an overview, with recommendations, of how ODL approaches can help hard-to-reach children achieve basic education. The companion volume puts together the two country studies of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and thus provides in-depth analysis more specific to policy makers and implementers in those countries.

Research methodology

Our research combined in-depth fieldwork in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and a fact-finding visit to India with desk-study reviews of South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). We sought advice, information and direct inputs to the research from a range of stakeholders: informed educational experts working in the field of education for hard-to-reach children and those in conflict and emergency situations and users (children, parents, teachers, employers). The process had the following stages:

- Initial identification of conceptual framework and research questions through discussion (with the research team, UNICEF, informed experts, in-country experts and documentary analysis).
- Fieldwork by visiting researchers in close collaboration with in-country UNICEF colleagues. The fieldwork included interviews with various stakeholders, including NGOs, government organizations, children, teachers, parents, employers and experts in the field of hard-to-reach children and those in conflict and emergency areas. Local literature was surveyed and two country reports prepared for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and project reports for India. Further details can be found in the companion volume *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Country Studies.*

- Ongoing review of literature and discussions to inform the conceptual framework and to add to the data on policy and practice. Literature included theoretical papers, national and agency policy documents, local and comparative research reports, unpublished and other grey literature and toolkits and other practical resources.
- Specially commissioned contributions from experts in the fields of conflict and emergency, policy and planning, funding and costing and the South Asian overview.

A more detailed account of the methodology appears at the end of the report as an Annex.

Report structure

The report starts with a section on setting the context. Chapter 1 attempts to give an overview of the scale of the problem. We made great efforts to get reliable comparative data for the South Asian countries but came to the view that the exact figures are impossible to find and are not important in themselves – the figures available are just an indication of the possible size of the problem. Chapter 2 in this section offers a framework for looking at open and distance learning and summarizes the debates in the literature. Chapter 3 gives examples of the way in which ODL has been used to provide or to support basic education – our research gave us the impression of a number of government and NGO initiatives that were fragmented and isolated.

In the second section we focus our attention on looking for evidence of enabling infrastructures and frameworks for policy and accreditation, which can build constructive links between the formal and non-formal provision, and facilitate progression and recognition for the learner. Chapter 4 examines the arguments for and against equivalency and certification, while Chapter 5 looks specifically at the contribution of open schools and community-based schools.

The third section, *What can work?*, starts with Chapter 6, in which we examine the issues in the two countries where we were able to do fieldwork. These are written up in more depth in the companion volume *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Country Studies*. Chapter 7 features eight initiatives which were selected to show a range of robust and sustainable models (or those that have the potential to be so). We present these as short case studies, each located in their specific context but also able to provide a starting point for thinking about educational planning.

The fourth section is aimed at policy makers, planners and activists who play a strategic role in basic education in South Asia and who wish to consider the potential of open learning as a means to address some of the large number of children who are unable either to access or complete a cycle of basic education. In order to construct effective educational strategies for hard-to-reach children and children whose lives are disrupted by conflicts and emergencies, that make the best use of constrained funds, they will need to consider what open learning can do in basic education, how well it can do it, how much it costs and what conditions and parameters need to be addressed in order for it to work in practice. Chapters 8 and 9 consider these issues.

The bibliography is then in two sections. The first section is a listing of all the references cited in the report. The second section is a wider bibliography, which is grouped under specific countries and topics. We hope this will provide a starting point for other researchers.

1 SETTING THE SCENE

This chapter sets the scene for the report by examining the number of children in South Asia with limited or no access to basic education, and explores which children are affected and why, and what implications this holds for thinking about access and exclusion.

Ros Morpeth

Brother and sister who live on the streets and work as rag pickers

1.1 The numbers

Despite their huge differences of culture, wealth, demography and size, the South Asian countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have educational challenges in common. All face demands for more and better provision for primary-age children, particularly in rural and slum areas, an expansion of junior-secondary schools, and for more and better-qualified teachers. All, too, have significant numbers of children who have had no access at all to primary schooling, or start but never finish, or finish but do not achieve basic levels of learning.

Out of an estimated total of 101 million children of school age who are out of school, over 35 million are in South Asian countries (Table 1.1). The overwhelming majority of these are in India, the most populous country of the region – an estimated near 21 million – and Pakistan, with 8.5 million children out of school, with another 5 million in Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Huge as these numbers are, they probably understate the problem, given conflicting statistics, contested statistical measurements and the difficulties of gathering accurate data on populations who are already hard to reach. For example:

- Children living in remote areas, for example, may not be reachable by census takers.
- Children in urban areas who are living on the streets may be reachable but are hard to track down and count, except by using creative and innovative measures.
- Impoverished households tend not to go to the expense or trouble of registering births.
- Already-marginalized people such as the scheduled castes and tribes of India, nomadic peoples, and the disabled, may well be distrustful of census takers given the abuse they suffer from members of the majority population.

Table 1.1 School enrolment rate, out-of-school populations and survival rates

Country	Gross enrolment rate Primary education, 2000–2007* (%)			Children of primary school age out of school (thousands), 2007			Compulsory education (age group)	Survival rate to last grade of primary school 2000–2007*	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		Administrative data	Survey data
Afghanistan	126	75	101	626	1,190	1,816	7–12	–	90
Bangladesh[2]	101	105	103	1,928	1,419	3,347	6–10	65	94
Bhutan	103	101	102	13	16	29	6–16	84	–
India	114	109	112	9,633	11,037	20,670	6–14	73	95
Maldives	118	114	116	1	1	2	6–12	–	–
Nepal	129	123	126	257	312	569	6–10	81	95
Pakistan	94	74	84	3,939	4,558	8,497	5–9	70	–
Sri Lanka[3]	108	108	108	19	19	38	5–14	100	–
				Children of primary school age out of school (millions), 2007					
South Asia	111	104	108	16.4	18.6	35.0		72	94
World	108	103	105	47.9	52.9	100.7		76	90

* Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the column heading
Source: UNICEF, Child Info www.childinfo.org/education_outofschool.php (accessed 29 May 2009)

Even with better accuracy, the numbers are not static: demographic pressures will remain a challenge throughout the decade as the primary-school-age population is expected to increase substantially in some countries, with projected growth rates in the coming decade of 34% in Afghanistan and 11% in Pakistan (UNESCO, 2008:2), for example. What counts as a school is also contested, and some official primary education statistics do not provide a comprehensive picture of school attendance. In Bangladesh, for example, they do not include over 30,000 one-room, one-teacher schools run by non-government organizations (NGOs), serving more than a million children.

Definition – EDI

The EFA Development Index is the arithmetic mean of four measures of educational achievement:

- primary enrolment rate
- adult literacy
- gender parity
- survival rate to Grade 5 (the level of completion at which primary education is defined as ending).

The closer a country's EDI value is to the maximum (1.0), the greater the extent of its overall EFA achievement and the nearer the country is to the EFA goal as a whole. A country is ranked as having 'Low EDI' if the value for the EDI is 0.80 or below; countries considered 'Low EDI' rank between 101 and 129. (See Table 1.2.)

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[2] More recent data on Bangladesh can be found in the accompanying country study report, and in DPE (2009); this table allows for a comparison of the ROSA countries.

[3] More recent data on Sri Lanka can be found in the Sri Lanka section of the companion volume *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Country Studies*.

Some writers make a useful distinction between 'access to' education and 'access in' education. 'Access to' means to have access to the buildings, enrolment procedures, etc., while 'access in' refers to the quality of the teaching and learning, and the level of participation in the life of the school.

Dr Cristina Devecchi, personal communication

In terms of reaching the goals of Education for All (EFA), South Asian countries have made substantial progress. The region halved the number of out-of-school children between 1999 and 2005 and increased primary enrolment by 35 million, or 22% (UNESCO, 2008:2) which represents a 9% increase in the primary net enrolment ratio to 86%. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. South Asia is still home to about one-third of the world's out-of-school population. More than half the children not in school (59%) have never been in school and may never enrol without additional incentives (UNESCO, 2009). The EFA Development Index (EDI) was calculated for six of the eight countries in the region (Table 1.2). Only one country – the Maldives – was close to achieving an EDI value of 1.0, and the other five countries covered in the region – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan – are far from achieving EFA (UNESCO, 2009).

Progress in enrolment is also not uniform. For example, in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, both have high numbers of children enrolling in primary school, with parity in enrolment rates of girls and boys, but they also have significant variations – regional, socio-economic and ethnic – in enrolment.

While access to and participation in primary schooling have increased since 1999, slow progression through school and failure to complete the primary cycle remain major concerns in some countries. Repeating grades is a significant issue in Nepal (42% in Grade 1), Afghanistan (18%), Bhutan (11%) and Bangladesh (11%) – (UNESCO, 2009). Another challenge is school retention: according to UNESCO (2009) the median survival rate to the last grade of primary education was particularly low (79% in 2004) and survival rates to the last grade vary from 65% in Bangladesh to 93% in Bhutan, although they have improved considerably in India and Nepal. Primary school dropout rates in Bangladesh, with a population of 150 million, have always been high, but according to a study in Bangladesh conducted by 10 NGOs, with the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF), the dropout rate over the five-year primary cycle increased from 33% in 2002 to 47% in 2006. A more recent government study indicates that in 2008, this had reduced slightly to 45% (DPE, 2009). In Pakistan, Education Sector Reforms 2001–2004 quote a gross enrolment of 89% and dropout of 50%. Thus out of 36 million children enrolled in schools, 18 million dropped out before completing primary education (CEF Pakistan Summary, 2005).

Table 1.2 Educational development indicators, 2006

Country	EDI rank	EDI	Primary NER[4]	Adult literacy[5]	Gender-specific EFA Index[6] (GEI)	Survival rate to grade 5[7]
Bangladesh	109	0.753	0.921	0.525	0.914	0.651
Bhutan	105	0.777	0.799	0.543	0.833	0.932
India	102	0.794	0.961	0.652	0.834	0.730
Maldives	49	0.959	0.980	0.970	0.966[8]	0.921
Nepal	110	0.738	0.801	0.552	0.815	0.785
Pakistan	118	0.652	0.656	0.542	0.714	0.697

Source: www.unesco.org/education/gmr2009/press/efagmr2009_Annex1_EDI.pdf (accessed 29 May 2009)

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[4] NER – Total primary National Enrolment Rate – includes children of primary school age who are enrolled in either primary or secondary schools.

[5] Adult literacy rate: A proxy measure based on educational attainment that is the proportion of the adult population with at least a complete primary education.

[6] GEI – The gender-specific EFA index is an average of three gender parity indexes: the gross enrolment ratio (M/F) in primary education, the gross enrolment ratio (M/F) in secondary education, and the gender parity measure (M/F) for adult literacy.

[7] This reflects the number of children completing Grade 5.

[8] Gender disparities in this case, unlike those of the other countries listed, are at the expense of boys or men, especially at secondary level.

Dropout rates also vary within a country: in Sri Lanka, though national dropout rates are low, there are exceptionally high student dropout and absentee rates in the conflict-affected areas of the North and East. According to a UNICEF Rapid Needs Assessment survey in Sri Lanka 2003, at least 65,000 children in the North and East were not attending school and the official dropout rate was 15% compared with 3.9% in the rest of the country (CEF Sri Lanka Summary, 2005). Even if children reach the last grade, they still may not successfully complete primary school. The most pronounced gaps between the survival rate to the last grade and cohort completion rates were found in Nepal and Pakistan.

Despite progress in reducing gender disparities, girls and women remain at a distinct disadvantage in accessing school and acquiring literacy skills (UNESCO, 2009). Progress in enrolment was particularly good in India and Nepal but significant disparities in primary education for girls remain in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Once in primary school, girls tend to do better than boys, with fewer repeating grades and, in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, they are more likely to reach the last grade of primary education than boys (the opposite is the case for India).

1.2 Poverty and access to school

The lack of entry to school, alongside the repeating or short participation patterns and the low achievement levels of some children in school, underline the fact that access to basic education is far more complex than just being a question of school supply and enrolment. There are factors within society that 'create differential demand for education and differential ability to take advantage of educational opportunities' (UNICEF, 2008a:21).

Many factors are at work to keep these children out of school or jeopardize consistent attendance: wars and disasters, geography, gender, displacement and mobility, and marginalization. Overarching all of these, however, is poverty, and numerous studies reveal the link between poverty and educational disadvantage (Molteno *et al.*, 1999; Huebler, 2008; UNICEF, 2008a; UNICEF, 2008b; van der Berg, 2008; Davies *et al.*, 2009).

Longitudinal study of child poverty

Young Lives, an international research project investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty in four countries – Ethiopia, Peru, India (state of Andhra Pradesh) and Vietnam – is one of the few longitudinal research projects. It is following two groups of children in each country: 2000 children who were born 2001–02 and 1000 children born 1994–95.

The initial findings from the second round of data collection carried out in Andhra Pradesh in late 2006 give an outline of some of the key indicators of childhood poverty and the changes that have taken place since the first round of data collection in 2002. Findings of interest in this report are that Andhra Pradesh has achieved considerable progress on child development indicators since the mid-1990s, but significant disparities remain based on class, caste, gender and geography. Not surprisingly, household wealth is an important determinant of child outcomes, with children from poorer households more likely to be stunted. But the study shows that household income is not the *only* determinant; the level of parental education significantly affects nutritional outcomes and enrolment in school, and a child's subjective sense of well-being and optimism for the future. A finding of particular importance is that short-term shocks such as illness or natural disasters can have a devastating effect on household resources in the long term. For example, children from drought-affected households are more likely to seek outside work, and families have to borrow to live and fall into a classic debt trap. Paid work for children emerges as an important issue. Despite legislation against child labour, over 20% of children in the Round 2 sample engaged in paid work with higher incidences in rural areas – 25.76% – and highest among scheduled castes, at 30.84%.

Galab, et al. (2008) Young Lives Round 2 Survey Report Initial findings:
Andhra Pradesh, India September 2008 www.younglives.org.uk/

The immediate effect of poverty shows up in early life expectancy figures in the region: on average, 83 of every 1,000 children born in the region do not reach age five, a figure that rises to a staggering 257 for Afghanistan (UIS, 2006). Malnutrition and poor health is a major problem in the region and one of the biggest barriers to achieving universal primary education (UPE). Across the South Asian countries, apart from Sri Lanka (with 14%), between 25–54% of children under five suffer from moderate to severe stunting which is known to have serious impact on a child's development.

Few children in the region, and particularly those from poor households which stand to benefit the most, have access to programmes of early childhood care and education (ECCE) that comprehensively address health, nutrition and learning needs and this will have a long-term impact on their ability to take advantage of educational opportunities. The lack of ECCE and pre-primary enrolment is particularly marked in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

Poverty and vulnerable livelihoods are cross-cutting factors in exclusion from school, resulting in no attendance, irregular attendance, repetition, dropout or poor educational attainment. Many poor and vulnerable children come from groups identified in the mid-decade EFA Review (UNESCO, 2008:14) but belong to more than one category, resulting in multiple disadvantage and marginalization.

These include:

- children from remote and rural communities
- children from religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities as well as indigenous peoples
- children from migrant families
- people/children with disabilities or with special needs
- street children, working children, children in difficult circumstances (conflict and disaster areas)
- orphans and abandoned children
- children of very poor parents
- girls, especially from rural/ethnic communities.

Factors within these communities have a differential impact on children's ability to access formal education – see Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Factors in unequal access by communities

Communities	Some factors resulting in unequal access
Girls, especially from rural/ethnic communities.	Lower valuing of schooling for girls, lower expectations, early marriage, no schools near enough, no female teachers, no separate toilets.
Children from remote and rural communities	Geographically remote areas (mountains, island archipelagos, desert regions) are usually the last to see benefits of economic development and provision of services. No schools. Lack of trained teachers. Children working in family.
Children from religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities as well as indigenous peoples	Caste-based and, for girls in particular, religious-based discrimination is significant in a number of South Asian countries. Minority languages underrepresented in majority-language medium schools.
Children from migrant families	Settlements in urban slum area with a lack of government provision or part-year attendance only in home village or schools near work-site.
Persons/children with disabilities or with special needs	Non-inclusive practices at formal school, teachers with no training in/awareness of special needs education needs. No out-of-school provision.
Street children, working children	Food and money priorities, chaotic lives, child labour, discrimination.
Children in difficult circumstances (conflict or disaster areas)	Long-term disrupted educational provision where poor are disproportionately affected. Cross-border refugees with no access to own national schooling system, child soldiers.
Orphans and abandoned children	Traumatized children with chaotic lives, child labour, discrimination.

Source: Adapted from UNICEF (2008a:14)

In addition, the devastation of wars and natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, landslides, etc.) that plague this region impacts most heavily on the poorest households:

● whose habitations and livelihoods are most prone to destruction
● whose members are most likely to be killed, injured, or displaced
● whose children are the most likely to be recruited as child soldiers
● whose women and girls are the most likely to suffer at the hands of soldiers on both sides.

On the supply side, there are inadequate schools and unequal provision of good quality schools in poorer and remote areas which prevent children from accessing basic education at all. Impoverished households cannot afford school fees, or pay for the expenses of the uniforms, supplies and food that schoolchildren require.

There are also opportunity costs: children who attend school are not available for work within or outside the household, either to supplement parents' meagre incomes or to free up parents for income-earning activity by minding other children or household livestock. This has long-term implications as parents with little education themselves are less convinced of the benefits of education. Where there are schools, some are not equally welcoming or accepting and do not provide equal opportunities to learning when in a school. (UNICEF, 2007, 2008a and b, 2009 and Molteno *et al.*, 1999 all examine this in more detail.)

Supply and demand factors are closely linked: the reality and perception of school quality, process and outcomes will inform decision on participation. Schools need to be seen as learning places which are welcoming, supportive and, crucially, result in achievement that is valued.

Exclusion from education, then, has many causes, with both supply and demand factors and is a 'complex web of inter-linked dimensions of poverty (linked to location and livelihood), gender, caste/status-based exclusion, ethnicity/language and disability. Children without adequate care and protection are particularly vulnerable to educational exclusion, and such children are not reached by general pro-poor policies. In South Asia, too, there is a compounding effect due to the prevalence of conflict and natural disasters (and HIV/AIDS)' (UNICEF, 2008a:22).

1.3 Why is access to basic education important?

From a human development perspective, poverty is not just a lack of financial resources but 'a denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life' (UNDP, 1997:2) and with education playing a central role in opening up capabilities, choices and opportunities (Sen, 1992, 2001; van der Berg, 2008). This approach contrasts with a common view that sees development purely in terms of GNP growth, and poverty purely as income-deprivation.

From this perspective, a lack of education is a part of the definition of poverty; and education, then, is a means to reduce it. Put another way,

The Taleban have ordered the closure of all girls' schools in the war-ravaged Swat District and warned parents and teachers of dire consequences if the ban is flouted.

'Female education is against Islamic teachings and spreads vulgarity in society,' Shar Dauran, leader of a group that has established control over a large part of Swat district in the North West Frontier Province, declared this week.

The district has 842 boys' and 490 girls' state schools for 300,000 children aged 3 to 9.

According to the local authorities, 50 per cent of girls have stopped attending school because of militants' threats.

Attacks on girls' schools are not confined to the Swat district. In the past two years another 100 schools have been burnt down in Waziristan and other tribal areas, leaving tens of thousands of children between the ages of 5 and 15 with no access to education.

Hussain (2008)

Capabilities represent the various functionings (beings and doings) that a person can achieve ... reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another ... to choose from possible livings.

Sen (1992:40)

the relationship between poverty and education is two-way: without adequate or meaningful education people are more likely to be constrained to a life of poverty and poor people are often unable to access an adequate and meaningful education. How meaningful or adequate access is defined is also critical.

We go on to look at the criteria for good basic education, and to define what constitutes a meaningful basic education for children – whether in formal or non-formal schooling systems – in the next chapter.

Manual scavenging anywhere tends to shock you, the sheer ugliness of it, the degradation of an entire people. But this was worse. In Sikar, little girls – eight, nine, 10 years old – were working with their mothers.

I met Pooja. She thought she was about 12. She had the saddest eyes of any little girl I have ever seen. And as she talked haltingly, slowly, shyly, I finally realized what it was all about. Not just the four endless years of cleaning human waste every morning from the age of eight. It was a combination of many things. Pooja had never ever had a childhood.

She was going to the school started by Manavadhikar Sampark Kendra to help balmikis. She was pleased to have stopped working the latrines.

In and around Sikar, there were 70 little girls like Pooja working the latrines. The scenario was the same in U.P. and Bihar. There are still one million people working as manual scavengers all over India. Prime Minister Vajpayee, like others before him, declared from the ramparts of the Red Fort that manual scavenging would be abolished by 2002. The deadline is one year old. Nothing has changed for India's one million balmikis.

Merely admitting them in government schools achieves nothing. The children are victimized, picked on, beaten up, laughed at and jeered at.

In addition, they have to sit and eat separately. They are not allowed to take water from the pot because it would be polluting. The teaching is minimal.

Thekaekara (2004)

Summary

This chapter has attempted to quantify the numbers of children with limited or no access to basic education but reiterates that the figures are contested and probably understate the situation. Whatever the real numbers are, what is important is that the scale of the problem and the challenges it presents are substantial and complex. Two major policy implications emerge from this short examination:

- the importance of establishing what constitutes an adequate basic education for all
- the importance of pursuing those aims through promoting equity to, in and through (UNICEF, 2008a) schools in general but also the need to respond to the particular sets of challenges that disadvantaged communities pose in terms of reaching and providing a meaningful education.

The next chapter examines the educational needs of children with limited or no access to basic education and what role open learning could play in educational responses.

10

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE POTENTIAL OF ODL RESPONSES

2

Drawing on the data from the previous chapter and other context issues, this chapter now considers appropriate educational responses to the needs of these children and whether open and distance learning have a role to play.

2.1 Why some children have no or limited access to basic education

We have seen that although enrolment levels in formal schooling have grown impressively in South Asian countries in recent years (and particularly in India), a significant number of hard-to-reach children continue to have no or limited access to basic education. They commonly exhibit different patterns of enrolment, attendance, dropout and achievement:

- those who never enrol
- those who enrol, persist for five years, but attend rarely
- those who enrol, attend rarely and drop out early
- those whose absences/disruptions are short, possibly only once, and are caused by external events
- those who enrol late (possibly one or more years later than would have been appropriate) and need to catch up with their peers
- those who have to repeat a year
- those who enrol at Grade 1, drop out for a long period (possibly more than a year), then wish to re-enter school to catch up with their peers
- those whose education is repeatedly disrupted, by domestic events, natural disaster or conflict situations
- those who drop out after reintegration into school, but do not wish to come back
- those who attend school but have consistently low achievement.

These patterns reveal that barriers for these children are partly a question of school supply, partly of school quality and partly, for some of them, the inappropriate and inflexible nature of the formal school model itself. These patterns have implications for the design of initiatives that meet their needs and whether open learning can have a role to play in responding to these needs.

Poor parents are easily intimidated if they have to deal with schools, with which they are unfamiliar. They lack the skill to get birth certificates, medical certificates, income and caste certificates, which need dealing with more than one department. They are much less familiar with the rules of examination, attendance, promotion and procurement of transfer certificates and so on. More often than not, their inability to cope with school as an institution has resulted in children dropping out of schools.

MV Foundation, India. Working paper on strategies for bringing children out of work into full time formal day schools

On the supply side, there may be various barriers in the system preventing many of these children from going to school: no school, no teacher, no female teacher or no clean water or toilets at a school (or a combination of these). Planners could address a lot of these needs without looking at open learning. Similarly, some financial and access barriers could be removed by other strategies: targeted financial support, child-seeking practices, facilitating birth registration, nutritional and health support programmes, and flexible enrolment dates.

In terms of quality, there are continuing needs for more and better trained teachers, more resources, a broader, more inclusive curriculum that is demonstrably relevant and of benefit to children in difficult circumstances (and perceived as such). Schools need to be more welcoming, stimulating and provide a child-friendly, safe and healthy environment. There needs to be more teachers from the same linguistic and cultural communities as the children they serve.

The formal school model, with its fixed schedules and five-to-seven year cycle, age-related enrolments and grades, and its teacher-delivered standard national curriculum, can present a barrier in itself. Children in difficult circumstances – working children, street children, displaced and refugee children, children from marginalized and poor communities, children with disabilities and those in areas that are remote or ravaged by war or natural disasters – all need more flexible provision than the formal school system presently provides. They need provision which is flexible enough to respond to their needs and the context in which they live, but which also leads to recognized educational achievement and further educational opportunities.

Open learning can play a role in addressing the last two areas in particular but any responses must begin from particular starting points and take account of the current context in basic education.

One non-negotiable starting point is the need for children to learn within a social environment. Using open learning for children at basic education level is not appropriate when it is a substitute for direct teaching and face-to-face contact with other children, teachers and carers. Its value in basic education for children may be in non-conventional schooling structures, teacher support systems, family-based opportunities for learning and planned responses to conflict and emergency situations. It may also be valuable in addressing the shortage of trained teachers (40% in Afghanistan and Nepal) and, as a consequence, high ratios of pupils to trained teachers (above 100:1 in Afghanistan and Nepal and 45:1 in Pakistan) and national disparities in the distribution of teachers.

2.2 The debates

The last 15 years have seen far more attention being focused on this hard core of children. In particular, the EFA process and government planning for the 2015 targets has done a lot to reveal the persistence and complexities of the problem and the diversity of communities and needs within this group. Greater awareness has led to various debates and the re-examination of established practices, both of which are increasingly informing policy and planning methodologies and, in some cases, basic education reform. For example, rights-based and social inclusion discourses, prominent from the 1990s, are increasingly marshalled to try to make government more accountable for these communities and move them away from the characteristically *ad hoc*, second best non-formal provision of the 1980s and 1990s, towards far more equitable, strategically planned and larger scale approaches.

2.2.1 Formal and non-formal provision

The relationship between formal and non-formal provision for these children is being re-examined and a questioning of whether the old dualities – formal v non-formal system, state v non-state providers – are part of the problem. This is partly because initial formal education for children has been subjected to change in recent decades, and 'as a result of greater community involvement, decentralization and changes in the resourcing of education, formal and non-formal forms of basic education increasingly resemble each other'
(Hoppers, 2006:15). There is now more awareness of the benefits of non-formal alternative schooling approaches for these children and, for some, the view of the formal school model as dysfunctional; that 'technicist' approaches to improving the formal system by providing more schools and investment is only entrenching rather than addressing a more fundamental problem (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008).

It is also partly due to a greater appreciation that the challenge is so big and the needs so diverse that the only practical response, certainly in high population countries, is to draw on a range of providers – both formal and non-formal – but in a more coordinated, strategic and joined-up way. This has led to 'practical considerations of how to manage this vast array of learning opportunities and how to divide responsibilities between the state and other partners, and between national and decentralized levels' (Hoppers, 2006:15). Much could be gained on both sides if the formal and non-formal systems, if state and non-state providers, can find a way of working together, playing to their respective strengths and, along the way, learn from each other. NGOs, for example, often excel at small-scale, highly contextualized non-formal approaches. State systems, on the other hand, can draw on a much wider range of state infrastructures, resources and recognized accreditation frameworks. But formal systems may require non-formal satellites, and non-formal systems ideally need links with the formal system for recognition and access to formal qualifications.

2.2.2 Progression routes and equivalency

Rights-based approaches have also focused attention beyond just access to basic education to include progress in and through the educational system. There is now greater appreciation that this can only be achieved by a life-cycle approach to planning, one that ensures effective transitions at each stage of a child's life from pre-school to primary and onto secondary and beyond. This implies, for these groups of children, not only a need for diversity of provision, drawing on multiple providers, but also joined-up provision through levels and between different providers.

Recognition and accreditation of achievement, often overlooked in provision for these groups, have become a central concern and viewed as an essential right and passport through this multiplicity of routes and providers. As a result, far more attention is being focused on non-formal programmes that operate closely to the formal part of the educational system, which either provide a bridge to the formal system or operate as a non-formal substitution for formal provision and act as an alternative route to equivalent qualifications.

The substitute type has been referred to as para-formal education (Gallart, 1989; Carron and Carr-Hill, 1991:21–3; Carr-Hill *et al.*, 2001:34; Hoppers, 2006:23) or complementary (as opposed to alternative) education (DeStefano *et al.,* 2005) and equivalency programmes (CHAP, 2005;

Table 2.1 Terms in the literature commonly associated with formal/non-formal educational provision

Formal	Non-formal
State provided	*NGO provided*
Conventional	Complementary/alternative
Mainstream	Compensatory/supplementary
Accountable to Ministry of Education	Accountable to civil society/community
Teacher-centred	Child-centred
Homogenous	Heterogeneous
Rigid	Flexible/participatory
Top-down	Bottom-up
Overcrowded curriculum	Accelerated learning
Modernization	Locally relevant

Source: Rose (2007:8)

Definitions – complementary v alternative nonformal approaches

Complementary or para-formal

Non-formal provision to promote equivalency with the government system by, for example, adopting a similar curriculum and preparing them for the same examinations/ levels.

Alternative

An umbrella term for non-formal provision implemented as a different educational model (to that of the state), in a way that is more relevant to the basic education needs of young people, altering the structure of education to increase access, relevance and efficiency. Examples include basic education mixed with training or skills for particular occupations, or additional support to young children who might still have the opportunity to gain access to the formal system but require a particular kind of support to enable them to do so, e.g. accelerated learning to cram the formal curriculum in a shorter timespan.

Adapted from Rose (2007:11)

Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; Hoppers, 2006 and 2007; Kirk, 2009; UNESCO, 2005). There is a growing literature around the area, for example the Non-formal Equivalency Programme, part of the Asia and Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) at UNESCO Bangkok.

Planning for this life-cycle approach and wider access to formal recognition and qualifications beyond the formal school, however, presents significant challenges: accreditation for NGOs is difficult and links and progression routes to and between formal and non-formal providers need to be established.

2.2.3 Meaningful basic education

One area of attention, which brings many of the considerations above together, is the need for planners to develop parameters for minimal conditions and criteria for good basic education, to define what constitutes a meaningful basic education for children – whether in formal or non-formal schooling systems. Two sources provide starting frameworks for examining this.

The Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), based at the Centre for International Education, University of Sussex UK (www.create-rpc.org, accessed 16 July 2009), for example, has developed an expanded vision of access to basic education schooling, which provides a strong starting point for exploring national contexts. It includes:

- access to preschool at appropriate levels
- local access to safe schools with acceptable levels of staffing, learning materials, and other facilities
- admission to and progression through primary school or its equivalent within a year of the nominal age-in-grade
- consistent attendance throughout the school year
- reasonable access to post-primary education and training related to context
- learning outcomes that meet national norms for successful completion of an educational cycle
- equitable access to publicly-funded educational services.

Hoppers (2007:53–54) cites Tomasevski's (2001) criteria for the institutional provision of school education as being particularly helpful in understanding what a right to education implies. These criteria are:

- availability: implying that schools should be established with competent educators and funded by the state
- accessibility: implying that schooling should be compulsory and that there should be parental freedom to choose schools

- acceptability: implying that education should be of a minimum standard: institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient numbers and should have sanitation facilities, trained teachers and teaching materials, amongst other such factors; schools should also foster diversity
- adaptability: implying that education should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to social changes and respond to the needs of learners from diverse cultural settings, including the children of refugees and children with disabilities.

2.3 Can open and distance learning contribute?

All the factors discussed in this chapter have influenced the search for, or analysis of, potential open and distance initiatives that could provide a response to these needs. Five broad types of ODL approaches emerge. These can be categorized in terms of their purpose:

- providing para-formal or alternative schooling systems
- supporting transition to and performance in formal schools
- raising the quality of schools by providing ready-made structured educational resources
- providing networking and training for intermediaries (e.g. teachers, broadcasters, mentors)
- providing communication for development (C4D) strategies.

The first two provide direct access to para-formal or alternative schooling to children who are outside the formal basic education schooling system (either permanently or temporarily). The remaining three open learning approaches support formal and non-formal basic education in some way, either in terms of trying to enrich its quality, of helping to train personnel involved in it or for broadly advocating basic education aims.

Summary

The picture that emerges from the discussion can be summarized in four main points:

1 **Educational responses need to be based on an expanded vision of access to basic education and on a careful analysis of specific access issues from a deep understanding of a national and local context.**
2 **Significant progress in reaching these children is only likely to be made through abandoning *ad hoc* provision for more strategic planning, one which considers ways of introducing flexibility and a diversity of provision, approaches and providers. Some provision may need to be relatively small-scale, highly-targeted approaches for particular groups (such as seasonal migrant workers). Some provision may need to be on a bigger scale and address wider access issues (such as schooling in remote areas or second chance provision for older children).**
3 **As poverty is a cross-cutting issue among these groups, any responses necessarily need to be multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral and address issues such as psychosocial aspects, health and nutritional support, proactive child-seeking practices, birth registration, stipends and so on.**
4 **A key area in planning is likely to be the need for enabling frameworks and infrastructures for policy and accreditation which can build constructive links between formal and non-formal provision and allow for successful transitions between them.**

3 OPEN LEARNING APPROACHES FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Open learning approaches have been widely used to provide and support formal and non-formal basic education for hard-to-reach children and those in conflict or disaster contexts. This chapter provides a descriptive overview of these approaches, looked at from different angles: in terms of their purpose, the technologies they use, the groups they reach, the range of learning contexts they can cover and who is involved in providing them. For this, mainly South Asian examples are drawn upon, but also specific international ones where they demonstrate a different or innovative approach.

3.1 What is open learning used for in basic education?

Open learning can serve different purposes in basic education for hard-to-reach children and those in emergency contexts. These can be categorized into five broad types (with acknowledged overlaps):

Table 3.1 Open learning: five broad different purposes

		Purpose	Examples
Accessing basic education	1	Para-formal and alternative schooling systems	Open schools Community schools Alternative life skills-based basic education
	2	Supporting successful transition to and performance in formal schools	ECCE Feeder or bridge schools Continuity schooling Accelerated learning (AL)
Supporting basic education	3	Raising the quality of formal and non-formal school by providing ready-made educational resources	Structured learning materials Schools radio and TV broadcasting Interactive radio instruction
	4	Training, networking and resources for intermediaries (e.g. teachers, broadcasters, mentors, planners)	Teacher training and professional development by distance education E-networks for teachers, educational broadcasters, planners Self-study manuals for teachers, educational broadcasters and planners Open source educational resources
	5	Communication for development (C4D) strategies	Campaigning programmes focused on children's needs - school readiness, health, nutrition advocacy Edutainment – broadcasting soaps with campaigning messages

The first two – para-formal and alternative schooling systems[9] and programmes that support transition to and performance in formal schools – can *supply direct access* to basic education for children and youth outside the formal system either permanently or temporarily. The remaining three approaches can all be used to *support* basic education (whether formal or non-formal) in terms of trying to enrich its quality, of helping to train personnel involved in it or of advocating basic education aims.

All five approaches can play an important role in basic education and any comprehensive and cohesive policy framework for these target groups should aim to employ all of them. We now take an overview of all them in turn, drawing mainly on examples from the South Asia region.

We will explore the first two approaches in more depth in the next two chapters in terms of providing routes to recognized qualifications (Chapter 4) and evidence of their effectiveness in providing an answer to some of the weak spots of the formal education system (Chapter 5).

3.2 Para-formal schooling and alternative schooling systems

Where access to formal schools is problematic for any reason, para-formal or alternative schooling systems can provide a different route to the completion of basic education. These can take a wide variety of forms and operate at a range of scales: some run on a national or regional level, others are small programmes catering to specific target groups, e.g. street children in a particular district of a city. They can be offered by a wide range of providers: state non-formal programmes, partnerships between UN agencies (like UNICEF) or international NGOs (like Save the Children and ActionAid) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and local NGOs, faith-based organizations, commercially-oriented private 'edupreneurs' and philanthropic providers (e.g. Aga Khan Foundation) or elite private schools which are prepared to use some of their established resources in outreach programmes for poor children. Table 3.2 captures some of this diversity of provision.

The existence, range and number of these schools in any one South Asian country is partly a reflection of the current reach of its formal system in relation to demand, partly a state's relationship with non-state providers and partly the acceptability of state provision among parents and employers. Unsurprisingly, the higher population countries in the region (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan) make use of a wide variety of providers while others, like Sri Lanka and the Maldives, provide most schooling through the formal system. Here we look at three types in particular:

School on Boat, East Godavari, India

One imaginative response to a community of fishing families who live on their boats (Donelu) is a 'School on Boat'. The children from the Donelus are categorized as amongst the most difficult to reach. The district officials built a boat that was beautifully decorated and equipped with play materials and employed a 'motivator' who went around collecting younger children who had never been to school, from their Donelus and brought then to the school for a few hours a day to sing songs, listen to stories and to dance. Once the School on Boat was accepted by the community and also used by older children, the district officials built a thatched hut on the bank of the canal and this was used to teach basic literacy and numeracy to children who were already motivated,. After three months of orientation a group of 'readied' children were enrolled in a residential bridge course camp where they were provided with textbooks, clothes and other facilities. After completing the residential bridge course the children were enrolled in formal schools or residential high schools.

Achievements
- Total of 238 in the age group 5–15 were identified
- 36 attended the school on the boat
- 20 were enrolled into local elementary schools
- 17 girls were admitted into residential formal schools
- 19 children attended residential bridge course camps.

Innovations, ssa.ap.nic.in/innovation_notes.pdf

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[9] A definition of both appears in Chapter 2.

1 Open schools (Pakistan,[10] Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India)
2 One-grade or multigrade one-room community schools (Nepal, Afghanistan, BRAC in Bangladesh) and home-based schools (Afghanistan)
3 Alternative life skills-based basic education.

3.2.1 Open schools

Open schooling is increasingly recognized as a viable solution to the lack of qualified teachers and conventional schools in the developing world and there are examples of open school models in Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, South Korea) and Africa (Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia). The 'open' in open schooling refers to the openness of their system: usually there are fewer rules dictating student ages, prerequisites, or number of courses in which learners must enrol. They tend to allow for credit accumulation, for ease of exam retakes and a path for acquiring state qualifications outside the formal system and, importantly, for a range of different mother tongue languages. As a result, open schooling can meet the needs of a broad range of learners.

Table 3.2 Types of para-formal and alternative schooling systems and the exclusion addressed

Type	Examples	Providers	Coverage	Exclusions addressed
Open schools	National Indian Open School (NIOS) Bangladesh Open School (BOS) Sri Lanka Open School (SLOS) Pakistan Open School (POS)	Parastatal Open University National Institute of Education Open University	National National National National	Wide range of hard-to-reach groups requiring alternative service delivery models - children, youth and adults
Community-based schools	Community Organized Primary Education (COPE) Initiative, CARE Afghanistan	NGO initiated but typically partnerships of INGO (e.g. SC, UNICEF), MoE and local NGOs	Mainly rural areas	Lack of access to schools, often in rural areas
	BRAC, Bangladesh	Large NGO	National, rural and urban	Lack of access in rural areas, but also cater to specific groups, e.g. street children, migrant workers, language minority groups, IDPs, refugees
	Escuela Nueva, Columbia	MoE, state formal system	National, mainly rural areas	Lack of access in rural areas
Television for direct instruction in primary and secondary education	Telesecundaria, Brazil	Partnership – typically MoE with public or private broadcasting organization	Nationally available	Demand-driven provision often in rural areas
Low-cost private schools	Low budget private schools in many South Asian countries	Private enterprise	Urban and peri-urban areas	Low income groups in urban and peri-urban areas, do not address exclusion of poorest or non-income poorest, e.g. gender, caste
Faith-based schools	Madrasas (Islamic religious seminaries) in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India	Faith-based organizations	Urban or rural areas	Responsive to differentiated demand, and may include moral obligation to cater for the poor
Schools run by charitable organizations	Pushpa Vidyalaya – St Agnes' Loreto Day School, Lucknow, India (elite private convent school with outreach programmes)	Philanthropic associations funded by corporations, individual donations and trusts	Urban or rural areas	Responsive to differentiated demand, and may include moral obligation to cater for the poor
	Aga Khan Foundation schools in Northern Areas, Pakistan			

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[10] The Open Universities of Pakistan (AIOU) and Bangladesh (BOU) offer distance learning courses leading to secondary level school certificates. Although they do not call themselves open schools, we have included them in our definition.

Typically, open schools have a central unit which develops highly structured learning resources (mainly print but increasingly with supplementary audio-visual and information and communications technology [ICT] components) which are based on the national curriculum and grade system (but also including other life skills and/or vocational subject areas) and available in different languages. Most open schools were established to cater for the secondary level out-of-school population (including adults) where the materials are designed as self-instructional materials and distributed on demand to students and study centres run by or regulated by the central body, and where students can attend regular tutorial groups or work together in groups. As yet, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in India is the only open school to have branched out into offering basic education (since 2002) – a programme called Open Basic Education (OBE) – and, as self-instructional materials are inappropriate at this level, produces instead structured resources for the mentor/teachers of children for use in a more school-like environment. Resources might include lesson plans, activities mapped against curriculum areas and levels, and worksheets for children. The central school also provides training for mentors/teachers and aims to help them develop their own locally-relevant materials. As a well-regarded, established organization, now acting as an apex organization, this development into basic education may act as a model for other open schools in the region. The pilot junior/lower secondary programmes in Bangladesh and Sri Lankan Open schools are both finding a need for provision at younger ages. These three organizations are all profiled as case studies in Chapter 7.

Open schools create a network of centres, usually drawing on existing spaces (which could be anything from a state-of-the-art community telecentre to a garage or railway platform). NIOS runs its OBE programmes in partnership with registered voluntary organizations/ institutions and one of its roles is as an accrediting agency for other NGOs which can then make use of the NIOS materials and training in a range of contexts.

There are at least four open schools in the South Asia area: NIOS in India (which acts as an apex organization to 12 State Open Schools), the Open School run by the National Institute of Education in Sri Lanka, the Bangladesh Open School at Bangladesh Open University and the Secondary and Higher Secondary School certificate programmes at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Pakistan. Each has been set up by the respective country's MoE, albeit in different state organizational structures, but this relationship with the MoE invests them with an authority to provide nationally recognized learning qualifications. (We explore this in more depth in Chapter 4.) The ready-made resources and teacher development capacity can make it possible to deploy educational provision relatively quickly where the education infrastructure is damaged or children are displaced. In Sri Lanka, the Open School programme and its ready-made resources act as a means of providing education in war- and disaster-affected areas and, with the help of mobile teachers drawn from the same area, of taking education to where the children are (e.g. near water in times of drought, to Internally Displaced Person [IDP] and refugee camps).

3.2.2 Community schools

Another type is the NGO-run community-based school – usually one-teacher, one-room schools and either monograde or multigrade – which fill some of the geographical gaps in government provision. Usually, they are the result of a partnership between United Nations (UN) agencies like UNICEF and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs, like Community Organized Primary Education Programme [COPE], the International Rescue Committee [IRC] and Save the Children), the MoE and the rural community, in which the partners take different roles (as in Bhutan, Afghanistan and Pakistan). Typically, the NGO provides short pre-service training in multigrade teaching methodology, subject content, materials development and the use of textbooks and also ongoing in-service support in the form of supervisory visits which incorporate further training. The mentors/teachers are provided with well-structured educational

Definition: Multigrade v monograde

Multigrade class
A class in which students of different grade levels are placed together as a response to the fact that there are fewer teachers than grade levels, as in one-class or small rural schools, or in larger schools, where multigrading is a response to uneven pupil intake.

Monograde class
A class in which students of similar grade levels are placed together, where, in one-room rural schools, they enrolled as a single cohort or, in larger schools, where there are enough teachers to take a separate grade level class.

Adapted from multigrade.ioe.ac.uk

resources (usually developed centrally by the NGO) usually based on a child-centred pedagogy and covering national curriculum areas, but, when mediated by the local teacher, are made appropriate to the specific context.

The BRAC Primary School programme in Bangladesh is a unique example of a long-established, large-scale NGO programme of community-based schools operating on a huge national scale (and increasingly in other countries – see Chapter 7). Its model has also influenced non-formal education (NFE) provision in other countries, e.g. Pakistan (Gazdar, 2001). Escuela Nueva, in Columbia, works on the same national scale as BRAC in rural areas but, as a government initiative, acts as a reform programme within the system.

Escuela Nueva, Colombia: a school reform programme

Escuela Nueva (EN) began as a pilot project in 1975 to improve the quality of 500 rural schools in the coffee-producing region of Colombia, then it was adopted in 1985 as the national policy for rural primary education and, in a slightly adapted version, is now being used to improve marginalized urban schools, secondary schools and to reach populations displaced by emergencies and armed conflict. It adopts a system-wide, whole-school approach to reforming and strengthening under-resourced, and often multigrade, classrooms (whether conventional state or unconventional educational settings) in four main areas: community involvement, the curriculum, teacher training, and school and classroom management. Implemented together, these components aim to create a synergy between children, families, community and the school to improve the quality and efficiency of education.

EN uses strategies to enrich and exploit the school environment: centrally-produced, self-study learner guides in at least four subject areas (language, mathematics, science and social studies) for pupils (from Grades 2–5), working interactively in small groups (4–6) and which free up the teacher's time for individualized support; peer teaching; content based on both the national curriculum, life skills and the immediate context; the establishment of classroom study corners and seating arranged for group work; small donated libraries (700–1,000 books); regular practice-centred workshops for teachers; and a three-tier decentralized management system – central (MoE), regional and student government. The pedagogy attempts to change the role of teachers from frontal teaching to supporting groups of pupils learning by themselves. The pedagogy promotes active learning, dialogue, group participation, independent thinking and linking learning to practice. Flexible promotion policies encourage children to advance from grade to grade within their own timeframe with a view to reducing repeat lessons or grades and dropout. For displaced and street children, Escuela Nueva Learning Circles are places of learning located within local communities, comprised of groups of between 12 and 15 students that work together with the aid of a 'youth tutor' who facilitates learning and provides personalized attention. They operate off-site from mainstream, formal 'mother schools', but are officially linked to them through shared academic calendars, grading systems and extracurricular programmes. Children are officially enrolled in the 'mother school', but study in these Learning Circles and receive classes in community centres, local churches, and family homes until they are prepared to transfer to the 'mother school'. This is not a parallel system; it is integrated into and recognized by the Ministry of Education to ease the transition from the refugee camp or streets to school.

Various evaluations provide evidence of significantly reduced dropout and repetition rates (among boys and girls) and some outperforming of EN schools compared with traditional schools. The EN model has an estimated reach of 5 million children in 15 countries: 11 other Central and South American countries including Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras and Guatemala have adopted this system entirely or partly with two African and one Asian (Philippines) pilots in the pipeline. The improvement of self-instructional textbooks, teachers' salaries and working conditions have proved problematic. Quality is mixed, particularly after going to scale – content, once growing out of the immediate rural context, has become increasingly standardized and not always in tune with rural life; and several elements of the programme, e.g. supervisory visits, are not being maintained to regional level. Widespread expansion is linked to a deterioration of quality.

www.escuelanueva.org

3.2.3 Alternative life skills-based basic education

This type of provision is attracting fresh attention from NGOs and governments and particularly where there are large numbers of young people with insufficient or no schooling, who are too old to be accepted into the formal system and whose conditions of poverty, marginality and vulnerability are such that they need a specific combination of training and personal support to safeguard their survival. A typical approach is functional basic education combined with vocational skills and other strands such as orientation to self-employment and income-generation skills. The programmes usually employ an alternative approach to basic education (to that of the state and para-formal schooling) in a way that is more relevant to their needs.

Such programmes are particularly useful for reaching hard-to-reach urban working children living in the increasing number of slums in all major South Asian cities. New Delhi, Mumbai, Karachi and Lahore, for example, all have growing slum populations, of which children are a sizeable proportion. Many of them are trapped in low-skilled, low- or no-income jobs for long hours, some of which are hazardous (waste-picking, construction, domestic service, in unregistered workshops). They need an education which occupies only a few hours in the day, where they have choices of starting and finishing times and which is close to where they live and work. The Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children programme (BEHTRUWC) in Bangladesh is an example of an 'earn and learn' approach.

Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC)

An estimated 15 million children in Bangladesh live in urban slums (UNESCO, 2007). Many of them under the age of 14 work in the unregulated informal sector and need an education which occupies only a few hours in the day, where they have choices of starting and finishing times and which is close to where they live and work.

The two-year BEHTRUWC programme, initiated in 1997, takes place at local learning centres where children go six days a week for two-and-a-half hours a day on a flexible timetable of two hours of literacy and numeracy and half-an-hour a day on life skills. The programme provides a 'quality, non-formal life-skills based basic education' (BEHTRUWC, 2008:5) in learning centres operating in the major cities of Bangladesh: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal and Rajshahi. The project includes a training programme of several weeks for teachers who are locally recruited and so can encourage children, especially girls, to attend the learning centre. In a second phase of the programme, which began in 2006 and is scheduled to run until 2011, an older age group of 10–14 years, who are unlikely to return to mainstream education, have been targeted. The basic education course was extended to 40 months, from an earlier two-year programme. Priority has been given to vocational training in a trade or livelihood skill with the aim to enrol 20,000 working children above the age of 13 in training and then assist them into job placements or self-employment.

BEHTRUWC is organized by the Bureau of Non-Formal Education, and the programme is implemented by 20 partner NGOs. UNICEF carries out a monitoring role. As of July 2008, there are 6,646 learning centres catering to 200,000 urban working children of 10–14 years of age, with 60% girls. The cost is estimated by UNESCO (2007) at US$35 per child per year.

Such programmes have also come to play an important role in post-conflict countries facing major challenges in rehabilitation, resettlement and reconstruction such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. By integrating other elements into their curriculum, they can deal with civic and peace education, environmental degradation, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS and community reconstruction (Thompson, 2001).

3.3 Supporting successful transition to and performance within formal schools (to, in and through)

Hard-to-reach children living in disadvantageous and vulnerable circumstances need specific support to help get into and stay in schools, and we examine four main strategies here: Early Childhood Care and Education programmes, mainstreaming programmes, continuity schooling and accelerated learning.

3.3.1 Early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes

Given that malnutrition and poor health is a major problem in South Asia, the low level of ECCE programmes in the region is a significant barrier to achieving UPE. ECCE programmes are particularly important for pre-school children from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds for three reasons:

1 They are crucial to establishing strong foundations for subsequent learning and development.
2 They act as a means to redress some of the social and health problems pre-school children have already experienced. These might include severe neglect, domestic violence, child labour and abuse, and chaotic, unhealthy and unsafe living conditions. Evidence has shown that by the time these children reach school – if they reach school – such conditions can predispose them to being unsocial challenging children who find it extremely difficult to adjust to a set pattern and routine.

3 They can have a whole-family benefit in poor families. The pre-school children are being looked after (alongside much needed food), which then releases older children in the family from child-caring responsibilities and provides an opportunity to participate in basic education activities. The parents are reassured about the well-being of their children, can then be motivated to send their older children to school and are also brought into the sphere of people that can take a longer-term role in supporting the family.

ECCE initiatives operate at different scales. Some are small individual crèche-type projects, others are large-scale programmes. Project Why, an NGO supporting slum children in New Delhi, aims to provide the 'right to babyhood in a safe environment' within their two crèches – Govindpuri and second Govindpuri. The emphasis is on creative awareness, life skills education, manners and educational games. For older pre-school children, the project's Prep Class concentrates on school-readiness in an increasingly

BRAC Pre-primary Schools (BPPS), Bangladesh

These are located close to or on formal school compounds and aim to provide one year's preparatory learning before entry to the formal primary school (either a Government Primary School [GPS] or a Registered Non-Government Primary School [RNGPS]). An agreement is signed between BRAC and the respective formal school agreeing to enrol the child on completion and giving priority to their enrolment at Grade 1. The curriculum is designed to impart children with the necessary knowledge and enthusiasm to succeed in formal primary schools. Interactive and child-friendly methods aim to encourage a love for books and knowledge, a familiarity with individual, group and teacher-directed learning methods and personal, family, and community-related knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The programme provides specifically designed Maths, Bangla and Science books. Slates and other materials are provided to each student, and each teacher receives a guidebook giving detailed activity instructions and strategies for creating and using local resources in the classroom. Students learn how to read and write the Bengali alphabet, how to count and manipulate simple numbers, how to recite nursery rhymes and play games, and the basics of hygiene, their environment, health and nutrition.

Studies provide evidence of increased primary school participation rates by children following this route. In February 2007, BRAC had 20,140 pre-primary schools in all 64 districts, with 562,652 students.

www.brac.net/

more structured approach with alphabets in Hindi and English, counting from 1 to 100, and collaborative and disciplined behaviour.

For the children of seasonal migrants in sugar cane sites, *Janarth* have added pre-school childcare centres (Balwadis) to their worksite-based schools (sakhar shalas) which aim to prepare small children for schooling and hence reduce dropout from village schools in the long run.

Educational broadcasting initiatives have strong potential for this level. Broadcasting initiatives such as *Sesame Street* radio and television broadcasting – now running in 150 different countries – aims to promote general school readiness with increasingly structured learning approaches.

Janet Raynor

▲
Older girls, like this one in Sherpur, Bangladesh, often have to stay out of school to look after younger siblings

Aprendamos Jugando: Radio for Early Childhood Development, Bolivia

In 1993 the Bolivian government and the LearnTech organization agreed to explore ways of engaging young children in active play whilst simultaneously training caregivers through IRI. As a result, they produced 50 programmes in three languages, plus support materials, including a pre-literacy *Big Book,* aimed at illiterate caregivers, and children between the ages of three and six.

As each programme is aired, a radio character, *Tia Clara*, starts a series of activities for both the caregivers and children. In one programme the children link up in a circle and sing along and dance to the opening music. They form a line and pretend they are a human train. During the story that follows they imagine themselves flying like birds and crawling like cats. At the end of the session the caregiver takes out a poster and asks each child follow-up questions, reinforcing the concepts that have been introduced during the programme. The activities are designed to support the children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and at the same time help caregivers learn the principles governing these processes.

The series was marketed to local municipalities, health and education programmes and kindergartens. After four years, 40,000 teachers, caregivers and parents had been trained and over 250,000 children had been reached directly with audio cassettes, with many more hearing the programmes on air. These Early Childhood Development programmes have created an international ripple effect, with adaptations of the model being developed in South Africa, Nepal, Ecuador and Colombia.

Mead (2001), www.unicef.org/girlseducation/files/Finetuning.pdf (accessed 9 March 2009)

Radio to promote early child development, Nepal

The Equal Access Initiative uses radio and community outreach to disseminate information to families living in remote rural areas in Nepal. Equal Access develops radio programmes in-country on a range of topics (e.g. early child development, prevention of HIV/AIDS and women's health) with a view to educating and promoting behaviour change in the target audiences. A new early childhood development (ECD) radio programme called Kheldai Sikdai (Learning While Playing) is now being broadcast in Nepal. The programme is broadcast via FM and satellite radio to ECD centres and a broadcast audience of millions. Kheldai Sikdai aims to help parents and communities create positive environments for children under the age of six and to better identify, address and support the needs of children. Through the programme, parents learn about the importance of their children's emotional development, and how stories and songs accelerate their intellectual development. Episodes also discuss topics like safe motherhood, nutrition and immunization.

www.equalaccess.org/ (accessed 14 July 2009)

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3.3.2 Mainstreaming

Various strategies are used to mainstream out-of-school children to, or back to, formal schools or to provide some educational continuity when schooling is serially disrupted (e.g. the children of distress seasonal migrants, and those caught up in conflict and disaster zones). The next chapter examines the range of mainstreaming strategies (and specifically where they link children outside the formal school system to recognized formal qualifications). Here, we introduce the main type: feeder approaches (also known as bridging programmes). These aim to prepare primary-age children who have never been to school for transition to formal education or provide a means for getting dropouts or over-aged children back into mainstream schooling. They are usually run by NGOs, who use a range of strategies and interventions for working with the children, family and community on one hand and with the school on the other hand to ensure retention and quality education in the primary level.

Careful planning and advocacy is needed to engage the children, family and community in the bridging programme in the first place and then subsequently to reach their goal of transition to the formal system or equivalent basic education. Their success in terms of subsequent transition and retention depends on the degree of articulation with the formal sector. Some are set up in collaboration with the district educational authorities while others depend on constant negotiation with individual schools and educational authorities. The NGOs' involvement continues after transition and can take various forms – following up children and families if attendance is poor, awareness-raising workshops for teachers in formal schools about the particular needs of specific groups of children, remedial support to the children where required.

Often working with working or street children, the NGOs have child-rights aims but vary in their approach. Some design the bridging programmes around the working child's life and timetable (Butterflies, Reach India programmes – see Chapter 4) as a first stage towards taking the child out of working life into formal schooling. Others use the actual bridging programme itself to lift the child out of labour or away from their parents' worksites. The MV Foundation, for example, adopts non-negotiable principles towards child labour and uses residential bridging courses.

3.3.3 Continuity schooling

Some circumstances need very particular schooling responses, for example, the children of seasonal workers and children caught up in emergency zones (either disaster or conflict). In both cases, their attendance at school can be serially disrupted and they need some type of continuity schooling which keeps the child in the educational loop when their normal school is unavailable and helps them to reintegrate into the formal system when it becomes available.

Poster in MV Foundation Bridge School

Charter of Basic Principles for Emancipation of Child Labour (The non-negotiables)

- **All children must attend full-time formal day schools.**
- **Any child out of school is a child labourer.**
- **All labour is hazardous and harms the overall growth and development of the child.**
- **There must be total abolition of child labour. Any law regulating children's work is unacceptable.**
- **Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned.**

Distress seasonal migration is a growing phenomenon in many South Asian countries. In the arid parts of India, for example, drought and lack of work in villages forces entire families to migrate for several months every year in search of work to survive. Children accompany their parents, and as a result school dropout rates go up. Estimates put the numbers of migrants between 10 and 30 million, of which an estimated 4–6 million are children. These migrants are among the most vulnerable sections of society and comprise the landless and land poor, and those possessing the least amount of assets, skills or education.

Migration takes place to a range of industrial and agro-industrial sectors (such as brick making, salt making, tile making, charcoal making, work at rice mills, sugar cane harvesting, stone quarrying, construction, plantations and fishing). Typically children spend part of the year in their home district and the remaining in their work district/state; other patterns of migration include moving from one to another worksite two or more times a year or even year-round migration. Education is critical to the issue of distress seasonal migration because the window of opportunity that children of migrant families have is very small. Children often begin working by the age of six or seven, and are working like adults within a few years. They therefore face a life of hardship from a very young age. They are subjected to hazardous travel between villages and worksites, and a life of severe deprivation at worksites. Girl children endure even more deprivations than boys. In the home villages, these children find acceptance neither in school nor in the larger community, and are constantly viewed as outsiders. Furthermore, because of the nature of their parents' labour patterns, these children are difficult to trace, and are therefore easily left out of the standard systemic interventions of the education system. Educational planning for these children is highly challenging: educational planning is organized by individual districts and states and migrants become external to both where neither the home nor the work district will take responsibility for them. Their mobility also means that even the variety of innovative and flexible schooling options created under India's Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and the Alternative and Innovative Education Scheme (AIE) may not help.

Interventions for children of seasonal migrants have generally dealt with only one end of the migration cycle – either the

Migrant women labourers and their children from the state of Karnataka working on a construction site in India

Janarth, Maharastra

Janarth is running sakhar shalas at sugar factories for children of migrant sugarcane workers in Maharastra. In 2005–06, 12,500 children were being covered through sakhar shalas and about 413 children were staying in the residential hostels (in the sending villages) being run by Janarth. Community contact and work with the government is also being carried out intensely. As a result of Janarth's initiative, the concept of sakhar shala or sugar schools, as a strategy for migrant children, is being advocated at various levels.

America India Foundation

Despite the success of the sakhar shala programme, however, Janarth found that at the end of the migration season it was difficult to get children re-admitted to their home schools …

It became clear that eventually all migration sites would need to have a school – a task that only the state is capable of accomplishing – and that there was also a need for interventions in villages in order to sustain existing efforts.

Smita (2008)

Setu: Centre for Social Knowledge and Action, Kutch, Gujarat

Setu is working with children of saltpan migrants in Gujarat. Currently, Setu is running 14 hostels in 14 villages, and is covering 201 children. Of these 201 children, 151 are boys and 50 are girls. Additionally, Setu is running coaching classes for children to improve their reading and writing skills, reaching almost 500 children. Besides these, there are three informal education centres running for the children of the brick kiln laborers, fishing community and the Jat community, reaching about 68 children. Lastly, about 1,400 children and community members are benefited by the library programme of Setu. Setu's initiative has encouraged the government to adopt its model for replication.

America India Foundation

The government of Gujarat has invited Setu to design a scheme for hostels and site schools and has asked for their help in setting up 50 hostels and 50 site schools to cover two major migration sectors – salt pans and sugarcane cutting.

Smita (2008)

sending end (seasonal hostels) or the receiving end (worksite schools) – but a newer model is emerging which involves interventions simultaneously in sending and receiving areas, with multiple options of schooling spanning both villages and worksites. The mainstay of the model is the local government school; and all alternative measures lead the child back to the government school.

The four dimensions of the model are as follows:

1 Seasonal hostels in villages
2 Schools/centres at worksites
3 Summer bridge courses in villages
4 Strengthening local government schools.

Table 3.3 Examples of educational interventions for the children of seasonal migrants in India*

Type	Examples	Providers	Exclusions addressed
Seasonal hostels in villages	Hostels for children of saltpan migrants, Gujarat	SETU	Rights-based approach for children to stay back in sending villages when parents migrate to work. Hostels provide continuity of schooling. Useful when worksite conditions (particularly saltpans and charcoal sites) make schooling interventions difficult
	Hostel for children of brick kiln migrants, Hyderabad	Vikalpa, Lok Drushti	
Schools/centres at worksites	Sakhar shala project, second semester schools in settlements of sugar cane cutters, Maharastra	Janarth charity + MoE, India	Lack of access to school at worksites and consequent discontinuity with school in home village on return (and subsequent dropout)
	Pre-primary centres for younger children, brick kiln, Hyderabad	Vikalpa	Safe, clean places with learning environment which also frees up primary-age children who care for their younger siblings
	School on boat for children of fishermen's families	East Gadvari District SSA Authorities	Children living on boats are drawn into education via boat-based school, canal bank school, residential bridge courses with a view to enrolment to formal or residential high schools
Summer bridge course in villages	Bridge catch-up courses in home village on return from migration sites	Janarth	Catch-up courses to link children back to local schools
Strengthening local government schools	Proper provisioning, school functioning and improvements in classroom pedagogy, gender sensitivity and knowledge of migrant work patterns	Janarth	Child-seeking approaches; community work to raise enrolment and retention rates
		SETU	Improving quality of village schools and advocacy with state educational system

* We have drawn here extensively on Smita's work (Smita, 2007, 2008), one of the few detailed examinations of this area

3.3.4 Accelerated learning

Accelerated learning programmes (ALP) combine mainstreaming and continuity approaches and are used to help children who are too old to be accepted into an appropriate age level in the formal school, and also children in conflict and disaster zones where schooling has been disrupted. Both need some form of catch-up provision which provides continuity of schooling and the chance to mainstream back into the formal system. Here, the required learning is completed in a shorter span of time and the goal is completion of primary education or integration into the formal system at an age-appropriate level. The assumption is that older, more cognitively sophisticated children/youth will learn faster. Most ALPs complete two grades in one year. The curriculum incorporates appropriate life skill subjects and may include vocational education and/or micro-enterprise activities. An ALP can be donor-funded, short term in nature, and focused on access, retention and completion. For example, the Afghan Primary Education Programme (APEP) helped 'over-aged' children to catch up with their age-appropriate formal school level (see Chapter 7 for a profile of APEP). BRAC in Bangladesh, by contrast, has a permanent programme – BRAC Adolescent Primary Schools (BAPS) – which caters to 11–14 year-old adolescents who failed to enter primary school at the right age. The compressed four-year basic education cycle – which partly draws on the formal curriculum – enables them to enter formal schooling and also equips them with life skills training to make the transition into married or working life.

According to Nicholson (2006:8), three types of programme are used to accelerate learning in developing countries:

1 *Using AL principles and practices*
   In some countries, the MoE has adopted AL principles and practices to improve learning in both formal and non-formal classrooms. They have used AL methods to improve teaching and encourage deeper learning, retention and achievement. Examples include: ASCEND Alternative Learning System; Accreditation and Equivalency (ALS A&E) in the Philippines; Escuela Nueva in Colombia; and the Continuous Assessment Feasibility Study (CAFS) in Malawi.

2 *Completing the learning in a shorter span of time*
   These programmes are often called 'catch-up' or alternative education programmes. They are not designed around AL principles and practices linked to brain-based research but use alternative strategies to cover the curriculum in a short time period. These involve reducing the curriculum to be covered whilst incorporating more effective teaching strategies. Examples include the Complementary Rapid Education Programme for Schools (CREPS) in Sierra Leone where 6 primary grades are completed in 3 years; the Accelerated Learning Programme for Primary Education, South Sudan, where eight primary grades are completed in 4 years; and the Complementary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE) programme in Uganda where seven grades are completed in 3 years.

3 *Completing the learning in a shorter span of time using some AL principles and practices*
   Combining the two approaches above has been used in some ALPs, where the full curriculum is covered in a shorter time using some AL methods to accelerate the pace of learning. For example: the Afghanistan Primary Education Programme (APEP) Accelerated Learning Programme completes six grades in 2 years 10 months and uses Alistair Smith's 'Accelerated learning in the classroom' model; the Revitalization of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education (RISE) project in Iraq completes two grades in one year and also uses the 'Accelerated learning in the classroom' model.

Accelerated learning, however, must be used judiciously:

The holistic method of AL has a lot to contribute towards enriching formal schooling. However it cannot substitute for formal schooling up to the elementary level, which is the fundamental right of every single child. Educationists and social activists across the country have highlighted the danger of such transitional strategies becoming permanent and thereby denying children from very poor families, those living in remote rural (tribal) areas and migrant communities the right to 8 years of elementary education of acceptable quality.

Equally, AL should not become a convenient way of denying girls access to formal schooling and let parents put the girl to work till she is 11 years and then send her to an AL centre for 7 to 12 months to get a primary school completion certificate. We cannot afford to ignore this warning. While AL strategies are indeed valuable for older out-of-school girls and the AL programme can enable us to break out of an inter-generational cycle of illiteracy, they should not become permanent fixtures in areas where the formal system continues to be dysfunctional. In the immediate term, i.e. in the next five years, AL programmes can indeed make a big difference to older out-of-school girls.

Ramachandran, 2004

3.4 Raising quality by providing ready-made structured educational resources

Ready-made educational resources can be deployed in emergency areas or to untrained or under-trained teachers/mentors/carers working in severely under-resourced circumstances. They provide the means for introducing learning materials, for exposing pupils and teachers to new methodologies and for diversifying the range of learning and teaching resources available. Ready-made resources tend to serve one of three different purposes and have different degrees of specificity and diffuseness: highly structured resources for direct teaching, structured resources to support teaching and learning, and unstructured resources.

3.4.1 Direct teaching

These are highly-structured curriculum-based resources for the classroom, organized into a series or programme of ready-made lessons, which *carry the main teaching burden* but usually recruit the classroom teacher/mentor in a facilitating role to support the lessons before, during and afterwards with specific tasks outlined in pre-prepared materials.

Interactive Radio Instruction in a conflict zone

After years of conflict, the schooling system in Somalia was devastated with 60–70% of school-age children having lost the opportunity to attend school. The Somali Interactive Radio Instruction Programme (SIRIP), a USAID initiative, aims to meet the current educational needs of Somali children while also working toward the long-term establishment of effective educational materials. A series of Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programmes allows formal, non-governmental, and Quranic schools to access daily, well-structured lessons and build teachers' skills. Supplementary materials accompany the programmes, providing schools with the resources to support primary-level instruction, e.g. a series of early readers, based on Somalian folktales. Each book concludes with educational resources and lesson ideas to assist teachers. SIRIP is now developing chapter books for more advanced readers and exploring ways to distribute the books more widely. In addition to basic reading and maths in Somali, the programmes contain life skills content such as health, conflict prevention and mediation, and democracy-building, and emphasize the education of girls. During the three-year period of performance (2005–09), SIRIP reached an estimated 400,000 children in Grades 1–5.

International Development Division, a division of Education Development Center, idd.edc.org/

Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) for mathematics basic education

In Venezuela, following a small-scale pilot in a rural district, and trials in urban areas around Caracas, a second grade primary level IRI mathematics programme was introduced in the 1990s in many regions of the country, followed by a third grade and first grade programme. The programme has now reached almost a million children and is used by 80% of state schools and unknown numbers of non-formal schools. The course content is derived from the national curriculum but is designed to be interactive, to involve active learning including singing, jumping and working with local objects such as pebbles and small sticks. Language development is woven into the mathematics. A materials pack is provided. Teachers act as stimulators and mediators using a system of signs, and at times providing visual clues. They provide assistance and evaluation for the children past the end of each broadcast but do not themselves teach the content. The programme also provides development for the teachers, cascading training by means of an annual seminar directed at the best maths teachers in the state who then train teachers at local level. Evaluation has been favourable, with improved attendance and self-confidence in rural schools, and punctuality and atmosphere at schools in general, alongside improvements in progress in maths.

www.idb.int/sds/doc/Edu&Tech11.pdf

They are particularly useful where the teacher is untrained or under-trained and needs support in specific core subject areas. Examples include Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) approaches (such as the Radio Mathematics Project of Venezuela, the English in Action programme in South Africa, the Radio Maths and Language Project of Zambia, and the Radio Science Project of Papua New Guinea, where full lessons are conveyed by radio or audio-cassette) and the Telesecundaria project in Brazil, which uses scheduled school lessons on TV with accompanying materials provided to pupils and teachers.

3.4.2 Supporting teaching and learning

These are structured and semi-structured educational resources (e.g. lessons, equipment, learner-centred self-access materials, mini-libraries, audio-visual materials) based on primary or lower secondary curriculum which teachers can adapt into their lessons and sometimes give learners as self-access materials. In the Escuela Nueva programme, for example, the range and learning-centred nature of the resources allow a teacher working in an under-resourced, multigrade one-class rural school to coordinate simultaneous activities in the room and better divide her attention among the different levels.

Gujarat to bring English into class via satellite

The controversial chief minister of the Indian state of Gujarat, Narenda Modi, appears to have overcome long held hostility towards English language education with the launch of a plan to give all schools in the state access to language classes via satellite.

As part of a $127 million project announced by Modi's government last month, 22,000 schools will be equipped with a satellite link and wide screen televisions by the end of this year.

The government said that 20 million children would have access to English language programming via India's Edusat satellite service. This was launched by the Indian Space Research Organization in 2004 to deliver English, maths and science lessons. According to the Times of India, Modi has had to overcome strong opposition within his Hindu nationalist party to policies that could undermine Gujarat language education.

The Guardian Weekly, 19 June 2009

School-in-a-Box, UNICEF

'School in a Box' is a classroom kit for use in emergency situations. It is easily portable and provides resources for up to 80 children in two 40-student shifts with 'culturally neutral materials'. Each kit contains 5 flip chart pads, 5 permanent markers, 15 ballpoint pens, 25 packets of wax crayons, 5 boxes of 20 pencil erasers, 150 exercise books, 25 pencil sharpeners, 25 pencils, 25 plastic rulers, 2 hard-cover school registers, 20 boxes of white chalk, 20 boxes of 100 assorted coloured chalk, 5 chalkboard dusters, a chalkboard ruler, 5 pieces of plywood for use as chalkboard, 4 litres of black paint for plywood (to create a blackboard) and 1 paint brush. From the quantities supplied, the kit could last several months if used carefully. The kit has been used in emergency situations such as the aftermath of the tsunami in Sri Lanka in 2004, the earthquake in Kashmir in 2005 and Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh in 2007. It is a short-term measure and by itself it cannot provide teaching and learning: this necessitates curriculum materials and teachers as well as classroom kit. Resourcing appropriate materials (for example in local languages) in the quantities necessary and finding adults able to teach may in certain situations be problematic.

UNICEF, www.unicef.org/supply/kits_flash/schoolinabox/ (accessed 21 July 2009)

The Recreation Kit, UNICEF

It is now widely appreciated that sport is an effective trauma therapy for children displaced by war and natural disasters. The Recreation Kit is designed to provide that therapy, as a result of experience gained during several emergencies. The kit is suitable for up to 90 children, who can participate in team sports and games under the guidance of a teacher. It includes balls for several types of games, coloured tunics for different teams and a measuring tape for marking play areas and a whistle and scoring slate. Following a gender analysis of the kit, and in light of UNICEF's priority of girls' education, additional items aimed at encouraging physical activity and sport amongst girls have also been added.

A limited number of play materials are stocked in the Supply Division warehouse for emergency purposes, but the Division's technical experts have identified a number local and regional sources of imaginative play materials for young children, that can be utilized when a need arises.

UNICEF, www.unicef.org/supply/kits_flash/recreation/ (accessed 21 July 2009)

Other examples include radio and TV schools broadcasting (with accompanying text activities geared around specific curriculum areas), structured self-access resources for individual or peer group study, Open Educational Resources (OERs) available on the Internet, the 500 rupee Laptop project, the provision of teaching kits such as 'school in a box' or solar radios.

The Open Learning Exchange (OLE) is a Nepali non-governmental organization dedicated to assisting the Government of Nepal in meeting its Education for All goals by developing freely accessible, open-source Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-based educational teaching–learning materials for teachers to select from at will.

3.4.3 Unstructured ready-made teaching and learning resources
These include films, external radio services, satellite TV broadcasting (e.g. general English medium resources to back up English language teaching and learning) used by teachers, carers and learners as general enrichment resources.

Also under this category are innovative programmes and projects using ICT which allow teachers and students more *self-initiated* learning. Examples include the Kothmale Community Radio Internet Project in Sri Lanka which combines community radio and the Internet to serve local information needs. Listeners, including teachers and learners, direct queries to the radio station to find specific information or materials otherwise out of reach. This is then researched at the station and returned, via broadcasting at pre-arranged times, in local languages. There are also examples in most South Asian countries of community resource centres which provide access to a variety of facilities – ICT, teachers, books – for children. There are also innovative projects such as the Hole-in-the-Wall project in India which provides access to computer terminals and the Internet in street kiosks in urban and, now, small towns and rural villages. The evidence shows that passers-by – often out-of-school children – pick up knowledge on their own and also teach themselves computer literacy.

The BEE Communication Hub

The BEE, a suitcase size unit, can be taken to areas of emergency to set up a temporary school and communication centre. It is solar powered and can be used to provide communications, education, connectivity and emergency support in places lacking electricity, Internet, telephone, radio and other connections.

The core of the unit is a PC hardware running Linux with various network connections. With access to satellite (e.g. WorldSpace) and mobile networks it is possible to pull content, such as educational materials and news. The kit comes with a projector and speakers for watching and listening to educational content, and a webcam and microphone, for instance, to register children in disaster situations, and to communicate the situation in the site for the rest of the world. With Linux-based radio-station software one can create radio programmes and transmit them for the people with the FM transmitter (range 5 km), also coming with the kit. In emergency situations, the unit can use applications that provide up-to-date information on the situation. A survey tool can collect information from field workers on the status of disease, pit latrines, or number of people in a household. In refugee or IDP camps, a photo registration application can register lost children and project their pictures on a wall so that family members can easily find them.

UNICEF, www.unicefinnovation.org/rugged-computing.php (accessed 21 July 2009)

3.5 Providing networking and training opportunities for intermediaries

Intermediaries in this context are people with formal responsibilities towards hard-to-reach children. This includes the obvious – teachers – but can also take in teacher educators, educational inspectors, writers of open learning materials, educational broadcasters, health and agricultural teachers, local disaster officials, carers and mentors. The training of all these intermediaries needs to be taken into account in basic education planning. Given the shortage of trained teachers in the South Asian area, the high ratios of pupils to trained teachers and national disparities in the distribution of teachers, here we focus on the potential of ODL for teacher education.

Open and distance learning can serve a range of teacher-training uses for basic education. Perraton (2007), Perraton *et al.* (2001, 2002), Creed and Perraton (2001) and Robinson (1997) all provide examples of a wide range of innovative distance teacher-education initiatives that could act as models for expanding provision. This body of research has shown that:

● Distance education has been used to provide initial training for inexperienced teachers, initial training for experienced but unqualified teachers, and continuing education for qualified teachers.

- Programmes have included some or all of the four elements of teacher education: general education, learning about the subjects that trainees will teach in the classroom, pedagogy and associated subjects, and classroom practice.
- Distance teacher education can deliver highly successful completion and examination pass rates, especially where trainees were guaranteed promotion on completion.
- Unit costs have tended to be lower than conventional teachers' courses because of savings in residential costs and economies of scale that can be achieved through distance education. Costs per successful student have often been between one-half and two-thirds of conventional teacher-education programmes.
- A range of technologies has been used. Print, in the form of correspondence courses, has often dominated. Radio and television have been important in larger countries with large audiences of students. And recently, there have been experiments in the use of video and computer conferencing, although logistics rule this out for many rural teachers.
- Combinations of media have an advantage over any single medium.

Distance education for teacher training has potential advantages. It can provide the means of side-stepping the slowness and dilution factor of the cascade approach by putting 'information about curricula and teaching approaches directly in to the hands of individual teachers' (Robinson, 1997:125) and by cutting down the time between learning about new teaching practices and trying them out in the classroom. Distance education can facilitate school-based training, enabling a closer relationship between theory and practice. The shorter lead-time of some distance education, notably broadcasting, can help by-pass the inertia of the traditional educational system and facilitate the reflection of topical and teacher-led interests. Distance education can also play a role in community development. The establishment of a decentralized distance-education structure can also be used for supporting training in general in the districts and serve as a basis for the development of a wider programme of continuing development of teachers. In print-poor countries, self-study materials can become a permanent resource.

Experience has shown that distance education also acts as an agent for change within a country. In some cases, long-established programmes in open universities (as in India, Pakistan and South Africa) have made, and continue to make, a significant numerical impact on teacher supply. It has also brought benefits of economies of scale. Most obviously, it is often the only means to bring educational opportunities to remote areas (Nepal Radio Project) or to displaced (the Sudanese Teacher Assistance Course for refugees) or marginalized communities (Northern Areas Education Project in Pakistan for remote female teachers).

In-service training of teachers, in initial training or continuing professional development, can provide the means to avoid the cost of replacing a teacher who has left for full-time education. Teachers and headteachers can be trained *in situ*. Carefully balanced mixed-mode teaching, which blends distance and regular face-to-face teaching within a course, can help to double and triple a teacher training college's throughput per year. Distance education can have lower opportunity costs to the learners than regular college approaches. Also, by replacing some formal teaching with self-study components, more time could be made available for the management and expansion of teaching practice or group work.

Distance education can also be used to re-orientate and support teachers in periods of educational change and curriculum reform. Where rapid and widespread dissemination of information and practical guidance is required, it can provide the means to by-pass the inertia of the regular educational system; where the regular system is undergoing fundamental change, it can provide an alternative or temporary solution to a shortfall in provision. For example, it has been used to redress inequalities in teaching qualifications and to introduce curriculum reform in post-colonial South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe and also as a tool for reconstruction of the teaching service

in conflict areas such as Uganda, Sudan and Mozambique. In many Latin America countries, notably Brazil and Colombia, distance education has been used widely to support curriculum reform and teacher upgrading.

In the region, all of the open universities – Open University Sri Lanka, The Bangladesh Open University, Allama Iqbal Open University and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (including some of the other 13 Indian open universities) – provide a range of distance teacher education programmes for initial qualifications (e.g. distance programmes for untrained primary teachers offered by the open universities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India).

Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and the Maldives all make wide use of ODL for teacher education to overcome geographical and capacity challenges. Nepal uses radio broadcasting to train basic education teachers and for schools broadcasting. The *Basic Teachers Training* consists of 480 15-minute radio programmes covering all major subjects taught in primary level plus pedagogy. Programmes are tied in with self-study materials issued to the teachers and their learning is supplemented with once-a-month meetings with other trainees. In Bhutan, the Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) uses print-based distance education to reach basic education teacher trainees and is currently integrating Internet-based asynchronous discussion among tutors and trainees. In the Maldives, the development of 20 Teacher Resource Centres (TRCs) on every atoll was a vital component of driving up the quality of primary education throughout the region, which is characterized by untrained teachers (two-thirds of all teachers), a dependency on expatriate teachers and general lack of facilities. To overcome the geographical difficulties and cost of transporting teachers to the capital, the MoE have developed with UNICEF decentralized in-service training via the TRCs. Each has a well-equipped training room, a computer room equipped with computers with Internet connectivity. This provides an e-link with the Education Development Centre, the apex organization for curriculum and materials development, in-service training, early childhood development, school health and educational broadcasting. The Afghan Primary Education Programme (APEP) (for further details of APEP, see Chapter 7), which expanded the number of rural community schools, integrated a Radio Teacher Training (RTT) strand to the programme which supported the classroom 'mentors'. This included the distribution of a reference book, wind-up radios and a series of teacher training broadcasts ('It's great to learn') which encouraged the use of child-centred pedagogy.

Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA)

The TESSA project involves a consortium of 13 Higher Education providers in Sub-Saharan Africa, along with the BBC and the UK Open University, using open learning resources to develop teacher education in SSA. The project has produced a large bank of materials which focus on literacy, numeracy, science, social studies and the arts, and life skills, and which use resources which would be available to teachers in SSA. For each subject area 15 study units have been produced. The material is available in several languages. The material is not itself a syllabus/curriculum but is designed to develop the teacher's practice in the classroom through using quality materials and approaches to teaching which can be adapted to fit specific local conditions and which provide a basis for teachers' development of further materials of their own. The materials are generally being used as part of teacher training programmes (where it is suggested they have already been seen/used by some hundreds of thousands of teachers). However, there is as yet no large-scale evaluation of the programme and interesting challenges persist in terms of how in the SSA context materials get from the central website repository to the number of classrooms which could benefit from them.

www.tessafrica.net/ (accessed 21 July 2009)

3.6 Providing communication for development (C4D) strategies

Communication for development strategies (C4D) employ an array of approaches (e.g. policy advocacy, social and community mobilization to interpersonal communication and media mobilization) with a view to shaping behaviours and contributing to positive social change. The rationale is that effective communication in educational matters will help parents, for example, to understand the importance of sending their daughters to school and ensure their children complete their elementary education; it will help communities protect their children from abuse, violence and exploitation; children and adolescents can be helped to acquire the life skills that will help them practise responsible behaviours, particularly to prevent HIV/AIDS and substance abuse.

Examples include 'Edutainment' radio soaps which embed topical social and health issues (e.g. Soul City), HIV/AIDS or landmine awareness promotion campaigns using learning circles, radio and TV broadcasting, and roving theatre-in-education.

The Meena Communication Initiative in South Asia

The Meena Communication Initiative (MCI) is a major human rights intervention campaign in South Asia that began in 1991 with support from UNICEF Offices in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal. Its main intention is to transform the heavily disadvantaged situation of girls. The MCI was funded primarily by the Government of Norway, with financial support also being provided by donors in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Finland and the United States.

As part of the ongoing development of the MCI, and considering the closure of funding, a decision was made by the Regional Director of UNICEF South Asia to decentralize its implementation to country level, in order to promote its further expansion, integration and longer term sustainability. Accordingly, it was decided that an evaluation be conducted of the MCI to provide a clear identification of its outcomes, implementation processes and costs, and the potential for its expansion and sustainability. In 2003, UNICEF ROSA commissioned an evaluation of the MCI in South Asia, focusing on its implementation in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal, the four countries in which the initiative has been implemented most extensively and for the longest time periods.

The MCI uses a multi-media Entertainment Education approach, involving the use of entertaining stories to convey educational and behavioural development messages to its audiences. In so doing, it uses the drawing power of popular entertainment to influence its audiences' awareness, knowledge, understanding, capacities and practices in relation to the status, rights and treatment of girls. The stories developed for the MCI revolve around the adventures of Meena, a nine year old South Asian girl, and members of her family and village community. The communication materials were developed by the UNICEF Regional Office in collaboration with the participating country offices.

The MCI is designed to support and reinforce programme objectives supported by UNICEF and its partners. As such, it has been linked to a number of education, health and social development programmes undertaken by UNICEF partners in government, NGOs, the media and the private sector.

In recent years, its implementation was decentralized to countries as part of measures for further expansion, integration and longer term sustainability. This enabled each country to decide what elements of the MCI it would implement, and how and when this would be done. The country contexts in which these decisions were taken vary widely in terms of prevailing social, economic, political, organizational and religious traditions and practices. This in turn has led to different levels and types of implementation at different times across the region, as each country endeavoured to tailor the initiative to meet its own circumstances. The MCI is thus a complex and variable set of intentions, processes, activities and events that have occurred and evolved over varying lengths of time in a range of different settings. The common element is the shared focus on the rights, understandings, life skills and practices of the girl child.

UNICEF ROSA (2004)

Technologies

Within the region, we can see a range of educational technologies being used and a variety of distance educational infrastructures providing and supporting basic education. Some of the infrastructures – such as open schools, open universities, broadcasting systems – all have centralized 'production' bodies and some form of outreach capacity (and the potential for widening it in the future) via localized study/community centres and national or local radio or TV channels.

Print remains the staple in most programmes although increasingly accompanied by audiotapes, videotapes and other technology. Para-formal schooling systems, including the open schooling approaches in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan and also community schools, for example, tend to use a combination

Teaching materials produced by the Open School in Sri Lanka

of ready-made print resources – for the students or the teachers – plus face-to-face teaching. Distance teacher-education programmes by the open universities in the region are predominantly print-based but are increasingly using the Internet where possible. Self-study is supplemented by occasional face-to-face meetings with tutors and other students, school visits/inspection and sometimes short stays at the central university.

Many countries in the region are involved in infrastructural capacity building in rural areas by developing *community resource centres*, equipped with ICT and other educational resources. These aim to serve various community purposes, and provide the potential for the development of local training and educational programmes (including basic education) and of knowledge networks based on local needs. For example, the Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP) in Sri Lanka, initiated in 1999 by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Sri Lankan government, has established over 500 community/telecentres in rural areas (some in secondary schools and Internet cafés) which provide the potential for use by various users. Another extensive non-governmental organization in Sri Lanka, Sarvodaya, has established 15 000 rural telecentres equipped with computers and Internet access. Similar projects in the region include the Virtual Knowledge Centres (VKCs) set up by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in India and UNESCO-supported Community Multi-Media Centres in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

The potential for large audiences in the high population countries in the region – Bangladesh, India and Pakistan – has made it possible for them to make extensive use of broadcasting for a range of educational purposes. India, for example, has the most well-developed ICT infrastructure and has
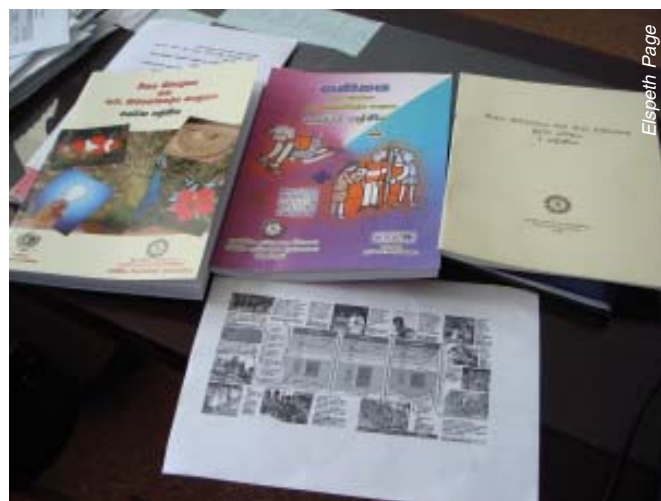
Sarvodaya poster

*EDUSAT **is the Indian satellite built exclusively for serving the educational sector. It is mainly intended to meet the demand for an interactive satellite-based distance education system for the country. It reflects India's commitment to use space technology for national development, especially for the development of the population in remote and rural locations. EDUSAT regularly telecasts programmes for schools and universities. Telecast of special programmes through EDUSAT may be organized for students in the age group of 10–15 years during summer vacation through the regional centres.***

long used satellite TV and radio broadcasting for education and interactive teleconferencing. The Electronic Media Production Centre, based at the Indira Ghandi National Open University, serves as an apex national resource centre in the production, dissemination and transmission of educational resources using a wide range of communication media. The facilities are shared with various educational and training institutions, state open universities, central government ministries and departments, NGOs, corporate bodies and other sectors. Its presence opens up the potential for a wide range of educational interventions using ICTs. The centre houses educational TV and radio channels, interactive teleconferencing facilities (used with study centres in most states) and a dedicated educational portal, Sakshat (mainly for teachers and tertiary level students). Their dedicated educational broadcasting channels – Gyan Darshan (six TV channels) and Gyan Vani (FM radio channel operating through currently 28 FM stations throughout the country) – run a range of educational programmes round the clock, some of which are for pre-school children, and schools broadcasting for enriching those already in some form of school. Gyan Darshan 2 is a one-way video and two-way audio teleconferencing facility which offers virtual classroom teaching through lecture–answer sessions where questions from students can be placed via toll-free telephones provided at regional centres and Satellite Interactive Terminals Centres. This facility has been widely used for training *in-situ* primary teachers, teaching assistants and mentor and study centre/library assistants by a range of institutions and organizations.

Another resource centre, Education Development Center in Bangalore funded by USAID, runs the Dot-EDU India Technology Tools for Teaching and Training (T4) project which produces various technology-based teaching tools for primary level education which have been widely used by primary state and non-state providers. The tools, available in English, Kannada and Hindi, include Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) in English, maths, science, social studies subjects and educational video programmes using project-based learning approaches focusing on difficult-to-teach content area in maths, science and social studies.

Nepal, Afghanistan, Bhutan and the Maldives are all using distance educational technologies – radio broadcasting, print and ICT – to overcome the infrastructural and geographical challenges of their countries for training basic education teachers.

Summary

Open and distance learning approaches can be used successfully to provide different routes to the completion of basic education by:
- **providing para-formal or alternative schooling systems**
- **supporting transition to and performance in formal schools**
- **raising the quality of schools by providing ready-made structured educational resources**
- **providing networking and training for intermediaries (e.g. teachers, broadcasters, mentors)**
- **providing communication for development (C4D) strategies.**

These five approaches are all important parts of a strategic framework and each has an important role to play, but the first two – recognition of flexible learning approaches and mainstreaming strategies to formal schools – can offer provision directly tailored to the needs of hard-to-reach children.

The next chapter considers the importance of providing opportunities to achieve recognized qualifications and outcomes, and how ODL may be able to widen access.

2

EXAMPLES OF ENABLING FRAMEWORKS

4 THE ARGUMENTS FOR EQUIVALENCY

Open learning, mainly thought of in terms of its role in opening up access to education – as in broadcasting to rural areas – is rarely seen as a route to accreditation but it can play a strong role. This chapter focuses on open learning strategies for the target groups which offer access to formal recognition of learning. Various examples in the region are examined.

Certification terminology

Certification/accreditation **is defined as a mark of quality that publicly attests the worth of a learning programme.**

Validation **is the process by which the authenticity of the accreditation is ascertained.**

Recognition **is the acceptance by an outside party of a certificate's worth and validation.**

4.1 Equal recognition and progression routes

One area often given low priority in provision for these groups is access to formal qualifications and accreditation (or other means of nationally-recognized learning achievement) even though it is an important aspect of equity and fundamental to opening up progression routes to more education and better jobs.

This missing element can contribute to the low acceptability of the provision among children, parents and carers, employers, government and teachers. A lack of emphasis on recognized or valued achievement gives the impression of a lack of government commitment, that what is on offer is a 'cheap way of containing educational demand without meeting it' (Perraton, 2007:207).

Much provision for these hard-to-reach groups is frequently perceived as low quality, second class and contributing not to equity but to a two-tier system which actually entrenches inequality (and for which poor parents often have to pay). Unsurprisingly, these perceptions inform decisions on participation and families and children often vote with their feet.

Positive factors for children in non-government schools relate to the more informal and creative aspects of the curriculum and the quality relationships they have with the teachers. The downside however is the lack of opportunities for accreditation and the possible sense of social exclusion associated with attending school that may be stigmatized by low status and marginalization. Efforts need to be made to overcome these problems and build on the strengths associated with both government and non-government schools if the equal right of these children to an education is to be made a reality

UNICEF (2008a:98)

On the other hand, certification is a highly complex area, which presents challenges in planning. What, if any, routes to formal qualifications and certificates are open to children outside the formal school system? One major hurdle is that accreditation is difficult for NGOs and if non-formal providers are going to play an increasing role in basic education, strategies for overcoming the problem need to be developed. Another very specific challenge is how to provide recognition of learning for cross-border refugees and internally displaced people.

4.2 Strategies for opening up access to formally-recognized achievement

Two main strategies to extend access to formally-recognized achievement are being used in the region:

1 Para-formal schooling systems initiatives with their own independent route to recognized achievement
2 Non-formal initiatives which, in different ways, connect children to formal or para-formal school systems where formal accreditation is available.

4.2.1 Para-formal substitution for formal provision

Open schools
Open schools include:

- the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in India (which also acts as an apex organization to 12 State Open Schools)
- Open School in Sri Lanka
- the Bangladesh Open School
- the Pakistan Open School.

Each has been set up by the respective country's MoE, albeit in the form of different state organizational structures, but this relationship with the MoE invests them with an authority to provide nationally-recognized learning qualifications. Open schooling systems have to face the acid test of ensuring that the standards offered by it are equivalent to those of the formal school; and in the case of the open basic education programme (OBE) run by NIOS, there has been a conscious attempt to develop the curriculum and the learning materials so that they are equivalent to the formal education system. This was felt necessary, as equivalence would give a chance to learners to move both vertically and horizontally from one system to the other. Hence the development of curriculum and materials has involved a close working relationship between the formal and open learning experts. Exams can be taken when the learner is ready. NIOS and the administering agency decide on the exam schedules in close collaboration with the formal school system. Exams can be conducted in Hindi, English or the regional language.

Table 4.1 Learners certified under the Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme, NIOS, India

Year	A level	B level	C level	Total
2001	2,996	734	271	4,001
2002	11,048	4,345	1,022	16,415
2003	14,686	6,391	4,919	25,996
2004	35,138	13,157	14,571	62,866
2005	46,649	510	307	47,466
2006	10,065	1,375	1,448	12,888
Total	**120,582**	**26,512**	**22,538**	**169,632**

Source: NIOS (2007)

Accreditation and certification – an exercise in collaboration

In the present scenario in India, there are National and State level Examination Boards that conduct and certify Secondary and Senior Secondary Examinations in the country. The NIOS is a National Board authorized by the government to certify open school learners.

Under the OBE programme, the NIOS has made a major departure from its established examination practice. NIOS has instituted an examination policy based upon a bond of mutual trust and responsibility. In accordance with this, NIOS shares the responsibility of certification with its partners and a Joint Certificate is given upon successful completion of the course. Such collaboration between the teaching learning agency and the certifying Board is unique and exemplifies the high degree of collaboration between partners.

The certificate of the OBE programme of NIOS has been recognized by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of Government of India for purposes of higher education and employment. The certificate enables learners in the younger age group to find a place in the formal schools while some others have been able to find jobs or get loans for self employment.

As regards the conduct of examination, the system reflects openness. A learner is enrolled for a period of five years and can appear in the examination for each subject depending upon his/her preparedness for a subject. The examination schedule is decided by the agency to the convenience of the learners. The NIOS has developed sample question papers that help the agency to determine the design and difficulty levels of each subject. The examination can be answered in Hindi, English or the regional language. Grades are awarded and certificates given only when the learner has completed the required number of credits.

The conduct of the examination is also an exercise in collaboration. In states like Rajasthan where the OBE programme is being run through the State Literacy Mission Authority, the examination is conducted with the support of the formal school department. The classrooms of the primary and middle schools serve as examination centres while their teachers are engaged as invigilators. The answer scripts are also examined by this large resource of teachers. The monitoring of the examination is done by the State government. In other cases, the existing infrastructure of NGOs is used for examination purpose.

Priyadarshini (2006)

NGO-run community schools

NGO-run community schools are usually one-teacher, one-room schools in rural areas which can also act as a route to certification. Some, once established, can seek government recognition converting them into feeder schools (as in Bhutan, Afghanistan and Pakistan). Others maintain their autonomy from government: the BRAC Primary School programme, for example, develops its own curriculum (which includes coverage of the competencies of the national curriculum) and its own certification and, in contrast to government schools, places a strong emphasis on child-centred pedagogy. Nevertheless, BRAC has the capacity to negotiate easy transitions from its primary schools into government-funded secondary schools (it has high transition rates). This seems to be based on:

- high primary completion rates and comparative tests which show that BRAC children often outperform children in government schools

A counter-argument

We should question such a strong emphasis on certification or equivalence. How important is it in a country like Bangladesh, where there is little confidence in the quality of formal educational provision, where the education offered by many NGOs is seen to be of higher quality and more relevant than government provision, and where rich parents opt out of the government system and buy into the ever-growing overseas exam market? A Secondary School Certificate in Bangladesh doesn't count for much … and there may be other, better routes to reasonably well-paid work in the skills training offered by NGOs.

● the high reputation BRAC graduates enjoy among employers and other teachers
● its strong local networks to negotiate transition
● respect for its own certification methods
● its capacity to sustain itself being perceived as part of its success.

This seems to illustrate that (proven) quality education is the real underlying passport to progression through education, and that certification is a public measure of that quality rather than an end in itself.

4.2.2 Initiatives that connect to formal or para-formal school systems

Initiatives that provide *connecting* routes to school systems are key to creating joined-up provision for these groups. They provide a means for bringing together the often disparate and sometimes small and highly-targeted interventions necessary to reach communities in specific circumstances and link to routes for recognized learning.

A range of these types of certification strategies exist which address various target communities and access issues:

● NGO and GO programmes mainstreaming children into the formal system
● NGO initiatives linking to open school examination systems
● Integration of non-formal schools into the formal education infrastructure
● Continuity schooling
● Government-recognized schools with outreach programmes
● Dual enrolment
● Special strategies for IDPs and refugees.

NGO and GO programmes mainstreaming children into the formal system

These feeder or bridging initiatives, described in Chapter 3, seek out-of-school children from poor rural or urban slum communities, and educationally prepare them for transition at some later stage to formal school or to an open school where they will have access to formal certification. Whether large-scale or small and highly-targeted, NGO- or MoE-initiated, these programmes play a significant role in providing a second chance to children who have had

We talked to boys attending a residential bridge course organized by the MVF in Hyderabad, India, about what jobs they aspired to. Almost all the boys – aged from about 9 to 14 – had been working as labourers, mostly in the stone quarries and in furniture making. The boys said that they wanted to be policemen, soldiers, teachers or peons (clerks) in government service. All the jobs they hoped to get require school leaving certificates, and selection is highly competitive.

Their teachers/mentors explained to us that these jobs represented financial security for the boys, all of whom had experience of living from hand to mouth in terrible poverty and deprivation. Looking at advertisements for a wide range of government jobs revealed that the senior school leaving certificate is a precondition for applying, with the exception of one driving job that required an 8th grade pass.

Ros Morpeth

▲
Students at an MV Foundation Residential Bridge School in Hyderabad. They had volunteered to come to the residential bridge school, which would prepare them for entry into a formal school at an age-appropriate level

Butterflies

Butterflies, a Delhi-based NGO for street and working children, offers an alternative education project to improve their lives and builds on their own experience. Classes take place during the day and at night, conducted in parks and at street corners and bus stations by child rights facilitators and trained teachers. When the children reach a certain level of educational achievement they are coached, in night shelters, to take national exams.

The curriculum has been developed within the framework of the formal primary school syllabus and in consultation with the children. As part of the curriculum, life skills education, vocational skills and value education in a non-formal setting is promoted, but with the objective to later mainstream the children to formal schooling or to enrol them with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). Butterflies is recognized by the National Institute of Open Schooling as an accredited agency to deliver the open basic education courses which are certificated at levels 3, 5 and 8 in the formal school system. The teaching and learning materials are developed in-house by Butterflies to ensure they suit the needs of the children. In this current academic year more than 1,200 children are taking part in the alternate education programme, 450 students have been enrolled with NIOS and 50 children have been admitted to formal schools.

www.butterflieschildrights.org/education.asp

limited or no access to education, and to those in danger of slipping into child labour, and in providing access to recognized certification for children in rural areas in small non-formal, community-based schools. Examples include the ROSC project in Bangladesh, community-based feeder schools in Afghanistan (Guyot, 2007), the anti-child labour MV Foundation, India, and the various catch-up accelerated learning approaches often used in conflict and disaster zones in a range of South Asian countries.

NGO initiatives linking to open school examination systems

Various NGOs working with specific hard-to-reach children can use open schools to provide access to their learning resources and accreditation system, either by becoming an accredited agency of an open school like Butterflies (see Box) or via direct enrolment with the open school. Among the open schools, only NIOS currently has the authority to accredit agencies.

Integration of non-formal schools into the formal education infrastructure

Here, the MoE absorbs a non-formal community school into the formal education system and, as a result, access to formal certificates follows. The Community Primary School programme in Bhutan, for example, is a partnership where, if a local community elects to donate land and take over the upkeep of a community school, Save the Children will finance its building and the MoE will provide a fully-trained teacher (who brings with them formal resources and access to a range of formal system resources and systems, including accreditation).

In Afghanistan, the integration or 'handover' of NGO-established community schools has contributed significantly to capacity building in post-conflict zones and rural areas (for more details, see the COPE case study in Chapter 7). Other benefits have flowed: the transfer of home-based schools (mainly for girls) to government schools resulted in an increase in primary enrolment of girls from 3% to 30% in a year (Rose, 2007:30).

A study by Guyot (2007) of the Partnership for the Advancement of Community-based Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) – a partnership of four international NGOs[11] – illustrated that following the establishment of community schools, integration into the government system was a continuum of partial to full integration along which the government gradually accepts more responsibility for newly-integrated schools as their capacity to support the school grows. During the transition the INGO continues to support the school through further teacher-training and supervisory visits. In practice, full integration of mainly remote rural community schools has proved problematic, and

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[11] CARE International, International Relief Committee, the Aga Khan Foundation and the Catholic Relief Services.

Guyot (2007:4) found that 'partial integration and gradual withdrawal of INGO is the optimal strategy, while a strong education *shura* (the community education committee, CEC) and mobilized community is critical for a school's success after integration. In addition, there was a consensus among all stakeholders that flexibility in application of policy is necessary in order to better address girls' educational needs.'

The whole handover system had been backed by an MoE Community-based Education policy, which, Guyot argued, now needed refinement in terms of making clear the criteria for integration and also capacity building at district and provincial levels so that better communication channels and monitoring and supervisory functions are established. A key consideration of this type of policy is whether integration is viewed as a positive outcome for community-based schools by the stakeholders involved. The NGOs which established these home-based and community-based schools made sure they complied with MoE policies and curricula. This has made the transition to integration easier and has demonstrated to the MoE the value of the NGOs' contribution in raising the profile of education at the community level and enabling capacity building but without setting up in competition with them.

Continuity schooling

The children of seasonal migrant workers need carefully pitched strategies to ensure continuity of schooling when seasonal work begins (see Chapter 3). Without strategies such as seasonal hostels in home villages, learning centres at worksites, summer accelerated bridge courses in villages and local government schools which understand and accommodate their particular needs, these children would find progression through and access to the formal system and certification very difficult to achieve.

Formal or recognized non-government schools with outreach programmes

These are initiatives or individual schools, which develop child-seeking outreach programmes to bring children into the orbit of formal or recognized schools. The St Agnes' Loreto Day School, an elite fee-paying private convent school in Lucknow, India, for example, has developed an outreach school, Pushpa Vidyalaya, within its school compound, which started as a class for the domestic staff of the convent. It has now become a fully-functioning recognized primary school with 320 students, and benefits from shared resources with the main private school. Elsewhere, the Loreto Day School in Kolkata, Sealdah, founded in 1894, 'is a large English Medium school of 1,400 girls, 700 of whom are so poor, they have to have all their needs met by the school, while the other 700 are able to pay regular school fees. All these children study and play together as equals. A further 300 wander in from the street every day and are taught by the regular children until such a time as they are ready to join formal school' (www.loreto.in/cal-loretosealdah/index.htm).

Study of an unrecognized school in Punjab

Examinations, if conducted by unrecognized schools, are not recognized elsewhere. This raises the issue of dual enrolment. Children in a terminal grade enrolled in an unrecognized school are also enrolled in a recognized school, without which they cannot appear in examinations conducted by a recognized school or board. They attend schools in unrecognized schools all year, appear in examinations conducted by recognized schools and if passed, transit to recognized schools for further studies. This … raises the vital question: why do parents prefer unrecognized to recognized schools? They are ready to pay tuition and other fees, provided that quality education is ensured, or it may be because of English as the medium of instruction.

Mehta (2005:38)

Dual enrolment

Fee-paying non-state primary and secondary schools – previously associated with wealth and privilege – have been playing an increasing role in reaching poorer communities since the 1990s in parts of Commonwealth South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. This is a

new low-cost incarnation and, despite the contentious debates that surround them, evidence indicates they are mushrooming (Phillipson, 2008). Data is thin on the ground but one major study in India (*ibid.*, pp.31–89), shows that some are government-recognized – which entitles the school to issue grade completion certificates – while others remain unrecognized. Schools accessed by the poor for their low fees belong to both recognized and unrecognized sectors but 'it is apparent that the informal, unrecognized sector is the one that has witnessed the greatest growth and has emerged as a major avenue for education among the poorer sections' (*ibid.*, p.38). In order to access completion certificates, children in unrecognized schools are also enrolled as external students with the examination board and the nearest formal school and appear on the examination day.

Special strategies for IDPs and refugees

Accreditation holds a particular importance in conflict and disaster zones but many of the lessons and recommendations that emerge from research in these areas (Talbot, 2006; Kirk, 2009) are equally applicable to hard-to-reach children in general. Kirk makes the point that a lack of education and certification for refugee or displaced children and young people denies them opportunities for a sense of identity – either continuity with the mother country or belonging to the host country – as well as access to other services and resources of the state.

Logistics and security of cross-border examinations

The MoE procedures for facilitating the (Burundian) examinations in Tanzania are complex but … deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the national examinations. The system is financially and logistically supported by UNHCR, with a prior cross-border trip to identify the appropriate examination centres and collect the list of candidates. The second visit is for the actual presentation and invigilation of the examination, after which the papers are collected and brought back over the border … The papers are coded and have no name or indication on them as to whether the students are refugees, to ensure neutrality in grading. The refugee students' papers are divided amongst the four grading centres across the country. Throughout the process, security and integrity of the national examination are of utmost concern. The bag in which the papers are carried has two locks, the keys to which are given to two different people, thus ensuring that the bag can only be opened in the presence of both. Each year the examination itself is developed through a serious process involving a ten-day retreat for selected Burundian educators, without access to telephone or visitors, to develop the question papers in complete isolation.

Kirk (2009:78)

She makes the following points:

- Donor funding for education often drops after the initial emergency, and so the formal recognition of learning achievement and the identification of certification possibilities need to be built into the initial response to an emergency situation.
- Ministries of education are lead 'actors' in shaping the learning programme and the mechanism for formal accreditation but they need to work with other government departments and agencies, including holding regular co-ordination meetings. (See case study of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, below.)
- 'In the longer term, donor support for education should encourage national curriculum, assessment, certification and validation development within regional and international frameworks which support cross-border equivalency, interoperability and mutual recognition and validation. This constitutes good practice in times of peace and should be a priority in times of crisis and reconstruction' (*ibid.*, p.114).
- Qualifications have to have recognized legitimacy and value in order to be of use. The quality assurance needed to provide the security for registration, exam papers, marking, etc. is demanding but necessary particularly when the accreditation and certification is provided in asylum countries. This requires strong co-ordination and collaboration. (See adjacent text discussing some of the logistics and security issues of cross-border examinations.)

- The lack of documentation of identity and/or educational progress is an enduring problem acting as a real barrier for children entering or completing their education. Kirk argues that support should be given in securing documentation, but that the lack of documentation should not be allowed to prevent admission to school or educational progress or transition.
- Open and distance learning through regional and other networks could support harmonized accreditation and certification.
- Accreditation and certification of teachers is closely linked with that of students (especially in refugee settings).

Case study: Certification and education for Afghan refugees in Pakistan

The Afghan consulate in Peshawar (an agency of the government of the country of origin) plays a major role for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, including for Afghan children. The consulate acts as an intermediary between UNHCR and the NGOs supporting education for refugees and the MoE in Kabul. Its functions include registration of refugee schools, students and teachers following the Afghan curriculum, transmission of examination papers for the Afghan MoE to refugee education providers, validation of student grades and records from registered refugee schools, and information sharing and policy dissemination from MoE Kabul to the refugee education community. The consulate has been a steady link between the MoE and the refugee students and teachers, and even in the early years of the new government in Afghanistan and the early phase of reconstruction within the MoE, it was a point of reference for the refugees themselves as well as for the education service providers. If enrolled in a registered refugee school, students returning to Afghanistan have been assured that their documents and certificates will be endorsed with the consulate stamp and thus be valid in Afghanistan.

However, gaps and delays have frustrated the Afghan refugees and education providers. For those located in and around Quetta, far away from Peshawar in Baluchistan province, where there are no similar consular services, the frustrations are greater: the delays in receiving the validated certificates from Peshawar are longer, and concerns about loss of papers en route are more serious. The flow of information between the MoE, the consulate and the refugees is limited. NGO representatives personally visit the consulate to discuss their individual cases and concerns with the education 'focal point' staff member recently appointed. In and around Peshawar, refugee education programmes supplement the information and resource materials (curriculum, policy document and updates, etc.) from the consulate with information from their own organizations with offices in Afghanistan, their direct linkages with the MoE in Kabul, and informal cross-border networks and information sharing. Since the 1980s, the commissioner for Afghan Refugees office in Peshawar has held monthly education sector co-ordination meetings, inviting partners NGOs and UNHCR to discuss updates.

Kirk (2009:81)

Table 4.2 illustrates some of the solutions and strategies that have been used to develop formal recognition of learning achievement among refugee and IDP populations. NGO and UN agencies have played a significant role through advocacy and negotiation with MoEs in promoting these strategies and facilitating their implementation.

Table 4.2 Summary of strategies for addressing certification challenges for refugees and IDPs

	Strategy	Populations	Actors involved	Case study examples
1	Facilitation of cross-border examinations for IDP and refugee students (may include working with regional examination bodies)	Returnees, refugees, IDPs	MoEs, NGOs, UN agencies, teachers	South Sudan/Uganda, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Guinea/Liberia, Guinea/Sierra Leone, Ingushetia/Chechnya, DRC Congo/Congo
2	Facilitation of host country school access and examinations for refugee students	Refugees, IDPs	MoEs, teachers, UN agencies, NGOs, donors	Liberia/Sierra Leone, Liberia/Ghana, Somalia/Kenya, Eritrea/Ethiopia, Myanmar/Thailand
3	Development of distance learning alternatives	Refugees	NGOs, universities	Sudan/Chad, Myanmar/Thailand
4	Support for refugee educators in the development of local certification boards	Refugees	UN and NGOs, refugee teachers and educators	Inter-regional Examinations Board in Tanzania
5	Policy development for returning refugees and IDPs and for local integration	Returnees, 'locally integrating former refugees'	MoE, NGOs, UN agencies	Southern Sudan, Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia
6	Advocacy and technical support for development of international and regional conventions	Refugees, IDPs	UN agencies, MoEs	Latin America

Source: Kirk (2009:46)

4.3 Planning for equivalency

So far, we have seen different strategies used to extend formal recognition of learning to hard-to-reach children either by accreditation routes outside the formal sector or by enabling children in a wide range of out-of-school contexts to come into the fold of the formal system. All of them could be promoted and expanded on through more strategic planning.

However, as we have seen in this chapter, the area of certification is complex, and planners become involved in various dilemmas and issues: Does an overemphasis on accreditation distract attention from perhaps the more important issue of high quality education which can, by itself, be recognized by future employers and educational institutions (as BRAC has demonstrated)? To what extent will the strengths an NGO can potentially bring to education – reach, external funding, innovative practices and the independence to by-pass the inertia of the formal system – be compromised by a closer relationship with the formal system? Will any mismatch between the practices the children may have been exposed to in some NGO educational provision make it difficult to transfer and progress in the formal system? Is there a particular point in primary school grades where certification or recognition of achievement is more important than at other points (for transition to secondary school, for example)? What if the formal system's qualifications are not valued by children, parents, employers and other teachers and they would rather attend an NGO school, even if it is not officially recognized by the MoE? What criteria should an MoE use to integrate, recognize or accredit NGO provision? How is it possible to scale up access to certification outside the formal system in ways that ensure equivalency with that received in the formal sectors, and are not perceived as second class or unacceptable to parents, teachers and employers?

A study (UNESCO, 2006) in India, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand identified a number of general issues that need to be addressed in the planning and implementation of equivalency programmes for out-of-school populations:

● Importance of political commitment and appropriate legal provisions. It notes that a 'rights perspective' is an enabling factor but needs to be accompanied by a national strategic plan and education act that equates NFE equivalence with formal education.

- Need for a variety of programmes involving GOs, NGOs and other civil society groups – different groups of learners have varied learning needs.
- To ensure flexibility of entry between formal and non-formal systems, there is a need for synergies between them in terms of curricula and certification but also policy support, delivery mechanisms and training of staff.
- The need for clear articulation of the target groups so that educational materials content, language of instruction and methods can be worked out.
- Importance of developing staff at all levels, especially the local level, but there is a problem of low status and low pay of these staff.
- Importance of community partnership and community support.

Some see certification as an area having fundamental implications for the formal/non-formal divide and believe that planners need to consider a more enabling framework for certification:

> An important concern for the state is to re-define the notion of 'formal-ness' in education. What does this notion primarily refer to? Is it principally associated with certain institutional forms of education provision and certain ways of ordering and managing learning situations? Or is it first and foremost associated with a common framework of learning outcomes, assessment and certification, and a range of basic quality criteria on the basis of which different institutional forms can be recognized and possibly supported? Does formal have to continue being associated with common framework of learning outcomes, assessment and certification, and a range of basic quality criteria on the basis of which different institutional forms can be recognized and possibly supported? Does formal have to continue being associated mainly with form, or can it be associated with substance, purpose and outcome? As Bock noted, the aim of getting (selected) NFE types to serve the desired allocation needs of subordinated groups of educational consumers can only be achieved if that NFE 'becomes socially chartered to confer the same legitimate, accredited access as schooling' (Bock, 1976:367). In this process, both sides of the boundary would have to change to conform to new national criteria for legitimacy and quality.
>
> It follows from this that the goal of mainstreaming NFE is not applicable. Most non-formal initiatives that wish to remain outside the ambit of government rules and regulations would have no desire to be mainstreamed into any common formulae. For those that wish to retain their vision and identity, while at the same time offering access to national certificates and channels for further education or training – as is the case for many para-formal programmes for children and young persons – mainstreaming would appear to be a one-directional process of assimilation. Formalization under the umbrella of more democratic and equitable education regime constitutes a form of integration, but one that recognized diversity and pluralism of forms within a common overarching frame.
>
> *Hoppers (2007:106)*

A truly open approach to certification would ensure that:

- Governments remove all definitions barriers that preclude para-formal schools from being recognized as fit enterprises to deliver educational programmes leading to national examinations.
- All students have an opportunity to sit national examinations, whatever the route they have taken through the education system.
- All students have an opportunity to sit subjects as and when they are ready are to do so, thus enabling them to accumulate subject-based credits towards a qualification.
- Entry, attendance, and progression requirements are flexible enough to accommodate to the needs of non-traditional students.

● Examinations taken by students who have studied in the open school system are the same as those sat by formal school students, except where there are over-riding operational reasons, in which case they should be clearly equivalent in the demands they make on candidates, and in the status they attract.
● The qualifications gained by students who have studied through the open school system are marked and awarded by the same Examining Body as that responsible for examinations in the formal school system.
● Examination certificates do not specify explicitly the mode of study followed by the student.

4.4 Insights from Bangladesh

Bangladesh casts light on some of these complexities: a recent and comprehensive mapping of non-formal education activities in Bangladesh (Rahman and Rahman, 2008) calls for the development of an equivalency framework between formal and non-formal education, and over the years there have been similar calls, such as the moves towards establishing an equivalency framework at the primary level in Bangladesh (details of which are summarized in Shathy and Haque, n.d.), both on the government side through the Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE), and on the NGO side by CAMPE, the umbrella organization for NGOs in education. However, the lack of coherence among the NGOs, and the lack of coordination with and by BNFE, has meant that little progress has been made.

Within the five years of primary schooling, and corroborated by the organizations covered in the fieldwork visits, there is strong evidence of transfers, in both directions, between formal and more open systems. So while there may be no official 'equivalence' established, there do not seem to be significant formal barriers. Moreover, many of the NGOs examined in the fieldwork were not pushing for equivalence. Although most cover the national curriculum, and therefore could be seen as equivalency programmes, they – and the parents and children who are in a position to make a comparison – feel they are offering 'national curriculum *plus*'. That is, they feel the approach, content and provision is superior to that of the state system.

At the primary level, there is no national exam or test at the end of the five years apart from the secondary scholarship exam, entered for by about 20% of students who are seen to be the most academically able, the passing of which entitles a child to a free secondary education. The key issue of recognition would be eligibility to sit for the secondary scholarship exam, which until recently was open only to those in recognized primary schools. In this, BRAC has managed to get recognition for their Grade 5 equivalents (Ryan *et al.*, 2007), opening up the possibility of free secondary education for their most able students; this form of recognition of equivalence could be a determining factor in whether a child goes on to secondary school or not. Other than that, secondary schools set their own entry criteria, and while there is fierce competition for places in the elite schools (which set their own entrance exams), almost all children whose parents are able and willing to let their children continue at secondary level would be able to get a place – if not in a government school, then in a non-government secondary school, or a secondary-level madrasa. The same is generally true for children who have a non-formal primary education. Problems such as poverty or distance to a secondary school are the barriers, not lack of equivalence.

The issue of accreditation and the establishment of equivalency are also being worked on by the MoE and the ILO, but *at levels beyond what is seen to be basic education* in Bangladesh. The first national exam for all students, the Secondary School Certificate (SSC), comes at the end of Grade 10 – that is, one year after what UNESCO defines as the minimum for 'basic

education', two years after Bangladesh's proposed extension of free compulsory education to eight years (*Daily Star*, 2009), and five years after the existing five years of primary. This certificate – which is offered for the science stream, humanities, business and vocational – has been increasingly devalued in recent years because of the rapid expansion in secondary education and the associated loss of quality (bigger classes, less qualified teachers, etc.). Linked to this is the loss of influential parents, those most likely to hold schools accountable, to the ever-growing English-medium 'O'- and 'A'-level international exam market. The SSC now has significantly reduced value in the employment market; with increasing numbers graduating with this certificate, the SSC has been increasingly expected for jobs that would earlier have called for only a few years of schooling, such as in garment factories (Raynor, 2000).

The main value in having the SSC is in being eligible to enrol for the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), the exam taken at the end of Grade 12, and the main value of that is to be eligible for higher education courses. For many of the children and parents in the groups this study is concerned with, the main concern is to have an education that will lead to decent, reasonably paid work. It may well be that there are other, better routes to that in the skills training offered by NGOs such as UCEP, which – unlike the government – has strong links with potential employers, and is very successful in getting its graduates into paid employment.

Summary

Open and distance learning can be used not only to open up access to education, but also as a route to the formal recognition and accreditation of learning. However, the area of certification is complex. It has fundamental implications for the formal/non-formal divide and a more enabling framework for certification could eventually lead to a truly open approach to basic education.

The next chapter examines open schools and NGO community schools systems like BRAC initiatives that have the potential as enabling organizations joining up provision and for creating some of the synergies and links between non-formal (NGO and GO) and formal education sectors.

5 PARA-FORMAL AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: EVIDENCE OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

Para-formal schooling systems – open schools and community-based schooling systems like BRAC – are examined as enabling structures for extending educational opportunities to hard-to-reach children. They can provide an answer to some of the weak spots of the formal basic education system: its difficulties in reaching remote or challenging areas, in addressing diverse communities, in being flexible enough to respond effectively to the needs of children with unconventional schooling paths and lives. They work, or have the potential to work, at a significant scale and in ways that can create coherence and progression routes in provision for hard-to-reach children and in ways that enhance and expand the state system. This chapter examines evidence of their impact and effectiveness. The costs are analysed in Chapter 9.

5.1 Open schools

Open schools provide an answer to many of the challenges of providing education for all: flexibility in eligibility requirements, in terms of age, medium of instruction, choice of subjects, medium of delivery (including the Internet), credit accumulation facility, examination system, ability to re-take exams (individually rather than the whole year) and ability to study at children's own pace and in their own time. All the open schools have the potential to operate on a national scale. What is more, open learning holds out lessons for formal schools in terms of introducing greater flexibility. For example, children generally have to take exams in a block, and if they fail one of them, they need to retake the whole year. To prevent dropout and age/class mismatch, open school materials can provide an opportunity for staying in an age-appropriate class while studying from open materials independently. They can also be used for remedial support. Open schools could also make a strong contribution towards opening up a three-tier open system for lifelong learning opportunities nationally.

NIOS as an enabling body
Out of all the open schools in South Asia, NIOS has been established the longest and has developed, unlike the others (as yet) into an apex organization, supporting other NGO providers in setting up basic provision for a wide range of marginalized communities. It is a parastatal apex organization invested with the power to act as an external examination board on a national scale up to pre-degree level for not only its own students but also students of other providers

accredited by NIOS. One of its roles, then, is as an accrediting agency for other NGOs providing basic education. This enabling role allows providers to cherry-pick from the ready-made NIOS materials and benefit from NIOS advice and training on how to create their own materials.

NIOS has a broad reach and potential for extending educational opportunities to a very wide range of hard-to-reach children. It has, for example, a dedicated 'Minority Cell' with four aims:

1　To focus specifically on working with Minority Educational Institutions (data shows lower literacy levels among Muslims and scheduled castes and tribes – 52.8% compared with the national mean of 65%)
2　To conduct an advocacy programme to extend the reach of NIOS in various Socio-Religious Communities (SRCs)
3　To appoint project coordinators in different states for promotion of educational activities among minorities in difficult-to-reach areas
4　To initiate wider consultation with community/religious leaders to negotiate 'relaxed norms' for accreditation of Traditional Education Institutions of Educationally Backward Minorities (Muslims). Under existing norms of accreditation, most of the Maktabs, Madrasas and Darul-ul-Uloom are not eligible for accreditation to NIOS. Learners in these traditional educational learning institutions do not have access to any nationally-recognized educational certification, which means that they remain largely out of the mainstream.

Case study: Muslim girls and the Hunar project

A unique pilot programme called the Hunar (The Skills Project) has been initiated by NIOS in collaboration with the Government of Bihar. The Hunar project will provide skills development courses free of charge to Muslim girls who are already enrolled in formal school at upper elementary level. Seven courses have been identified at Class V and VIII levels, i.e. B and C Levels of NIOS's Open and Basic Education (OBE) for this pilot. More than 12,000 girls have been enrolled in the 2008–09 academic year. The Bihar Government has contributed Rs18 million from its flagship literacy programme, the Bihar Education Project (BEP), which in turn receives substantial funding from central government under its EFA programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The plan is to extend the programme in Bihar, and the figure for the next intake has been estimated at 50–60,000 and, depending on its success, it will be replicated in other states. This promises to be a ground-breaking initiative where open schooling has been used to reach the most difficult target group, i.e. young Muslim girls, and to overcome barriers to access in the educationally-backward state of Bihar. One of the big issues that NIOS has had to address is to change its criteria for approving institutions to be Accredited Institutions in order to accredit the Maktabs and Madrasas. (Until now no religious schools have been eligible for accreditation and this has meant that their students have not had any access to nationally recognized qualifications.) This project is built on close collaboration between different stakeholders such as the Central Government (NIOS), State Government (BEP), local community schools (Maktabs/Madrasas) and educational/community leaders and organizations like Imarat-e-Sharia/Rahmani Foundation working together for the common goal of EFA.

Adapted from Bist (2008)

A quick analysis of the accredited agencies for OBE provides an insight into the wide range of communities they serve in all the majority of Indian states. Examples include: Bhumiheen Seva Samiti (a village school for Dalits), Ruchika Social Service Organization (Train Platform School of India), Project Mala (schooling for 1,150 children in the hand knotted carpet industry), Pratham (running an outreach programme (for child labourers, street children, pavement dwellers) and pre-school, bridge and remedial programmes, the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped and the Centre for the Communication Impaired. NIOS also serves Indian nationals overseas. It has three study centres in Nepal with 1,429 students and 16 study centres in UAE with 783 students. This has clear potential for extending education to children and youth in conflict and emergency zones. It already has an established accelerated learning programme.

Ros Morpeth

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*Girls who have come from orphanages
attending an NGO school in India – they are
following the NIOS secondary level curriculum*

El Shaddhai, Goa

Shanti Niketan school takes in children from the Child Rescue orphanages, the local community and other orphanages in the area. The school uses the NIOS accelerated learning programme and has 230 students from 3–18. They are now with their fifth cohort of 15+ students.

At seventh grade the school moves over to reading and writing in English. The philosophy is that peer pressure and competiveness are not encouraged, learning is treated as fun. The academic children go on to tenth and twelfth grades through NIOS. The non-academic do vocational courses like tailoring from the resident tailor who makes all the school uniforms. But all children do handicrafts and make things like cards that can be sold to support the project in the afternoons. The children reported that they enjoy the teaching materials. They are not an accredited NIOS centre yet because they don't meet the requirements of government recognition and nor do they have a science laboratory. The other significant requirement is a library and they are making good progress on that. The Shanti Niketan students get good marks in exams. It is clearly an excellent school with a very positive approach to teaching and learning. They would like to become an accredited NIOS centre because that would mean that children wouldn't need to travel to other schools to take the exams and then they could help local children as an exam centre. They report that there are private schools in Mapusa offering alternative secondary education through NIOS but they charge 6,000 rupees just for admission to the school.

childrescue.net

Evening platform schools

The railway platforms of Bhubaneswar in India have long been a breeding ground of despair, where the underprivileged children of all ages (of rural families coming to urban areas for work) settle in slums around the railway.

They are vulnerable to frequent abuse, starvation and neglect and preyed upon for the purposes of child labour and even prostitution. Initially the programme consisted of a single train platform school.

Today the organization reaches out to more than 4,000 underprivileged children and their families. Remarkably, the train school programme is inexpensive and cost effective.

www.ashanet.org

NIOS was identified as the lead institution by the National Monitoring Committee for Minority Education and is now working to become one of the first government institutions to extend recognition to the vast numbers of maktabs/madrasas in the unorganized sector (about 80% of these institutions fall into this category). Learners will then have access to both Duniyavi Taleem (worldly learning) along with Deeni Taleem (religious learning). This has clear policy implications for other South Asian countries and particularly in relation to the education of girls. (See the case study of the Hunar project on the previous page.)

Building on research that shows that students learn best in their own mother tongue, NIOS gives other agencies the flexibility in making their learning package based upon the curriculum offered by the state or national educational bodies. They can thus develop their own materials in their own local language/mother tongue. NIOS already produces learning materials in an impressive range of languages (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Data on Open Schools in South Asia

	Target population	No. of study centres	Level of education	Enrolment	Medium of instruction
India: National Institute of Open Schooling	Rural children, high poverty urban areas, special needs, indigenous ethnic/ linguistic minority groups	11 regional centres			Hindi, Urdu, English, Marathis, Gujarati, Malayalm at secondary stage Hindi, Urdu, English at Senior secondary stage
Open Basic Ed. programme (2003–present)		341 OBE-accredited agencies	Complete primary cycle class 8. High potential for transfer to state system or to NIOS secondary level and vocational programmes with NIOS or accredited agency	169,632 (2001–06)	
Junior and Senior Secondary (2002–present)		1,923	To Class X–XII, leading to Secondary school and Senior Secondary certificate	1,395,322 (2002–07)	
Vocational (2002–present)		999	Diplomas, Advanced Certificate and certificates in a range of vocational courses	113,273 (2002–07)	
Bangladesh Open School (2007–10)	For learners, mainly in rural areas, from community schools which are not recognized by the formal system				
New Junior Secondary (Pilot, 2007–10)		40	Lower secondary grades 6, 7 and 8 as a bridge to formal secondary school	2,000 (2007–08)	NA
Secondary School Certificate (1995–present)		NA	Two-year secondary school certificate across 25 subjects	70,990 (2006)	NA
Higher Secondary School Certificate (1998–present)		NA	NA	34,023 (2005)	NA
Sri Lankan Open School Junior secondary programme (2007–present)	Second chance dropouts Marginalized groups including Muslim children from religious schools, indigenous groups, plantation workers, children in conflict zones, IDP camps	13, each developing sub-centres	Lower secondary level 1 (Grades 6–7), Level 2 (8–9) Level 3 (10–11) Bridge course for tsunami child victims	1,400	Sinhalese, Tamil, or English

Source: NIOS (2007)

5.2 Community-based schools

The establishment of community-based or feeder schools in most South Asian countries since the mid-1990s has made a significant contribution to opening up access for children, and particularly girls, in areas underserved by the state school system. Unlike the rigid, standardized fare of many formal schools, they can be highly flexible and responsive to local contexts and also provide a progression route to the secondary level. Typically, they are the result of a partnership between UN agencies like UNICEF and INGOs (like COPE, IRC and Save the

Children), the MoE and the rural community, in which the partners take different roles. For example, following canvassing by NGO 'community mobilizers', community leaders may agree on the need for a school. They supply the land and, in village committees, nominate a local person as the teacher and take responsibility for managing the school, including decisions about its timetable and content specific to the community. The MoE may fund the building of the school, while the INGO takes responsibility for the ongoing training of a local teacher and supplying the school equipment and educational resources. This local level decision-making and management is part of the reason for their effectiveness. The school is responsive to local needs in terms, for example, of location, timetable, content, language, holidays, number of children, single-sex or mixed. In cases where segregation of the sexes is important, the schools can be located in teachers' homes or community spaces such as mosques.

The distribution of responsibilities between the MoE and the NGO varies in the projects and reflects the degree to which the MoE is open to ceding or sharing authority in certain areas. For example, in Pakistan, to stay within the national rules, the community school teachers must have a Primary Teaching Certificate to ensure quality education and to assure government officials that the curriculum conforms to national standards. They are supervised on a weekly basis by a headteacher from the nearest government primary school. In contrast, in Bhutan, Afghanistan and Nepal, the MoE has been open to the community nominating a local teacher, often women with higher secondary level education but no official teaching qualifications. In these cases, it is the NGO which provides short pre-service training in multigrade teaching methodology, subject content, materials development and the use of textbooks and also ongoing in-service support in the form of supervisory visits which incorporate further training. Nevertheless, the clear distribution of responsibilities provides the potential for introducing new practices and new funding into the system.

BRAC School, Bangladesh

BRAC and Escuela Neuva as enabling bodies

Both BRAC in Bangladesh, working independently from government, and Escuela Nueva in Columbia, working in the state system, have been refining these community-based approaches since the 1980s. The way they have expanded and diversified their role illustrates how planners could build on a basic community-school infrastructure in a more coordinated way which reduces duplication of effort. Now working on a vast scale, both BRAC and Escuela Nueva have diversified into different types of basic education provision, refined their resources and training, and, with proven track records in completion and transition rates and local level, have been able to become agents of reform (e.g. in terms of their child-centred methodology) within other state primary schools and the formal secondary level system.

For example, the BRAC primary education programme (BPEP or BEP) began with 22 one-room schools in 1985 focusing on girls' education in rural areas. It has grown to more than 35,000 primary schools and 20,000 pre-primary schools, and has now diversified into a range of special provision focused on particular broad access problems but also including a programme for ethnic minorities. There are currently four types of primary schools operating within the BEP, which together provide education for almost one million students. These include the BRAC Primary Schools for children aged 8–10 on initial enrolment (c. 20,000 schools), the BRAC Adolescent Primary Schools for those aged 11–14 on enrolment (c. 4,000 schools), schools operated by partner NGOs under the Education Support Programme with financial and

technical support from BRAC (c. 5,500 schools), and the 'Education for Ethnic Children' schools in which initial education is provided in the mother tongue, with a gradual progression to Bengali-medium education (c. 2,500 schools). The 'Children with Special Needs' component cuts across these (25,000 children).

BRAC community-based schools for Ethnic Children (EEC), Bangladesh

Although an estimated 98% of the citizens of Bangladesh speak Bengali as their first language, the 2% who do not represents approximately 3 million people. There is a variety of ethnic groups in remote rural areas such as the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet and Rangpur Divisions, and the Mymensingh area. There are also some groups in urban areas, such as the Biharis. There is no government provision for teaching in the minority first language and this is seen to be a major reason for drop out from formal education, particularly in the first years of primary school.

In 2001, BRAC established a unit (EEC) to focus on the educational needs of children from Bangladesh's ethnic communities. The schools follow the basic BRAC model of a single classroom where the children stay for four years and follow a condensed version of the national primary curriculum. However the usual 33 children in a BRAC classroom are likely to be 22–30 children in an EEC school because the areas are so remote. EEC schools have adapted the basic BRAC teaching model to suit the needs of the particular ethnic community. The first language of the students is used extensively in teaching the first two years of primary school and then gradually through the rest of the four-year programme a greater proportion of Bengali is used. Teaching and reading materials are produced locally and focus on the children's culture, heritage and their everyday experiences. Wherever possible, these are produced in the child's first language or are mediated in the first language by the teacher. Where possible there are two adults in the classroom; for example a first language speaker of Bengali alongside a first language speaker of the ethnic language of the children, or speakers of two ethnic languages if the low numbers of two ethnic minority groups necessitate bringing them together into one classroom. Currently there are more than 2,000 of these specialized primary schools for more than 57,000 students. There are also 180 pre-primary schools for children from ethnic minorities, so that younger children are prepared to begin their primary education.

In other respects, these schools follow the same pattern of all BRAC schools, including the specific targeting of girls. BRAC is well known for its community infrastructure, in which education is one strand among many of local community development, including micro-financing, the enfranchisement of women, and village organizations. All school resources are provided free to the children. In general, graduates from the BRAC primary schools move back into the formal system if they move on to secondary. BRAC claims a high rate of transference with more than 90% moving on to secondary. It is not clear, however, how much that rate varies across the country and whether ethnic minorities do better or less well. Because students move away from the BRAC school, it is also not possible for BRAC to evaluate statistically how many of its primary graduates complete Lower Secondary and move on to take SSC and HSC.

BRAC's annual budget is about US$485 million, about 80% of which is self-financed. BRAC reported US$105 million in grants in 2007, with DFID and NOVIB/RNE providing almost 60% of the total. BRAC estimates the education cost per child per year at a BRAC school as US$18.

BRAC, www.brac.net

Like NIOS, BRAC has created tiers of progression routes for learners from pre-primary to tertiary level within BRAC and, through its close contact with state schools, out to the formal system. Its current primary component – picking up previously unenrolled children or early drop-outs – successfully compresses the standard five-year programme into four years. It covers the national curriculum, using BRAC-produced textbooks in the early stages, and moving onto those used by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board in the later stages. Each school is run by the same teacher for the same cohort of children for the entire four-year period, and has a maximum of 33 students in a class. There are no long holidays, and no homework.

In addition to being a large-scale provider itself, BRAC, like NIOS, has become an apex organization by diversifying into training for other providers, formal and non-formal. For example, it is involved in providing training with BRAC methodology (core subject training for teachers, management training for head and deputy-head teachers and school committee members) for:

● under-resourced rural state primary and secondary community schools
● 'formal schools' based on government models, where there is no government school but a high population density
● partner NGO schools.

It has also expanded internationally and has set up organizations in neighbouring countries in South Asia (Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan) and more recently in sub-Saharan Africa. At a local level, BRAC officials work out of more than 3,000 local offices across Bangladesh, and training and development for teachers is provided through BRAC's own programmes and at its own training centres.

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 collate data from community-based school programmes in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal about their current scale, enrolment figures and effectiveness data.

Table 5.2 Selection of community school programmes in South Asia and enrolment figures

	Target population	No. of schools	Level of education	Enrolment
Afghanistan: COPE community schools programme	Rural children with focus on girls	479 schools in nine provinces	Complete primary cycle to Grade 6 with transfer into state system	45,513 (2003)
Afghanistan: IRC Home-based Schools Programme	Rural children with a focus on girls	NA	Complete primary cycle to Grade 6 with transfer into state system	14,000 (58% girls) between 2000–03 5,800 (70% girls) in 2005 (reduction due to successful transfer to state schools)
Bhutan: SC Community primary schools	Rural children	150 30	Pre-primary to Grade 6	12,600 (UNICEF project) 4,500 (Save the Children)
Nepal: IDA[12] community-managed support schools	Rural children with a focus on girls	4,000	Complete primary cycle	NA
Bangladesh: BRAC primary schools	Rural children, high poverty urban areas, special needs, indigenous ethnic/linguistic minority groups	35,500	Complete primary cycle to Grade six in four years modified to six. High potential for transfer to state system	984,440 (65% girls) 2009

Source: Adapted from DeStefano et al. (2006)

[12] IDA references:
web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA_0,,contentMDK:21387809~menuPK:3266877~pagePK:51236175~piPK:437394~theSitePK:73154,00.html (accessed 10 July 2009)
www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/06/23/000160016_20040623095558/Rendered/PDF/AB310paper.pdf (accessed 10 July 2009)

Table 5.3 Effectiveness data of some community school programmes in South Asia

	Access	Completion rates	Learning rates	Integration
Afghanistan: COPE Community schools programme (1998–2003)	Provided 9% of total enrolment in six provinces in 2003; provided 100% of national girls' total enrolment in 2001 12,000 girls enrolled in 2003 % female enrolment increased 34–55 between 1998–2003 Increased province level enrolment by 10%	Comm school: 50% State school: 32%	Comm school: 94% State school: NA	112 schools handed over to MoE 125 partially handed over to MoE (2004)
Afghanistan: Home-based schools (2000–present)	Provided only access in some areas, particularly for girls	Home school: 68% State school: 32%	Home school: 70% State school: 27%	Students typically transfer when an MoE school is available
Nepal: IDA[13] Community-managed schools support project (2003–08)	Reduced total out-of-school 5-9 year-olds from 41% to 15% Reduced out-of-school girls from 45% to 15% Reduced out-of-school Dalit (lowest Hindu caste) from 50% to 18% Reduced out-of-school Janajatis (indigenous groups) from 44% to 15%	NA	NA	Considered part of the state system but devolved management to community and local education infrastructure backed by a raft of grants and incentives to individual children and community management
Bhutan: community primary schools (2006–present)	NA Aim to increase primary enrolment to 80% by 2010	NA NA	NA NA	UNICEF Project: Teachers were trained in multigrade teaching methods as part of a UNICEF-AusAID grant. Save the Children project: MoE provides and pays salary of fully-trained and qualified teacher, the school budget (maintenance and operating costs), teaching aids and textbooks and integrates the community schools into the formal primary system.
Bangladesh: BRAC primary schools (1985–present)	Provided 8% total national enrolment. Provided up to 50% of total enrolment in rural areas	BRAC school: 94% State school: 67%	BRAC school: 70% State school: 27%	98% of primary graduates transfer to state secondary school

Source: Adapted from DeStefano et al. (2006)

Summary

Para-formal schooling systems, such as open schools and community-based schooling systems, are enabling structures for extending educational opportunities to hard-to-reach children. They can provide answers to some of the weak spots of the formal basic education system, and they work, or have the potential to work, at a significant scale and in ways that can create coherence and progression routes in provision for hard-to-reach children and in ways that enhance and expand the state system.

[13] IDA references:
web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA_0,,contentMDK:21387809~menuPK:3266877~pagePK:51236175~piPK:437394~theSitePK:73154,00.html (accessed 10 July 2009)
www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/06/23/000160016_20040623095558/Rendered/PDF/AB310paper.pdf (accessed 10 July 2009)

3
WHAT CAN WORK?

6

THE ISSUES IN CONTEXT: EVIDENCE FROM FIELDWORK IN BANGLADESH AND SRI LANKA

Some of the research for this report has been based on published and grey literature but an important dimension of this project was fieldwork in two South Asian countries, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This made it possible to interview government officials and agency and NGO staff who were working on the ground, and importantly to meet and talk to providers, parents and children. This was used to inform and enrich the report and to confirm or raise questions about desk research findings. This chapter is a summary of the findings from the fieldwork, and is placed here to provide a more in-depth contextualized picture of the issues raised in the preceding chapters. More detailed reports of each country visit are available in the companion volume *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Country Studies.*

6.1 Introduction

In this section of the report we focus our attention on hard-to-reach children in two countries in South Asia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The particular focus is on Bangladesh: our interest in Sri Lanka is specifically on children in conflict. These two South Asian countries have a different cycle of basic education: Bangladesh with compulsory education from age 6 to 10 and Sri Lanka from age 5 to 14. Their completion rates for primary school and lower secondary school also differ markedly: only just over half of children in Bangladesh reach the end of primary school whereas in Sri Lanka almost everyone completes primary school and nine out of ten children transfer to secondary.

Nevertheless, both countries are similar in having high numbers – more than nine out of every ten children – enrolling in primary school, with parity in enrolment rates of girls and boys, and having significant variations in enrolment in terms of regional variation, socio-economic variation, and variation in terms of ethnicity. And in Sri Lanka, although national dropout rates are low,

there are exceptionally high student dropout and absentee rates in the conflict-affected areas of the north and east. Estimates vary, at somewhere between one in twenty to almost one in four. In 2003, UNICEF gave a figure of 15.8%, with dropout highest among displaced children (NIE and UNICEF, 2003).

We start by identifying the range of reasons why children in these two countries drop out of school. We know that generally most children drop out slowly from school with absences and irregular attendance creating conditions which make it difficult to keep up with the class, followed by a gradual withdrawal. An emergency such as natural disaster can sometimes create different conditions for dropout with the emergency serving as a catalyst for withdrawal from school in situations where safety, shelter and food become the family priorities. And in times of conflict, where families are displaced from their homes for months or years and are moving from one temporary location to another, school can become unavailable for long periods of time.

6.2 Why children in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka drop out

6.2.1 Difficulties in getting to school

Children drop out because they cannot get to school easily enough. In Bangladesh, despite the presence of large urban centres such as Dhaka, up to four-fifths of the population is still rural, typically making their livelihood through subsistence farming. In the more remote rural settings, children drop out of school or never attend school because getting to school is such a problem. Government of Bangladesh primary schools are built according to population criteria, and so in the more remote locations with much lower density of population, the distance to school is much greater.

The need for a school which is geographically close to where a child lives is one of the basic needs to ensure access to education. While official policy in Bangladesh (MOPME, 2003) states that there is a government primary school every 2 km, this is a national average and masks high variation. Establishing a state or state-funded school involves donating the land to the government and landowners in the village may be unwilling to do so, leading to a school being sited further away. In Bangladesh, government schools are required to employ four qualified teachers, two of them female, and these are difficult to find in remote areas.

So a shortage of government-recognized qualified teachers in rural areas in Bangladesh makes the establishment of schools close

Janet Raynor

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Out-of-school children, Bangladesh

enough to students more difficult. Similarly in Sri Lanka: although the fact of a shortage of teachers is disputed by some government officials in Colombo, there seems no doubt that there is a general shortage of teachers nationwide as well as severe deployment issues with finding enough qualified teachers prepared to work in the conflict-affected areas of the country. Transport for teachers to remote rural schools in the conflict-affected areas remains an endemic issue: the most local of teachers may live 20–30 km away from the school.

6.2.2 Belonging to an ethnic minority

The difficulties of accessing education when living in a remote location are exacerbated for children belonging to an ethnic minority. For example, in the tea plantations in Srimangal in Bangladesh, where workers were brought over from India generations ago, the children speak Sylheti, and

languages such as Oriya, and many are Hindu. They live with their parents on land belonging to the tea companies, and although their employers are responsible for providing schools, the single school may be located on the other side of the plantation and offer only a Bangla-medium education.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts population density is extremely low and ethnic tensions exist between government and the local populations. Despite the signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord in 1997, the army's continued presence in the area can make the journey to school a difficult one. Similarly in Sri Lanka the problem of getting to school can be the immediate one of long and dangerous routes to schools: children attending secondary schools in conflict-affected areas may be walking 7 km to get to school. There is the risk of abduction (a particular problem in LTTE-controlled areas) or arrest by government forces, and there is pervasive constraint on movement, with military checkpoints every few hundred metres in the conflict-affected areas.

In Bangladesh, education for ethnic minorities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and elsewhere (e.g. areas of Sylhet, Dhaka and Rangpur divisions) is complicated by the lack of teachers who speak particular ethnic minority languages and the difficulties in bringing together a full cohort of children with the same first language. In Sri Lanka, state schools are Tamil medium or Sinhalese medium and it is Tamil-speaking children who are predominantly affected by the conflict. The need is for sufficient government-recognized teachers who can teach in the Tamil medium: teachers are almost never bilingual in the two languages of Sinhalese and Tamil.

6.2.3 Living in an urban slum

In the cities in Bangladesh, access to government schools can also be a geographical issue. Governments cannot build schools in slum areas on private land where people are squatting and they may in any case be reluctant to endorse the establishment of unplanned communities. In Bangladesh, half the urban population growth in Dhaka is fuelled by migration from the rural areas, and as new migrants follow relatives, or people from the same village, slums increase in area and in overcrowding and their inhabitants are increasingly marginalized. Urban migrant workers in any case lack official documentation and legal status.

Numbers in urban slums are also increased by the natural disasters to which Bangladesh is prone, such as the flooding in 2007. An estimated 30,000 people each year are made homeless by disaster and they typically seek shelter in the cities. Basic services such as sanitation and electricity in slums are rare or nonexistent (Aparajeyo Bangladesh, c.2005), and government schools, according to the urban child-rights organization Aparajeyo, 'are simply not available'. For the children of migrant workers, the geography of access is complicated by the fact that parents are moving to seek employment. Aparajeyo highlights issues of this 'floating/migratory life', complicated by transience and the separation of the parents.

Aparajeyo also highlights, through its work, the plight of female-headed households in urban slums, living close to starvation and with little security (Aparajeyo Bangladesh, 2007). It appears that the children of female-headed households are a particularly vulnerable group, and may constitute a disproportionately high number of the nation's poorest children. So, in the urban slums of Dhaka and other major cities in Bangladesh it is not simply the geography of access which can affect enrolment and attendance, but factors such as the lack of parental involvement – because a single parent has to focus on generating the family income – and the lack of a close-knit community supporting the child's education.

6.2.4 The difficulties for working children

The need for urban children to contribute to the family can also be paramount. Altogether it is estimated that in Bangladesh about 40% of urban slum children aged 6–10 are out of school

(Education Watch, 2005; Aparajeyo Bangladesh, c.2005) and government sponsored projects such as Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) acknowledge 'the large disparity between the levels of education of children living in the urban slum areas and those living in other areas of the country'.

Urban working children may attend irregularly or drop out of school because there is not enough purpose in education and there are more pressing needs. There are many opportunities in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet for paid employment such as brick-chipping, working as 'helpers' in shops or on buses, domestic labour, selling newspapers or flowers, or the production of items to be sold. For the children of Dhaka's Aminbazar, brick-chipping can offer a better income than other jobs on offer and is typical of the occupations of children whose families have migrated into Dhaka. The family circumstances of the need to move to the city – debt, illness, the death of the breadwinner – make earning money the top priority and even TK25 (US$0.40) a day or TK500 (US$8) a month can make an important contribution to the whole family income.

A working child in Bangladesh

The needs of urban working children are for schooling close to where they live and work, for flexible school hours negotiated with the school, and for a short enough school day – typically three or four hours – which they can fit around the work that they do. From the many discussions in our fieldwork, their pressing need is also to have an education which fits their situation and includes training for achievable goals (such as tailor, candlemaker or mechanic). Some of the children we talked to aspire to be doctors and lawyers, but there seems little hope for such ambition. Education in vocational skills leads to the realistic possibility of better employment. The children also benefit from education, which helps them to cope with the reality of their lives: lack of hygiene and sanitation, the dangers of drugs and alcohol, their rights as individuals.

For working children living in rural settings, dropout can follow a seasonal cycle where children take time off to help the family plant seeds or help with the harvesting, or perform the routine tasks of looking after animals. On the tea plantations, such as those in Srimangal, so many of the children have left school to pick tea that it is recognized employment with official rates of pay and annual leave. In Sri Lanka, while our main focus is on children dropping out because of the conflict, it is worth noting that there are some general concerns about the effect of child labour on completing basic education. Rural child labour is a particular issue affecting nearly half a million children under 15 (although most are said to be also following some form of education). There are also concerns in Sri Lanka about the numbers of children in domestic service. Pressures to contribute to the family income are exacerbated during and after conflict situations because other forms of income generation (the family livestock, the rice crop) may have been lost.

Child weavers in Bangladesh

Children also need encouragement and support in their learning from the wider community. Most of the parents we talked to in our study, parents in both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and parents in urban and rural settings, had had relatively little education themselves. While one or two parents in Bangladesh had completed Grade 3, most had dropped out within the first two years of primary school and, in many cases, within a few weeks of enrolling. In Sri Lanka, one or two had reached as far as Grade 8 but completion of Grade 3 or 4 was more typical and some had had no education (a reminder that conflict and displacement has also affected the education of the previous generation).

The need for the whole family to see a purpose in education is paramount. Currently, for children on the tea plantations for example, even if a school building is within reachable distance, the family may find it hard to see a meaningful purpose for education because economic pressures lead to the child following parents into tea picking. Community centres which support learners of all ages and where basic literacy and neo-literacy are supported are vital in helping the whole family to see purpose in education. NGOs in Bangladesh such as Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) run more than 1,000 'gonokendra' community centres supporting learning; BRAC has helped set up more than 1,500 'gonokendros' (union libraries) of which 1,000 are now self financing and run by the local communities. Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka has a wide network of village learning centres.

Working children may be those in domestic employment, which is sometimes paid and often not paid. These are children, often girls whose needs are particularly hard to meet. Their working lives are out of the public eye and their duties range from helping out in the family home to babysitting younger siblings to acting as child-carers for the children of richer distant relatives to full-time heavy-duty domestic employment. For girls, particularly as they approach puberty, this can be seen as the path into their adult life.

6.2.5 Difficulties for children in times of emergency

For children who are caught up in disaster or conflict, the process to complete withdrawal can sometimes be more immediate than the gradual withdrawal from school which is typical of other kinds of dropout. With the floods of 2007 in Bangladesh from Cyclone Sidr, an estimated 10 million people were affected. Even in 2009, the much less severe Cyclone Aila is reported to have made half a million people homeless. The need to focus on short-term survival leads into the medium-term needs to rebuild the family infrastructure and income by seeding a new crop to replace the one destroyed and rebuilding the house. After Sidr, in numerous small settlements, schools which were flooded reopened within two days, a week, 12 days, a month, but with student numbers reduced by 30% or 50%. Even the smallest factor affects the capacity to continue – the TK2 a day needed to pay for the raft to get across the water, the damaged schoolbooks – as well as larger factors such as hunger, illness and bereavement.

Jane Cullen

A UNICEF temporary learning centre in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

Similarly, although all schooling is free in Sri Lanka, conflict increases poverty and brings extra obstacles to attendance at school. In fragmented families such as those displaced by conflict, children and young people have to care for siblings or work themselves. Expenses such as transport and the loss of school books and uniforms can be the catalyst for losing touch with schooling (MG Consultants, 2009). In conflict-affected areas, schools may close for a long time. In 2006, in Batticaloa, 324 schools were temporarily closed to accommodate IDPs. Over the next year, the education of more than 135,000 children was interrupted and by May 2007, 86 schools still could not reopen 'because they either sheltered IDPs or were considered to be too insecure'. And even when schools are no longer being used for other purposes, if the security situation is tense there is often little progress on reconstruction or repair or cleanup, so reopening them is further delayed (MG Consultants, 2009). During the fieldwork carried out for this project in the Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts in May 2009, for example, it became apparent that where schools in the district had been closed and the population displaced, the school closure was typically for 18 months or two years.

6.2.6 Serial disruption to education

In the conflict-affected areas in Sri Lanka serial disruption to children's education has been caused by serial displacement from one new location to the next, as the site of conflict has shifted or families are re-allocated to new camps. Each new placement may have only lasted a few weeks before a subsequent move, and families may be in continual transition for several months. This means a series of short-term accommodations of displacement and perhaps a year or more missed of any kind of stable schooling. Even when families have been settled in particular IDP camps, schooling may be fragmented, with children first in school in the camp (being taught by whoever is available) and then in 'host' schools in the local community. Where resettlement occurs, typically only a proportion of children will be back in their original school. In our field study examples of both primary and secondary schools, the proportion of returnees compared with the original student population was between 40% and 80%. It is clear that there is little robust accounting for the children who have not returned and that, although some children are undoubtedly being accommodated in other schools, a proportion has dropped out.

6.3 What would help hard-to-reach children stay in education?

6.3.1 Targeted financial support

In Bangladesh, with nearly all these groups of hard-to-reach children the lack of money in the family, and the need for the child to contribute to the family income, make a compelling case for financial support tightly targeted for the poorest children. Currently in Bangladesh, there is a government-run highly successful stipend programme for girls at secondary level: this has been instrumental in keeping girls in education at lower secondary (although less successful at SSC examination and at Higher Secondary).

In primary education in Bangladesh, there is a primary stipend programme (PESP) for a potential 40% of boys and girls enrolled in Grades 1–5 from the poorest households, and giving TK100–TK125 to the household. The stipend programme is for rural communities, for families with occupations such as fishing, and weaving, and cobbling, for the landless or land-poor, and for families headed by a 'destitute woman'. However, there are allegations of widespread corruption in disbursement of the sums, and criticism that up to half of the 5.6 million beneficiaries are not the poor. This includes over two-thirds of children from the poorest category not being selected as stipend recipients, and over a quarter of children from affluent households receiving the stipend (Molla, 2003).

In our fieldwork in Sri Lanka, we saw that any return to normalcy for conflict-affected families in the more remote rural areas is hampered by the lack of a complete infrastructure to resume their former ways of life, for example because of the loss of tools, livestock or crops. Financial support would undoubtedly make a difference to a family's capacity to support their children's education

particularly through the transition from primary to lower secondary education, where there is significant dropout. In Sri Lanka, the current system of scholarships at primary level are those in Grade 5 in which high marks provide entrance to the most popular junior secondary schools as well as funding to the student's family.

In our fieldwork interviews in Colombo, government officials have suggested that within the framework of the new National Education Act, the Grade 5 scholarship will be dropped and scholarships will be targeted from Grade 1 to the 20% poorest students. Stipends can make an important difference to the family's capacity to allow the child to continue. The difficulty is to ensure that they actually reach the hardest-to-reach families.

Janet Raynor

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Grade 2 children in a BRAC school

Jane Cullen

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A child in a temporary learning centre, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

6.3.2 Appropriate catch-up programmes

Hard-to-reach children need good programmes of catch-up education. In both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka children may have missed so much school that they cannot re-enter school with their appropriate age group. In Bangladesh, children often do not begin primary school at the designated age and as many as one in ten primary school students have to repeat a year.

In Bangladesh, programmes such as those organized by UCEP give catch-up by offering overage children eight years of curriculum in four years, completing the complete cycle of primary and lower secondary education for children from the age of 10 to 14. Similarly, BRAC schools offer catch-up within their general programme where eight-year-olds begin primary school two years late and complete the five years of primary education in four years. What is being offered in these two programmes is a particular understanding of what 'catch-up' entails, i.e. that it can entail a fresh start or long-term support. Children joining the UCEP programme have usually had some experience of school but it will not be assumed that they have achieved a particular grade or particular competences, and they will join the UCEP programme at an appropriate level after they have been tested. Similarly, what is offered in the BRAC schools is a complete programme of primary education, and although children may have had some previous experience of primary education they will start at the beginning with BRAC and follow the full four years.

In Sri Lanka, although national averages suggest a repetition rate of less than one in fifty, repetition particularly affects the poorest and rates are undoubtedly much higher in the conflict-affected areas. In a draft report on dropout in Sri Lanka, which included the conflict-affected areas of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa (MG Consultants, 2009), the main reasons for dropout given by principals and students were that children 'could not catch up with classwork' and were 'discouraged by having to repeat classes'.

For those at risk of dropping out altogether, being able to get back on their feet and re-engage with education after family, local or national disaster entails a kind of catch-up which meets their educational needs. What is available at the moment in Sri Lanka as catch-up education funded and organized by aid agencies assumes that students can quickly catch up with their peers and that they have been out of school for a matter of weeks or perhaps at most a few months. Development partners in Sri Lanka such as UNICEF and Save the Children in Sri Lanka (SCiSL) have organized important catch-up programmes for children affected by the conflict, with children able to attend sessions in school, out of school hours and/or at weekends. These programmes are undoubtedly meeting an important short-term need, but it does not appear that the long-term needs of children affected by conflict can be met by means of initiatives such as these. The fact is that conflict may have seriously affected children's education for several years: in our field study, as mentioned previously, children's own schools were closed for up to two years. The serial displacement of families set alongside the difficulties in organizing education in any temporary locations where there will be abrupt departures, repeated and sudden major influxes of new families and a shortage of all teaching and learning resources leaves little room for a coherent long-term plan for the education of an individual child.

What is apparent in both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka is that the longer the child has been in irregular attendance or absent from school, or in a temporary location because of disaster or conflict, the more complex the needs of the child. Long-term and radical alternative solutions are needed.

6.3.3 A perceived purpose

To make education attractive to those in hard-to-reach groups, it should clearly meet immediate needs, as well as provide preparation for future lives. Fitting school into a working day is important for many. 'Earning while learning' is a mantra of many of the open learning programmes in Bangladesh. Vocational education alongside literacy and numeracy gives working children and their families an immediate sense of a return on investment. Programmes which combine classes with actual production of a saleable product, for example, give children the opportunity to demonstrate in very concrete fashion the benefits of that education.

The Centre for Mass Education and Science (CMES) provides programmes for the children of recent urban migrants, especially girls, who have dropped out. In the CMES programmes, students learn market-linked trades such as soap making, tie-dye garment making, mushroom cultivation, and poultry farming, all linked to practical literacy and numeracy. They are also trained in basic business practices to help their self-employment (CMES, n.d.). In our field visit to Gabtoli, an urban slum area in Dhaka, graduates of the CMES programme for brick-chippers were enthusiastic about the education they had received and were able to discuss and demonstrate the tangible difference it had made to their lives.

What is also important is that children and their families perceive a wider purpose in education, with education that it is motivating, creative, and perhaps even fun and which has a sense of potential transformation. Education has purpose when it has wide recognition and respect among peers and elders. Purpose is also evident with education which has recognition within the wider community and is transferable to another location and context. Widely-recognized skills and qualifications are important in transforming people's lives.

6.4   The acceptability of ODL approaches for hard-to-reach children

6.4.1 Acceptability to children and parents

From all of the fieldwork we have carried out, it seems that children who are engaged in non-formal learning are finding value in it. They enjoy their learning and the second chance it is giving them. In Bangladesh we talked to a wide variety of groups of children now in alternative schools, but previously in government schools, and in general their message was one of appreciation for the education that is now available to them and some concerns (the expense, the distance) about their previous schools.

Children in the FIVDB school we visited appreciate the locality and the curriculum on offer. The children in the UCEP programmes expect real transformation in their lives and talk about future skilled employment as mechanics or with professional jobs in computing. Young people in the CMES programme have been able to set up their own small businesses and be self-employed. When we have talked to groups of parents about the local alternative education, for example those whose children are attending a BRAC school, we found no special distinction being made between formal and non-formal education, a sense of enthusiasm and gratitude that there is a local school available for their children and a wish for free and local secondary education on the BRAC model.

Janet Raynor

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A BRAC student

6.4.2 Acceptability: the potential of open schooling

In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, there is already a measure of acceptability of open learning with an established Open School in both countries. Interestingly in Sri Lanka, the Department of Open School (DOS) Open School is not part of the Open University as it is in Bangladesh, but a department within the National Institute of Education (NIE), the government body which trains teachers, develops curricula and conducts policy research. DOS was inaugurated in 2005 in acknowledgement of the number of dropouts from the formal system and to provide an alternative to the rigidity of the formal system, to help learners achieve 'basic credentials' and give them the opportunity of moving on to the next levels of education or of helping with their employment. The present number and geographic spread of regional centres (and students) is limited. But both the Ministry of Education and the Department of Open School are enthusiastic about scaling up the initiative, particularly by establishing centres in the conflict-affected areas of the country. Nevertheless, of the 13 centres currently open, only the three centres in Puttalam are catering to large numbers of IDPs, although there are current plans to raise awareness of Open School in the conflict-affected areas in Trincomalee district.

Evidence of the acceptability of the Open School in Sri Lanka is limited by its relatively recent introduction, the relatively small number of current centres and dependence on donor funding. However, it is providing education which has currency within the formal system and can issue end-of-year certificates for the government Grades 6–11 to students who have completed its courses. And although Open School nationally is catering to relatively few students at the moment compared with an estimated need, the centre in Puttalam for example is attracting large numbers of new students. The success in Puttalam of Open School, with 11 sub-centres opening and hundreds of students on waiting lists, suggests that Open School in Sri Lanka could achieve more widespread acceptability given the right conditions.

The Open School of the Bangladesh Open University is well established, has more than 1,000 tutorial centres spread across the country and runs a large-scale alternative secondary curriculum. The distance learning offered by BOU at SSC and HSC level (the equivalent of 'O' and 'A' Level in Sri Lanka), is, in the words of BOU, 'equivalent' to that of SSC and HSC provided by the state (BOU, 2004). BOU and BOU Open School have a long history of writing distance-learning materials and of training ODL tutors. There are currently almost 200,000 people aged 14 and above enrolled in its secondary programmes. In an important sense then, BOU's Open School is in a very good position to offer a real alternative in primary and lower secondary education, and its pilot Junior Secondary Certificate demonstrates its interest.

Nevertheless, it is important not to underestimate some of the barriers to acceptability. Notwithstanding the size of the BOU Open School programmes, the numbers involved are small compared with SSC and HSC offered through formal schooling. And as one of the top officials in BRAC said to us: 'Open learning is seen as a second class education and not so well regarded in mainstream; and distance education is not well regarded at all, needing decades of institution to be accepted.'

6.4.3 Evidence of scale and sustainability of programmes of open learning

What alternative schooling does not always offer are initiatives which can operate at a sufficient scale for all who could benefit from them. Some organizations argue coherently that the quality of their provision and the holistic addressing of an individual's needs can only be achieved through small-scale bespoke projects. In our field study, Aparajeyo and CMES in Bangladesh are both examples of organizations where the warm and inviting atmosphere of the environments which they have created and the personal contact offered through their programmes is linked to their small size. CMES see themselves as a 'hothouse of innovation' and this is possible only through positioning themselves as an organization of a certain size.

With other initiatives, such as UCEP in Bangladesh, there would be real advantages to becoming a much larger-scale organization. The programmes already have acceptance and their graduates are sought after for employment. The question is how much and how quickly they could increase the scale of their initiatives. They are currently going through a period of rapid expansion and expect to move quickly from more than 30,000 to 50,000 students. They have recently opened two further Technical Schools and a school for training those in hospitality and management. But we feel that there is much higher demand for their provision.

A large-scale project brings automatic recognition, particularly when it is organized or backed by government. In Bangladesh, the Basic Education for Hard to Reach Working Children (BEHTRUWC) has a long history as an initiative, with more than 10 years of implementation across its phases, and targets urban working children in the 10–14 age group who have missed out on primary education. Again, this is acknowledgement of the low educational achievements of poor urban children and the size of the migration of families into urban settings in search of paid work. The success of the programme is in terms of its large scale, with more than 6,000 learning centres catering to 200,000 urban working children and spread across all the major cities of Bangladesh. BEHTRUWC demonstrates some of the advantage of working at scale and the capacity of government to organize an initiative, which brings together a large number of development partners over an extended period of time. What remains relatively surprising with BEHTRUWC is the fact that it does not currently offer equivalence or easy transfer back into the formal system, and this would seem a target to pursue.

Another large-scale project organized by the government of Bangladesh does offer equivalence. The Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) project is run from within the Department of Primary Education (DPE). The initiative targets half a million children and aims for an outcome where 80% of learners can transfer into the formal system at Grade 4 or 70% can move into

Lower Secondary after completing the ROSC Grade 5. The ROSC project is described in detail in the Bangladesh section of the companion volume *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Country Studies*. Like BEHTRUWC, its success must be measured partly in terms of scale and the potential to scale up such an initiative even further, given the numbers of children dropping out from formal education. Another measure of the success of the ROSC programme should be is its capacity to reach the hardest to reach, as it should be bringing in some learners who have never enrolled in primary school.

Out-of-school girls, Weligama, Sri Lanka

6.4.4 Government acceptance

From the many discussions we have had with government officials in both Dhaka and Colombo concerning government acceptance of alternative forms of education and the work of development partners, there is wide recognition of the benefits that non-formal learning can bring to marginalized groups. In Sri Lanka a major focus of the new National Education Act is on disadvantaged children, including street children, the children of plantation workers, those in institutional care and children caught up in conflict. There is wide acknowledgement in government circles in Colombo of the help given by the development partners in catch-up education and in providing psychosocial education to children who have been traumatized. Cooperation between development partners and government is very direct. UNICEF has two consultants working in the Ministry of Education, one in the EFA Monitoring Unit and one attached to the Non-Formal Education Unit, and the development partner GTZ runs an office in the Ministry of Education. However, the sense so far of our work in Sri Lanka is official recognition of only a limited role for non-formal education. For example, it is being suggested within the NFE Unit that non-formal education be limited to those outside the compulsory school age-range (although this planning is, as we understand it, at a very provisional stage).

In Bangladesh the Bureau of Non-Formal Education has a direct coordinating role for development partners and local NGOs as demonstrated through its own programme BEHTRUWC (described above). The ROSC project, similarly, is a non-formal programme run from within a government ministry, the DPE. The National Plan of Action, published in 2003, has important objectives which relate to the greater recognition of the role of non-formal education and greater alignment of government and NGO activity. However, this amounts to better 'coordination' with and 'oversight' of non-formal education rather any suggestion of more close-knit working or greater collaboration.

We have found little so far in our fieldwork to suggest that the governments of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are likely to introduce major changes of strategy with regard to non-formal learning. However, with the time of PEDP III approaching in Bangladesh and a new National Education Act – the first since the 1930s – being drafted in Sri Lanka, there are opportunities to do so.

6.5 Effective ODL initiatives in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, during the time of our fieldwork, we looked at a range of initiatives and talked to a significant number of development partners and local NGOs. We report on key initiatives here and more are included in the companion volume *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Country Studies*.

Table 6.1 ODL initiatives in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

	Purpose	Types	Examples from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh
1	Para-formal and alternative schooling systems	Open schools Community schools Continuity schooling (for seasonal migrants and those in conflict and disaster zones) Basic education with vocational training	Open School, Bangladesh Open University Department of Open School, Sri Lanka BRAC, Bangladesh Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB) UNICEF Save the Children in Sri Lanka (SCiSL) Sarvodaya PlanDeutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) Underprivileged Children Education Programmes (UCEP) Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC)
2	Supporting successful transition to and performance in formal schools	ECCE Feeder or bridge schools	BRAC, Bangladesh Aparajeyo Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC), Bangladesh Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Bangladesh BRAC, Bangladesh
3	Raising the quality of formal and non-formal school by providing ready-made educational resources	Structured learning materials Schools radio and TV broadcasting	Home School Modules, Sri Lanka English in Action project, Bangladesh
4	Providing networking and training for intermediaries (e.g. teachers, broadcasters, mentors)	Teacher training and professional development by distance education e-networks for teachers	National Institute of Education (NIE) Sri Lanka (Distance Initial Teacher Training) Open University, Sri Lanka (distance and online teacher training)
5	Providing Communication for Development (C4D) strategies	Campaigning programmes – school readiness, health, nutrition advocacy Edutainment	English in Action project, Bangladesh (distance/technology based English language teacher training) Kothmale Community Radio Project, Sri Lanka

In general, from our range of typologies, it is 'alternative schooling systems' which seem to have most to offer in meeting the needs of hard-to-reach learners in Bangladesh and transitions back into the formal system which are the current preferred approach in Sri Lanka.

6.6 The importance of location, flexibility and progression

6.6.1 Location
What particular providers of non-formal education have done is to fill some of the geographical gaps between government primary schools. Friends in Village Development of Bangladesh (FIVDB) make an initial decision to locate a school using government survey data to identify the gap and carry out a house-to-house survey to see if there are enough primary-age children to enrol. This ensures that children do not have to travel more than 1 km – '10 minutes walk' was how the FIVDB children typically describe their journey to school. FIVDB local officials in Maulvi Bazaar made clear that the community decision to donate the land to build the school there had helped ensure local support and involvement. Similarly, this practice of canvassing support from the community is one which has been a feature of BRAC school building since the organization began. It is the community who make the decision on the school, and there also has to be a suitable candidate for local teacher before building begins. So the fact that alternative schools choose their location carefully is part of the reason for their effectiveness.

That is not to say that a school close by is itself the only solution. The catchment of children may change. The FIVDB school we visited in Maulvi Bazaar showed only just over two-thirds enrolment of its target 180 children: with the BRAC schools in Srimangal, there was evidence (by the number of out-of-school children we met in each village) of a much greater demand for the schools than is currently being met. In one village, BRAC local officials said that there were enough out-of-school children to fill another single-room school, if they could find a teacher and some more land.

With the BRAC Education for Ethnic Children (EEC) programme, it is the proximity of the school to the community that is important, but it is also the support for the community's first language and the amount of first language teaching in the early years of primary school which help the initiative to be particularly effective.

This was emphasized in our field visits, for example when BRAC Grade 2 students told us that they would like more first language instruction in Oriya. But Grade 5 students in another BRAC EEC school told us that they felt comfortable with the proportion and with the transition to Bangla medium, and in any case, Oriya was only ever their spoken language. BRAC's EEC programme is one of a number of alternative models aimed at the ethnic minorities. Others include ISDE and Caritas, both working in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

6.6.2 Flexibility

Flexibility in fitting in with the needs of the hard-to-reach children is a feature of many of the alternative school systems we looked at. The hours of contact may not be more than those within the formal system, and may similarly be offered in alternative shifts during the day. However, it is the rigidity of the three to four contact hours a day in the formal system which inhibits attendance, and it is the flexibility in school hours in the alternative schools which is considered important. This flexibility only comes about through community involvement in the provision. In Bangladesh this would mean programmes which offer contact hours with children's working patterns in mind.

The flexibility offered through 'earning and learning' is something central to many of the most interesting current initiatives for both rural and for urban children. The Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES) offers both combined academic and vocational courses. Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) is another example of an NGO which combines alternative academic education with vocational education through its Vocational Training Institute (VTI). BEHTRUWC is another programme which fits education into the children's work commitments. What such programmes do is accept the current conditions of the children's lives – i.e. that they work – and safeguard their capacity to contribute to the family income, while providing a potentially transforming education.

The work of Underprivileged Children's Educational Programmes (UCEP) is particularly interesting in this context, as UCEP is providing a complete package of academic, technical and vocational education for children while they work full-time, so that by graduation they have completed the eight years of primary and lower secondary education and gained a technical/ vocational background to their education. Those who move on to the UCEP Technical School can gain qualifications recognized by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board, and the national Secondary School Certificate.

The young people we spoke to at UCEP Integrated General and Vocational Education (IGVE) and Technical Schools in both Dhaka and Sylhet were enthusiastic about what is offered by this alternative schooling. In most cases they had entered the IGVE schools after two or three years of formal primary school followed by gaps of one or more years in their education. Typically UCEP students are working full-time and combining this with the three to four hours a day they

spent at UCEP. The young people in the UCEP Technical Schools are given a stipend of TK200 a month, which means, theoretically at least, that they need not work during their training.

6.6.3 Progression

Initiatives which provide progression offer real advantages for hard-to-reach children and their families. Primary education by itself does not necessarily give access to improved living conditions or employment for the poor. In Bangladesh, enrolment in alternative primary schooling, for all its perceived value by the children and their parents, brings with it the potential difficulties of transfer back into the formal system at secondary level. This is because in comparison with alternative primary education, there are relatively few alternative systems of lower secondary education. Aparajeyo is the only organization that we discovered with a programme which bridges the gap between primary and lower secondary education, by providing its own Grade 6 class so that children transfer into the formal system at Grade 7. They have an impressively high transition rate and the children who do well academically and are able to continue their education are sponsored by Aparajeyo to attend formal schools up to Grade 10.

However, the usual transition is from an alternative Grade 5 to a formal Grade 6. With graduates from BRAC schools for example (of whom there may be 150,000–200,000 in a typical year), the move is from the highly local one-room BRAC school into a typically 5 km distant secondary school. So once again, for families there are the difficulties of distance, of financing attendance at a secondary school and the opportunity costs of a 10–14 year-old not available for work. Rural families we spoke to talked of the expense of secondary school – one mother costed it at TK55 a month for each child with rickshaw fares on top. Another parent said that it was sometimes a case of school fees or food. So there is interest in any programme which could offer an alternative to the expense of formal secondary education which is reachable in terms of location and which also offers flexibility in terms of hours of study.

The extent to which projects and organizations are paying attention to the parameters of location, flexibility and progression are for us important markers of the potential for success of the work which they are doing. That is not to say that these markers are always easily defined. For example, flexibility in provision in Bangladesh is closely associated with the need for children to continue in paid employment in parallel with continuing their education. This is a contested view in right-based education, and in contrast, for an organization like MV Foundation in India, this might refer to the flexibility needed in dealing with the age-range of the children who are ceasing their paid employment and moving into or back into education. Similarly with progression, there is material difference in outcome between the highly localized and predominantly rural progression of most BRAC village school graduates and the transformative progression of a programme like UCEP, where successful graduates may well end up in skilled technical employment abroad.

Summary

Children in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka drop out of school for many reasons. During fieldwork in these countries the following ways of helping hard-to reach children stay in education were identified:

- **Targeted financial support**
- **Appropriate catch-up programmes**
- **A perceived purpose, with tangible benefits that include recognized skills and qualifications.**

To have a chance of being successful, open and distance learning need to be acceptable to children, parents and governments. In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka there is already a measure of acceptability, with an established Open School in both countries.

7 BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE: SOME EXEMPLAR CASE STUDIES

This chapter provides accessible short case studies of open learning initiatives, which, from the research, appear to provide examples of models of good practice for planners developing a strategy for basic education provision for the target groups.

The eight selected case studies are as follows:

1 BRAC Education Programme (BEP), Bangladesh
2 The Open Basic Education Programme, NIOS, India
3 Open School, Sri Lanka
4 The Flexible Junior Secondary Certificate, Bangladesh
5 Bridge Schools Programme, MV Foundation, India
6 Afghan Primary Education Programme (APEP), Afghanistan
7 The Community Organized Primary Education Initiative (COPE), Afghanistan
8 Underprivileged Children's Educational Programmes (UCEP), Bangladesh.

The first four are examples of para-formal schooling systems (Table 7.1) and the remaining four support successful transition to and performance within formal schools (Table 7.2). Contexts, programmes, organizational structures and funding methods vary, but where outcomes have been measured, most criteria – such as survival rate and employment rate after finishing – indicate the success of these programmes.

Table 7.1 Case studies of para-formal or alternative schooling systems

		Description	Target group	Providers
1	BRAC Education Programme (BEP), Bangladesh	An apex organization, providing a package of programmes for a range children and young people from disadvantaged groups. Also supporting other NGOs/formal system in teacher training, materials development, capacity-building	A broad range of disadvantaged children	Large INGO
2	Open Basic Education Programme National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS), India	An apex organization, providing three-tier progression routes from basic to higher secondary for a range of children and young people from disadvantaged groups. Also supporting other NGOS/formal system in materials development and capacity-building	Broad range of disadvantaged children	Parastatal
3	Open School in Sri Lanka – a pilot programme	Second chance equivalence schooling for lower secondary level for children/youth past the official age, but also attracting younger ages and those who did not complete basic education	Various disadvantaged groups	National Institute of Education + funding from other development partners, e.g. GTZ
4	Junior Secondary Certificate Bangladesh Open University – a pilot programme	Programme providing lower secondary level equivalence schooling for those who have had non-formal basic education which has not been recognized formally, e.g. in some rural community schools	Various disadvantaged groups but particularly for children and youth in rural areas	Bangladesh National Open University Open School, CAMPE, COL but with potential for scaling up using other providers, e.g. BRAC

Table 7.2 Case studies of programmes supporting successful transition to and performance within formal schools

		Description	Target group	Providers
1	MV Foundation Residential Schools, India	A proactive, rights-based feeder approach to take child workers out of work and mainstream into formal schools.	Child labourers	A charitable organization supported and funded by the Indian and Andhra Pradesh governments, charitable organizations (e.g. JRD Tata Trust, Sir Dorabi Tata Trust), INGOs (e.g. CRS, Action Aid) and UN and donor agencies (e.g. UNDP, NORAD)
2	Afghan Primary Education Programme (APEP), Afghanistan	A catch-up feeder (to formal school) programme using accelerated learning, Afghanistan.	Overage children (9–14) Out of school children Children in underserved rural areas	Consortium of MoE + Afghanistan NGOs + several INGOs and donor agencies
3	The Community Organized Primary Education Initiative (COPE), Afghanistan	Non-formal community schools integrated into the formal system, Afghanistan.	Children in underserved rural areas	CARE + MoE (central and district)
4	Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP), Bangladesh	Accessing accelerated basic education with technical and vocational elements and technical training, Bangladesh.	Working children of the urban poor	Directorate of Primary Education + Plan International with funding from DFID, World Bank, DANIDA, Save the Children AusAID, CIDA

The framework for selecting these case studies was broad-based, with an overall holistic approach to the learning and a clear vision of the endpoint for the learner. An initiative needs to offer more than a set of pre-prepared materials – ideally there should be considerable attention addressed to the following elements at least:

- giving priority to accessible location, flexibility in meeting the needs of the learners and providing progression routes to more education or work
- achieving national equivalence, recognition and certification
- scalability (either operating at scale or having the potential for scalability)
- replicability (where elements of the programme could be successfully adapted for different contexts)
- addressing a broad range of disadvantaged groups or a highly specific project geared to a particular group or particular access issue
- blended learning, ensuring the right balance, with locally appropriate use of any pre-prepared element (including home study) and regular face-to-face contact
- flexibility in meeting the needs of the learners, particularly in the negotiation of when and how learning takes place
- community participation to ensure support for the learning
- quality materials, which have been developed locally (which have 'approaches to learning' and instructions for using the materials built in)
- close attention to the detail of how the teaching and learning will take place
- inclusion of appropriate mechanisms for situational analysis, monitoring and evaluation
- high participation/collaboration throughout the cycle of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- capacity within the programme for further development and for linking to other programmes/schooling systems
- organized around the concept of a strategic partnership, including some form of governmental recognition, with partners bringing different strengths and pools of funding
- thorough initial training of mediators, facilitators, teachers
- regular professional development, with frequent face-to-face meetings among staff (e.g. once a month)
- reasoned, justifiable choice of mediator/facilitators, teachers
- attention to the motivation and accountability of facilitators.

BRAC Education Programme (BEP), Bangladesh

A package of programmes for children and young people from disadvantaged groups, ranging from pre-primary through primary and on to secondary level education, with specific sub-programmes for children with special needs. Both 'equivalent' and 'supplementary' education is offered.

Context

BRAC was established in 1972 to help resettle refugees in post-war Bangladesh, but later focused on a philosophy of poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor. In 1985, it started its first education programme for children and adolescents, reportedly after a woman in one of BRAC's adult literacy classes asked what provision could be made for their children. The new programme, starting with just 22 schools, had the overall aim of providing educational opportunities to those who were not served or were poorly served by the mainstream education system. The goal of BEP – as given in the BRAC 2007 annual report (BRAC, 2008), and within the overall BRAC mission of working with people whose lives are dominated by extreme poverty, illiteracy, disease and other disadvantages – is 'to make a significant contribution to the achievement of education for all in Bangladesh … to improve the quality and delivery of services in education appropriate to the needs of poor children, in particular girls, and to increase their access to those services'. Initially only operating at primary level, it has been extended to pre- and post-primary programmes. Initially operating only in rural areas, it now also reaches high-poverty urban areas, more remote rural areas with indigenous ethnic/linguistic minority groups, and children with special needs – all groups inadequately served by the state-supported system.

Features of the programme

The 'standard' BRAC primary schools (previously called 'non-formal primary') are still the largest part of the programme. The current primary component – picking up previously unenrolled children or early dropouts – successfully compresses the standard five-year programme into four years. It covers the national curriculum, using BRAC-produced textbooks in the early stages and moving on to those used by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board in the later stages. Each school is run by the same teacher for the same cohort of children for the entire four-year period, and has a maximum of 33 students in a class. There are no long holidays, and no homework. There are currently four types of primary schools operating within the BEP, which together provide education for almost one million students. These include the BRAC Primary Schools for children aged 8–10 on initial enrolment (c. 20,000 schools), the BRAC Adolescent Primary Schools for those aged 11–14 on enrolment (c. 4,000 schools), schools operated by partner NGOs under the Education Support Programme with financial and technical support from BRAC (c. 5,500 schools), and the 'Education for Ethnic Children' (EEC) schools in which initial education is provided in the mother tongue, with a gradual progression to Bengali-medium education (c. 2,500 schools). The 'Children with Special Needs' component cuts across these (25,000 children). There are also a number of Community Schools and 'formal schools' based on government models, where there is no government school but a high population density, and support for partner NGO schools.

A pre-primary component was piloted in 1997, and established in partnership with the government in 2002. The centres are set up in or near government-recognized primary schools, and help prepare children from disadvantaged backgrounds for school. There are currently over 20,000 pre-primary centres. Beyond primary level, there are a number of initiatives. BRAC, again in collaboration with the government, provides support for over 2,000 rural secondary schools. The support includes in-service training for head teachers and teachers of core subjects, computer-aided learning in those core subjects in selected schools, student-led mentoring for poor students in Grades 6–8, and financial support for gifted children from poor families that allows them to continue to higher education. There is also the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) for both girls and boys, in or out of school, with over 8,500 adolescent centres (kishori kendras). The Adolescent Peer Organized Network (APON), started in 1999, provides education on issues not normally discussed in Bangladesh society or schools, including areas such as reproductive health, early marriage, women's rights, HIV/AIDS and sexual harassment. The programmes are peer-led. In all of these strands, the vast majority of teachers, peer leaders and mentors are girls and women (except for the APON programme for boys).

Organizational structure

BRAC is probably the largest NGO in the world. The largest programme is microfinance, second is 'social enterprises' and the third largest is the BEP, which in 2007 took up 16% of BRAC's overall expenditure. Other areas include the Ultra-poor Programme, Health, Livelihood Development, and Relief and Rehabilitation.

Within BEP, each centre of learning has strong links with the local community, and is supported by BRAC at a number of levels. A typical BRAC teacher is female, from the local community, with 10–12 years of schooling, and willing to accept relatively low pay. She will have had an initial 12-day training course, and then participates in monthly refresher courses, as well as getting regular support from local BRAC staff. Branch Offices at the local level have Programme Organizers who act as grassroots-level supervisors for primary and pre-primary schools. The Programme Officers for post-primary components are supervised by staff from the Area Offices. Overseeing them are the Regional Managers, the most senior supervisors at the field level. All supervisory staff members are responsible for the development of plans for school operation, staff development, monitoring of schools and financial matters, and communicating with different stakeholders. At the highest level, in the Central Office in Dhaka, is a special unit for all BEP components, plus cells responsible for areas such as curriculum, materials development, teaching training, and research, monitoring and evaluation.

The BEP has increasingly strengthened its partnership with the government in recent years, particularly at pre-primary level, and working with formal secondary schools, but also in other areas such as getting agreement for primary-level BRAC graduates to enter the national secondary scholarship exam and linking with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs on programmes for adolescents.

Funding and costs

Once heavily dependent on donors, over the years BRAC has become increasingly self-reliant, and now finances about 80% of its work. However, the BEP still obtains most of its support from development partners, and various aspects of the programme – much of it in the form of pooled funding by the donor consortium – are supported by DFID, CIDA, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Oxfam, NOVIB, UNICEF and AusAID. Total BEP expenditure in 2007 was US$48,857,818. A year in a BRAC primary school costs about US$20 per child, with all costs covered by BRAC rather than the families. Estimates for government schools range from US$29 to US$52 per year. The estimated cost for each child who completes the full four-year BRAC primary cycle is US$84, compared with US$246 for each child who completes in government-recognized schools. The main cost-efficiency is on teachers' salaries, which are less than 40% of overall costs (compared with about 90% in government schools). This leaves more funds for smaller class sizes, books and supplies, curriculum development, training, management and support at the local level.

Impact and effectiveness

Many reports on BEP have acknowledged its capacity to engage with communities, maintain high standards, offer supportive supervision, offer continuous and regular in-service training, ensure timely delivery of supplies to even the most remote areas, to recruit, train and retain women teachers, and so on. To give an idea of scale: about 4 million children have graduated from BRAC schools, and there are about a million children currently in school. About 2.5 million children have successfully completed the pre-primary school level, and a further million enrolled. Over a quarter of a million girls belong to Kishori Kendras, and about 200,000 adolescents have had life skills training. An untold number are benefiting from BRAC support to rural secondary schools. And apart from prioritizing girls in the classes, the BEP has had a huge impact on the lives of women living in rural areas and working for BRAC. Among other things, they have greater visibility in the community, more mobility, greater confidence, and a regular income.

In terms of effectiveness, the sources noted below detail a range of facts and figures: 98% of all pre-primary students transferred to a primary school, primary attendance and completion rates are higher than in government schools, the drop-out rate is only about 6%, around 98% of primary graduates transfer to secondary schools, 78% of all pupils gain the required skills upon completion of their course, and BRAC students have been shown to outperform government primary school students on standard competencies. Apart from numbers enrolled, there does not yet seem to be much available hard data on the effectiveness of the more recent post-primary components, but with the ADP for example, various qualitative studies attest to the effectiveness in the eyes of those who have participated, who earnestly describe the positive impact it has had, and give examples of how they have effectively used the knowledge and confidence they have gained.

One of BRAC's greatest strengths is its constant monitoring and evaluation, and readiness to modify programmes to ensure greater impact and effectiveness.

Sources: *BRAC; Raynor (2004); Ardt* et al*. (2005); Chabbott (2006); RED (2006); Ryan* et al*. (2007); BRAC (2008); UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2008); Wahid (n.d.).*

The Open Basic Education Programme, NIOS, India

An equivalency basic education programme for children of 6–14 years and adults of 15 years and above, reaching 200,000 urban working children (aged 10–14) organized by the Government of India, operating in more than 6,000 centres in the six major cities of India.

Context

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) was established in November 1989 and has as its mission statement 'Education for all – greater equity and justice in society – the evolution of a learning society'. Within the broad framework of the formal school curriculum, it creates its own syllabuses and conducts its own exams. In 2002, NIOS extended its secondary, senior secondary and vocational provision to basic education level by launching an Open Basic Education (OBE) programme to offer a three-tier progression route. The OBE programme provides an equivalency programme for children and adults who are seeking basic education courses which are complementary to the formal system.

Description of the programme

The priority groups of the Open Basic Education programme include children aged 6–14 who have dropped out of school, or participated in a programme of non-formal education (most of them have competencies of Class II level, which need to be further consolidated), and adults (15+) including women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, daily wage earners, those living below the poverty line, people living in rural areas and in urban slums. The OBE programme is an equivalency programme for primary and upper primary levels and has three levels, A, B and C:

- Level A is equivalent to standard III of the formal school system
- Level B is equivalent to standard V of the formal school system
- Level C is equivalent to standard VIII of the formal school system.

Organizational structure

NIOS was established as an autonomous parastatal organization by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, November, 1989. NIOS acts as a national apex organization for open schools. It is a provider of education (with its own materials, external equivalence examination system, and study centres in many states) but also acts to accredit, support and train other providing agencies (NGOs) wanting to extend basic education to children. It also supplies its materials to under-resourced formal schools to supplement their teaching materials.

The OBE curriculum is provided through Accredited Agencies (AAs – currently 341), which have been approved by NIOS to run the OBE programme, and government and non-government agencies, e.g. the Army, Navy and Air Force Wives' Charitable Association in Delhi, Prathama in Mumbai, and Ramakrishna Mission in Moabadi. These Accredited Agencies perform both academic and administrative functions. They are responsible for registering learners and maintaining their records. The agencies draw up timetables for teaching and also arrange for competent staff to teach the course. Motivating learners to remain on the course and to appear for examinations is also part of the agency's role. In some states, nodal state level agencies have been identified to act as the linking agency as well as to monitor the programme.

Materials development

Under the OBE programme, materials are developed in a decentralized manner, i.e. by the district level accredited agency, to ensure they are locally specific. NIOS provides them with the curriculum and sample materials (text, audio and visual) and the agency has the freedom to either develop its own materials or adapt NIOS materials for every subject. The OBE curriculum follows the guidelines of the National Credit Framework but has space for local concerns and input. In the case of agencies catering to the 6–14 age group, they also have the option to use textbooks prescribed by the national and state educational councils. The curriculum is competency-based and the learners have to acquire proficiency in these competencies to qualify for a certificate. The curriculum for children and adults is similar but vocational education options and areas such as good parenting and reproductive health are included for adults. The choice

of vocational subjects is decided in consultation with the accredited agency, taking into consideration local needs. The NIOS curriculum at secondary level makes more use of self-study materials: it is based upon at least 100 hours of study time per subject. Of this 50 hours is at the study centre and 50 hours is self-study. However, in case of primary level where children are the target group, they learn at the agency centre in group situations.

Funding and costs
NIOS receives government grants but also charges (fairly low) fees (for materials and examination fees) to its students at secondary level. OBE learners, however, are exempt from fees.

Impact and effectiveness
After a pilot with 1,500 students in 2001–02, the numbers increased from 12,000 in 2002–03 to 21,000 in 2003–04, 41,000 in 2004–05, 60,000 in 2005–06, and 73,000 in 2006–07 and then declined to 53,000 in 2007–08 and 49,000 in 2008–09. In all years the majority (around 65–70%) of the learners are enrolled in Level A but, as would have been expected with progression, the numbers of learners are increasing in Levels B and C. In 2008–09 there were 27,000 learners in Level A, 13,600 in Level B and 8,000 in Level C.

Its qualifications are widely recognized. It has grown quickly and now attracts over 291,000 enrolments a year on its academic courses and 22,000 on its vocational courses (2006–07).

Flexibility

- NIOS now offers an alternative three-tier progression route from primary through to senior secondary level, with equivalency to formal qualifications at all levels.
- The registration period for each learner for each level is a maximum of five years.
- Learners have a choice of Hindi, English or a regional language as the medium of study.
- There is no upper age limit for any learner (however, the youngest age is six).
- The learning package consists of language, mathematics, science and social sciences as academic subjects and one vocational subject.
- Exams are conducted twice a year as decided by NIOS and the agency.
- A learner can take the first exam for any level after one year of admission and subsequently take the exam until successful.
- Credit accumulation is available.
- Learners can choose the vocational subject from the range of subjects offered by NIOS.

Equivalency
In the case of OBE there has been a conscious attempt to develop the curriculum and the learning materials so that they are equivalent to the formal education system. This was felt necessary, as this equivalence would give a chance to learners to move both vertically and horizontally from one system to the other. Hence the development of curriculum and materials has involved a close working relationship between the formal and open learning experts. The Open Basic Education programme has been recognized by the Government of India as equivalent education to the formal school for purposes of higher education and employment. The certificate enables learners in the youngest age group to find a place in the formal schools while some others have been able to find jobs or get loans for self-employment.

Target groups
NIOS operates on a national scale and increasingly has an international presence in countries with high levels of Indian nationals, e.g. Nepal, UAE, Kuwait and Oman. Through its accredited agencies, it can reach a wide variety of different groups of children, youth and adults in different disadvantaged groups. Its materials are used in conflict zones, for cross-border refugees and for reaching scheduled castes. It is also reaching out to girls and women through the National Programme for the Education for Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL). The programme also works in collaboration with NGOs running institutions for differently-abled children.

Sources: *NIOS (2007); Priyadarshini (2006); Sujatha (2002); UNESCO (2006).*

Open School, Sri Lanka

A government-run alternative formally-accredited secondary school programme inaugurated in 2005 for those who have not completed secondary education. Currently funded by GTZ and operating in 13 centres around the island.

Context
The Department of Open School in Sri Lanka (DOS) is a small department in the Faculty of Education for All in the National Institute of Education (NIE). The NIE was established in the 1980s to develop curricula, to organize initial teacher training and professional development for teachers, and to conduct policy research for the Ministry of Education.

Open School in Sri Lanka was inaugurated in 2005 and began its programmes in 2007. Its programmes target several kinds of marginalized groups of young people. These include:

- Muslim children who have been brought up in fundamentalist communities and attend religious schools which do not recognize the formal system of schooling
- Children of Veddah communities (groups which are said to be indigenous to Sri Lanka and which predate the Sinhalese and Tamil communities)
- Children of plantation workers
- Young people and adults in prison and in correctional centres
- Young people and adults who have been caught up in the armed conflict in the north and east.

Open School is aimed at learners aged 15+, the argument being that formal primary education is very successful and that it is at lower secondary level, Grade 6 onwards, and particularly at Grades 9 and 10, that students start to drop out in large numbers. Open School is described as a 'second chance' for those who have passed the age of lower secondary schooling. During the pilot, however, it seems to be attracting a wider age range than its official target group, with some much younger students being recruited onto bespoke programmes.

Description of the programme
Open School courses are offered in both Sinhalese and Tamil. At present there are three main levels of Open School courses:

- Level 1 which corresponds to Grades 6 and 7
- Level 2 which covers Grades 8 and 9
- Level 3 which covers grades 10 and 11.

For anyone who would have difficulty in terms of self-directed learning or language competency in beginning Level 1, there is a Foundation course. The formal secondary curriculum has been taken as a starting point and then materials have been developed which are more practical and more user friendly. Large print and illustrations are used and the books are A5-size to make then easy to carry. Materials are very pared-down and deliberately different from the formal textbooks used in secondary education in Sri Lanka.

Tutorials are run three times each month in a local centre by the 'resource person' (tutor) with each tutorial lasting three hours. Most tutorials run on a Saturday or Sunday, though each group can make their own arrangements and some are run in evenings. Built into the tutorial model is the idea that small groups of students (e.g. three students) can ask for supplementary tutorials and the tutor is available for these up to six times per month. The 'resource person' who tutors on the courses does not have to be a qualified teacher,

All the development of teaching materials is carried out centrally by the half dozen Open School staff at NIE in Colombo. One of the delays in development has been that of translating (in some cases re-rendering) materials into Tamil. One of the central NIE staff is bilingual in Sinhalese, but apparently this is highly unusual and this means that there is still a significant catch-up needed in materials in Tamil.

Organizational structure

Open School is run from NIE in Colombo by a Director and a small staff. Besides materials development and distribution, all the general administration of the programme is organized from Colombo. NIE staff regularly monitor tutorials and all appointments of resource person/tutors are with the approval of the Director. All distribution of materials is from Colombo out to the regional centres.

In charge of each centre is a senior tutor along with two administrative staff. Once a month, all the senior tutors attend a session In Colombo where the following month's programme and work-plan is discussed and agreed with the Director. Three workshops are run each year for tutors, sometimes in the regions and sometimes centrally.

Funding

Open School has significant funding from the German development partner GTZ, and current Open School plans seem highly dependent on continued funding from development partners. This is put forward as one of the reasons why Open School is at present operating only on a modest scale. According to the Director, there are no costs whatsoever incurred by the student. All materials and all costs of teaching are borne by GTZ. Each group of students is constituted to be as local as possible, so there are no transport costs to the centre.

In terms of the overall costs compared with secondary education in the formal system, this would depend on what was included. Open School students and tutors use schools and other premises in the evenings and at weekends and only for a limited time each month and this incurs low expense. However, the low number of current students and the fact that most of the secondary school level materials have now been developed would suggest that, currently, unit costs (i.e. the costs of developing materials divided by the numbers of students using them) are extremely high. As with other programmes of distance learning, unit costs decrease significantly as numbers increase.

Impact and effectiveness

The fact that Open School started so recently means that there are as yet few firm outcomes. Open School is operating at a small scale at present with current student numbers at approximately 1,400, spread across the 13 regional centres currently in operation. Its national aim is to open five new centres a year and any large-scale future growth may be hampered by limitations on funding, although there are indications from at least one of its centres that expansion is becoming rapid. It also appears that Open School may be attracting a wider age range than its official target group, with some much younger students being set up with bespoke programmes.

Until now there has been no specific large-scale push to cater for those caught up in the conflict, although the centres in north-west Sri Lanka are catering to a number of IDPs. There are as yet no Open School centres in the north and east – the conflict-affected areas – although there are plans to try to open centres as the areas in the east become more settled.

As a department in the government institute (NIE) which oversees the development of national curricula, Open School has the authority to provide nationally-recognized qualifications in terms of equivalent end-of-year certificates to those provided in secondary schools in the formal system of education. It is not itself an examining body, but students who have completed and passed Open School Level 3 have completed the equivalent of Year 11 and so can be entered for 'O' Level examinations run by the Department of Examinations, and take them in the government examination centres alongside students from formal secondary school. However, the DOS programmes are aimed at accreditation rather than preparation for 'O' level and it is not yet clear (as no students have yet reached the end of Level 3) whether students would be sufficiently prepared to take 'O' Levels on the basis of the existing programme.

Source: *NIE DOS: www.nie.lk/os/dept41b.html.*

The Flexible Junior Secondary Certificate, Bangladesh

Flexible learning for young people who cannot attend formal schools at Lower Secondary level so that they can study the three post-compulsory years – Grades 6 to 8 – of Junior Secondary school. Currently a small pilot project is running until 2010.

Context
Children who have had a non-formal primary education (Grades 1–5) in community schools or NGO-funded centres cannot transfer easily into formal secondary school because of the lack of recognition of their primary schooling. They may in any case need flexible learning if they want to continue with their education. A non-formal programme covering Years 6, 7 and 8 of Lower Secondary school fills a gap, particularly for young people in the rural areas, between non-formal primary provision and provision of non-formal Secondary School Certificate (SSC) programmes for Years 9 and 10.

Description of the programme
The Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) was launched in 2007 as a small pilot for 2,000 students. Currently it is scheduled to run until 2010. In the programme there are seven compulsory courses: Bangla, English, Mathematics, Social Science, General Science, Business Studies and Religious Education, and students also choose three vocational courses from a selection which ranges from mushroom culture to phone mechanics. The learners have to complete both general and vocational components to obtain the certificate.

The courses are distance education with materials written for study at home. There are also face-to-face sessions every fortnight and students attend local learning centres with tutorials which cover the content of the courses and which give guidance on study skills. ICT approaches are planned but limited to using DVDs in sessions at the learning centres.

Tutors on the academic courses in the programme are graduates and from local non-formal education. The tutors of the vocational courses have a minimum of five years' experience in their field. Tutors work under a lead tutor and supervisor with a team-teaching approach in tutorial sessions. Tutors have all received training in distance teaching, and the tutorial materials as well as the curriculum materials are designed by experienced faculty members from the Bangladesh Open University (BOU) Open School. The tutor's role is to mediate the curriculum to the learners and to help the student develop the discipline and motivation needed for self-study.

The curriculum materials were designed collaboratively through a taskforce consisting of members from the Open School at BOU, participating NGOs, Dhaka University and the Government of Bangladesh Bureau of Non-Formal Education. The Bureau of Non-Formal Education reviewed the curriculum and the educational materials.

Organizational structure
The JSC has come into being through collaboration between the Bangladesh Open University Open School, the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), which is an umbrella organization of NGOs, and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). Responsibility for the materials rests with BOU, and CAMPE has an organizational role with its participating NGOs.

The programme runs in 40 centres. There are 'lead tutors', experienced tutors who have had five days of training from COL and who act as mentors, especially to those tutors who have had no previous experience in open and distance learning. The lead tutor also assists the supervisor, who is the contact between the participating NGO and the JSC programme at BOU. Supervisors organize the programme at the learning centre including, for example, scheduling and staff training.

Funding and costs

This pilot project is jointly funded by The Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Impact and effectiveness

Upon successful completion of the JSC, students can enrol in the BOU Open School's SSC and HSC programmes, with the first JSC graduates expected in 2010. This gives learners a potential route through schooling which has been lacking. However, this small pilot of 2,000 students finishes in 2010 and as yet there are no firm plans to continue, although another small-scale version of the programme is under discussion.

One concern shared by many currently involved in the JSC has been that junior secondary students are not old enough or mature enough to be left largely to study on their own, with guidance sessions only once every two weeks. Distance learning is rare in Bangladesh and not easily accepted by local populations, particularly in more remote areas. BOU points to the fact that participants in its SSC programme may be as young as 14, and that many enrolled in the JSC will be over-age for this 10–14 curriculum.

One potential and very significant development is the current interest of BRAC University in the project. This is significant in part because of the large numbers of students (approximately 200,000) graduating from BRAC primary schools each year and because of BRAC's reputation for being able to innovate on a large scale. However, it is not currently clear whether BRAC's interest will translate into participation, and if so whether BRAC would participate in this particular programme or set up its own alternative through its own university.

Sources: *Akhter (2004); Rahman (2007).*

Bridge Schools Programme, MV Foundation, India

Based on the non-negotiable principle that 'no child works and every child attends full time formal school as a matter of right', MVF, located in Andhra Pradesh, has been working towards abolition of child labour in all its forms and mainstreaming children into formal schools since 1991.

Context
The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2004 estimated that there were more than 12 million child labourers in India. The MV Foundation's estimate is 17 million with 2 million of these children working in hazardous occupations/environments like carpet weaving, glass factories and match factories. The majority of child labourers work in agriculture and allied industries. Variations between Indian states are considerable, with the highest proportions of child labourers in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat.

Description of the programme
The Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF), established in 1981 to research issues relating to social change and transformation, began focusing in 1991 on the abolition of child labour via community advocacy and mainstreaming children, via different routes, back into formal schools and supporting them there. This approach is at odds with those who advocate night-time or vocational schooling for child labourers and bonded children. It operates on the following non-negotiable principles:

- All children must attend full-time formal day schools.
- Any child out of school is a child labourer.
- All labour is hazardous, it harms the overall growth and development of the child.
- There must be a total abolition of child labour.
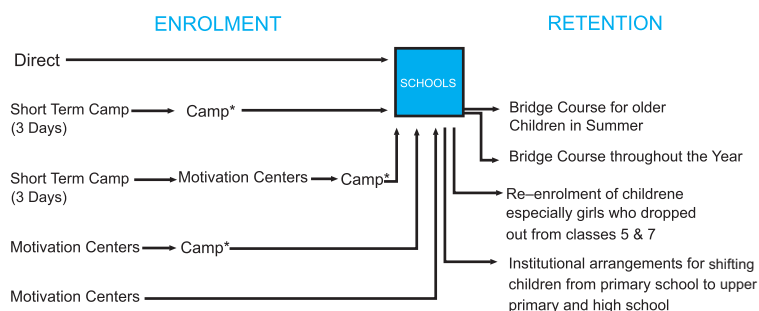- Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned.

Organizational structure
MVF works directly at community-level with all concerned in the process of withdrawing children from work and enrolling them in schools: parents, teachers, youth, employers, women's groups, elected representatives and the children themselves. This mobilization effort is made with a view towards transforming attitudes and creating an environment that is supportive of children's education. One key feature of the approach has been the conscious rejection of a hierarchical or directive structure that is imposed from outside. All efforts to build consensus and overcome opposition take place at the local level and the aim is to create new societal norms about children that are universally accepted. Villages wishing to join the programme do so of their own volition and in realization of the intrinsic worth of education. They come with the demand, looking for ways to meet it through processes and mechanisms that interface with their lives and their local capabilities. Motivation centres are established at villages which serve as a central focus to bring working children into school. Bridge courses, camps and residential programmes encourage children to attend schools.

MVF works with a small core team of 20, with about 1,400 paid staff working in the field and in schools. Many of these staff are first generation learners themselves and are fully committed to the work and values of the Foundation. There are also large numbers of volunteers.

DIFFERENT ENROLMENT STRATEGIES TO MAINSTREAM WORKING CHILDREN

ENROLMENT   RETENTION

Direct → SCHOOLS

Short Term Camp (3 Days) → Camp* →

Short Term Camp (3 Days) → Motivation Centers → Camp* →

Motivation Centers → Camp* →

Motivation Centers →

Bridge Course for older Children in Summer

Bridge Course throughout the Year

Re–enrolment of childrene especially girls who dropped out from classes 5 & 7

Institutional arrangements for shifting children from primary school to upper primary and high school

*Camps - 4 months for children in 9 - 11 years age group
12 -18 months for children in 12 - 14 years age group

Funding and costs

MVF's work is supported by the Government of India, Government of Andhra Pradesh, UNDP/NORAD, HIVOS, Catholic Relief Services, ActionAid, JRD Tata Trust, Sir Dorabi Tata Trust, and the Hyderabad Round Table. At the time of visiting MVF (February 2009) they were having to plan for the withdrawal of funding from HIVOS, one of their major funders.

Impact and effectiveness

Between 1991 and 2009 the Foundation worked in over 4,330 villages. In 1,500 of these villages, every child in the age group of 5–11 is attending full time school. In 600 villages all children up to 14 are attending school. Currently MVF is implementing the programme directly in the Ranga Reddy, Nalgonda, and Kurnool and Adilabad districts in Andhra Pradesh covering over 2,500 villages and in the city of Hyderabad. Nearly 250,000 children have been enrolled and retained in schools, while more than 7,000 bonded labourers have been released.

MVF has been successful in forming partnerships with other like-minded organizations, both in Andhra Pradesh and in the rest of India, and has been active in assisting and training NGOs to replicate its programme strategies. Its residential camp model is being used as a strategy for preparing dropouts, out-of-school children and working children for entry into the formal school system. The World Bank's District Poverty Initiatives Programme has also adopted this model.

MVF also provides technical support to various governments; NGOs and the MVF resource people have worked in Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. MVF has provided technical support to NGOs and governments in Nepal, Central America and Africa.

The challenge of replicability: mainstreaming a tried and tested model

The State Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh in March 2001 passed a resolution to end all forms of child labour and achieve Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in the state by 2004.

Building on models that had been successfully used by the MVF, the government set up a number of initiatives including residential and non-residential Bridge Courses for the 9–14 age group, children under DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) and Early Child Education Centres. By 2002–03, the State Government was supporting 3,376 Non-Residential Bridge Course (NRBC) centres and 385 Residential Bridge Course (RBC) centres. The State Government also launched a midday meal programme in 2002 in all the primary and upper primary schools in the state covering 700,000 children. This programme was initiated not only to increase enrolment but also to enhance retention through better nutrition levels and improve the quality of education in the schools.

In order to sensitize the community on the child labour issue and attract children into schools, community mobilization activities were also undertaken across the state. A large-scale 10-day community mobilization campaign known as 'Chaduvula Pandaga' was launched throughout the state in August 2002. In this programme, a large number of children were enrolled into schools across the state. A legal enforcement drive was undertaken to release child labourers and 5,442 cases were filed against the employers of children in different sectors.

Commentators evaluating the initiative criticize the high emphasis on the enrolment of children in schools rather than retaining them. Community motivation and mobilization were given secondary importance and undertaken as a one-off event. The dry ration (of grains) and midday meal programme encouraged fictitious enrolment in several places. Due to the fact that less attention was given to community motivation and mobilization, the residential and non-residential bridge course centres opened by the government on the lines of the 'MV Foundation approach' did not function very effectively. The high targets set by the higher officials encouraged lower bureaucracy to report wrong statistics. Several local NGOs who came forward to partner with the government in community mobilization efforts and mainstreaming of child labour through bridge course centres discontinued.

Wazir (2002)

Sources: *MVF (2003); MVF website: www.mvfindia.in/index.html.*

Afghan Primary Education Programme (APEP), Afghanistan

A catch-up equivalency programme for 'over-age' children in a post-conflict context to mainstream them and their mentors into the formal system.

Context
After the fall of the Taliban regime, the government initiated a 'Back to School' campaign and although highly successful, an estimated 3.2 million primary school-age and 'over-age' children aged 9–15 were out of school and had never had the opportunity of education.

Description of the programme
A USAID-initiated programme for 'over-aged' children focusing on Grades I–VI, using accelerated learning (AL) principles and practices where the full curriculum is covered in a shorter time, i.e. six grades in two years and 10 months. Certification of students and mentors was central to the programme's ultimate aim of mainstreaming both the students and teachers into the formal system. Following a pilot phase in 2003, this was scaled up and reached 170,000 children, in 6,800 classes with 6,800 mentors in 17 provinces (out of 32). Other capacity building included 680 Provincial Trainers, 51 Master Trainers, 115 AL centres, 22 village libraries, 20 mothers' groups and crèches. The project was wound up in December 2006.

The model had four operational stages:

1　Community mobilization – community mobilizers in each province assisted communities to establish an education committee and then identify student population and community-based mentors.
2　Establishment of curriculum/programme: age range from 9–18; maximum class size 25; classes with strict number of hours per day, six days a week with Grades 1–3 (four hours a day in summer, three hours and 10 minutes in winter) and Grades 4–6 (four hours 45 minutes in summer, three hours 45 minutes in winter). School times are selected by the community, e.g. morning, afternoon. Grades I–III completed in 13 months, grades IV–VI (subject to a placement test) could be completed in 22 months (i.e. 35 months for all six grades).
3　Cascade training – Senior Trainers trained a tier of Master Trainers (three in each province) who trained a tier of Provincial Trainers who trained classroom mentors. Five training courses were delivered using the cascade model for Grades I and II, III, IV, V, VI.
4　Monitoring and evaluation – to track project productivity, trainer recruitment and progress, mentor recruitment and progress, student characteristics and progress.

Student kits and sets of academic textbooks were provided by the programme. Mentors each receive a Teacher's Kit with items to help with class administration and lesson planning, e.g. MoE form for attendance, assessment and student ID, maps, landmine-awareness kits, timetables, flashcards. There was an accompanying Radio Teacher Training (RTT) strand to the programme, with a teacher's reference book, and regular teacher-training broadcasts (*It's great to learn*). Wind-up radios were supplied to every teacher. Teachers are encouraged to use child-centred pedagogy, e.g. group-work to solve maths problems, role-play for life skills subjects, pair-work, case studies, hands-on activities, games, drama and quizzes.

Organizational structure
The Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) ran as a partnership between Creative Associates International Inc. (CAII), Children in Crisis (CiC) (a British NGO), and Aguirre International, the Ministry of Education and five local Afghan NGOs (Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance [CHA], Afghanistan Development Association, Coordination of Afghan Relief, Afghan Women's Education Centres, and Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan). All partners collaborated in the overall planning process, but each partner had distinct responsibilities, with the Afghan NGOs acting as the operational implementing agencies.

Funding
No data available at present.

Impact and effectiveness

Over 140,000 (82%) of the original 170,000 AL students completed the full programme to Grade VI, of which 55% were girls. It had low student dropout (between 2–3% compared with 10–17% in MoE formal schools). Traditionally girls drop out most heavily after Grade III but here the dropout figure for girls, 4%, was only 1% higher than for males. A total of 6,616 mentors enrolled for the additional Radio Teacher Training support course. There was strong female participation: 55% graduates, 34–41% female teachers (3,278 at peak), 27% female provincial trainers (184), 22% female Master Trainers (11 out of 51), three female senior teachers (out of seven).

Perceived strengths of the project included: its contribution to capacity building (mentors, trainers and school equipment and resources); regular meetings, agreed protocols and commitment developed a strong sense of bond and trust between the partners. Although a partnership, it is perceived as an Afghan project as the main relationship is between the Afghan implementing partners and the communities and it is also an equivalency programme. The Afghan implementing partners' sense of ownership and responsibilities had a strong positive impact on the communities with which they worked. Strengths also include the spread of effective child-centred practices to the MoE, the inclusion of minority groups, and the high quality trainer manual and mentor guides which are a permanent resource and reference for teachers and mentors.

Perceived challenges included: lengthy processes with MoE to achieve recognition of AL student achievement and subsequent enrolment in mainstream schools. By-passing the MoE route, Children in Crisis prepared and got approved an education policy document for AL in 2006 which recognized that all ALP students who had followed the course successfully could enrol in MoE schools. The mentors' certification proved more problematic: Aguirre had deliberately linked the ALP training course to the new Teacher Education Department (TED) in-service course with a view to recognition of its certificate, but the TED developed problems in implementing the course. Although not officially recognized, the APEP certificate has nevertheless enabled some mentors to be hired by the TED on the most basic salary scale. MoE-approved didactic textbooks, rules and regulations (assessment, examination and record keeping) were not always compatible with more child-centred approaches and introduced a lot of bureaucracy; although the ALP followed the MoE curriculum which included periods for religious subjects, a USAID restriction was that religious textbooks and training for mentors could not be funded under APEP. This created tensions within the consortium and meant that the Afghan implementing partners faced a distrustful and hostile (in some cases, dangerous) environment in the communities. Various strategies were adopted including continuous negotiation with MoE for religious text provision, finding funding from consortium partners to print copies of religious texts, sharing texts, recycling texts, community funding texts. Security has been an ongoing challenge within the communities which has led to the closure of 68 classes in one area. Visiting teacher trainers and project partners using highly visible military personnel and vehicles have created tension within communities. The USAID logo is generally not used. Some of the districts were remote and mountainous, and cut off by snow or flooding, which made visits and delivery of school supplies difficult and compromised schedules. The rush to start-up meant that some newly-appointed staff had not been thoroughly vetted, community mobilization and decision-making was perfunctory, and financial strains were experienced by local implementing partners as a result of bureaucratic delays on releasing budgets. Competition for experienced Afghan personnel from a limited pool led to unrealistically high salary demands, high turnover of staff and often questionable commitment to the project. Identifying female teachers prepared to travel for training courses proved very difficult as was finding office staff with financial, computer or reporting skills both in the provinces and in Kabul. Mentors' salaries had to be similar to MoE teachers' salaries due to the longer hours, little funding coming from the communities, very little vacation time (taken up by training). Management and coordination with the provinces was problematic due to poor communications infrastructure. The need for documentation in three languages – Dari, Pashto and English – raised many challenges. Procurement of 6,800 school class kits, up to 43,600 teacher kits and 1,220,000 student kits proved difficult for various reasons: USAID restrictions on purchasing from Iran, quality issues, storage issues, damage in transport, delays in supplies. MoE textbooks were only obtained after lengthy consultations and delays.

Sources: *Deyo (2007); Nicholson (2007).*

The Community Organized Primary Education Initiative (COPE), Afghanistan

A transitional mechanism through which non-formal community schools in underserved rural areas, once established, are then 'handed over' to the formal system and thereby contribute to primary level capacity building.

Description of the programme

The Community Organized Primary Education Initiative (COPE), established by CARE in Afghanistan, aims to provide underserved rural populations with quality, community-managed educational opportunities. By 1998 the programme had established 64 community-based schools in three provinces (4,411 enrolments); by 2003 there were 479 COPE schools in nine provinces (45,514 enrolments). From 1998 to 2003 female enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment in COPE schools increased from 34% to 55%. In comparison with public schools, COPE schools have had higher survival rates to Grade 5 (50% compared with 31%) and lower dropout (8% compared with 10–12%).

Based in homes, mosques, tents, in the open air, COPE schools remove distance as a barrier to school access, as they are located in areas where there is no other school within 3 kilometres. The programme is accepted or tolerated by Taliban and local and national government because it builds on the traditional education system where instruction takes place in mosques or private houses, and their emphasis on community leadership and management, as well as teachers nominated and hired from local communities. Teachers are chosen on the basis that they are acceptable to all parents, have attained Grade 12 education and are Muslims of 'good behaviour'.

The programme has clear operational management guidelines:

1. Criteria-led procedures for selecting school sites and developing Village Education Committees (VECs):
   a) Target communities must demonstrate a strong interest in primary education.
   b) No other primary school within 3 kilometre radius.
   c) The community must provide a list of potential pupils, 30% of whom must be girls.
   d) The community must provide a space for the school (e.g. a local mosque).
   e) The community must be prepared to pay a teacher's salary and form a VEC.
   Where a community meets these criteria, CARE invites them to form a VEC and enter into an agreement with CARE. The VECs must provide and maintain the school space, select, supervise and pay local teachers, enhance school–community relationships and implement a monitoring and evaluation system.

2. Through a clearly articulated operational structure of project supervisors, community organizers, teacher trainers and data management staff, CARE offers COPE schools consistent and constant technical and operational support. Community organizers act to help communities mobilize resources and develop VEC capacity. This includes community-based participatory methodologies, gender issues awareness, school administration and conflict resolution. They also visit new schools every week and, after six months, once a month.

3. Once hired, teachers receive pre-service training in teaching methodology, subject content, materials development, and textbook use as well as in-service training on basic literacy and maths competencies. CARE made a considerable investment in teacher training both to improve the teachers' own knowledge of subject content and to introduce them to child-centred teaching methodology and continuous assessment. They produced five different training modules – pre-service, in-service, grade up, materials development and refresher. Training in multigrade teaching was integrated through all of the modules. Teachers are evaluated by VEC members, teacher trainers and community organizers. Teacher trainers monitor teacher development once a week during the first six weeks and then once a month afterwards.

The schools use the same curriculum and formal examination schedule as public schools. In the class the children are divided into Grade 1 – Grade 6 grade groups and the teachers divide their time between the groups in 45-minute classes. Typically, Grades 1–3 have a five hour and 25 minute day, while for Grades 4–6 it is six hours and 25 minutes.

The learning environment is more responsive to local realities in terms of their calendar, timetable, local language instruction and range of religious subjects. The schools allow for year-round enrolment so there are cohorts at different times. Books and stationery are supplied by CARE and include textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guides, pens, notebooks, slates, geometry boxes, blackboards, mats, maps, desks and chairs. Students in the upper grades receive supplementary reading materials including BBC publications, and health and peace education.

Organizational structure

COPE operates as a collaborative partnership between communities, an international NGO (CARE) and local and national government. CARE places an emphasis on the community's capacity and responsibility to manage the school and its finances and to find locally appropriate solutions to address barriers that impede school attendance.

Funding and costs

Recurrent costs (teacher salaries, training, travel, transportation, materials and supplies, home office support and salaries for COPE staff) for the programme averaged approximately US$1.13 million between 2001 and 2003. Start-up costs (technical assistance, materials and project design) and piloting from 1995–97 came to approximately US$62,918.

Table 7.3 Comparison of costs and completion rates

Year	Cost per student	Completion rate	Cost per completer
COPE schools	$38	50%	$453
Public schools	$37	32%	$704

Source: Balwanz (2007)

Impact and effectiveness

COPE schools have exhibited higher survival rates and lower dropout rates than formal school equivalents. They have survival rates to sixth grade of at least 50% compared with 31.5% in the formal system; the average dropout rate between 1998 and 2003 was 8% compared with 10–12%. In 2003, COPE schools had 12,000 girls enrolled and from 1998–2003, female enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment in COPE schools increased from 34% to 55%. In 2003, 531 (68%) of 783 graduates from the COPE schools continued to secondary school. The range of pass rates across grades over 2000–03 was above 91%.

Originally conceived as complementary to the formal system, CARE's emphasis shifted in 2002 towards working with the MoE to integrate, over time, COPE schools and students into the public system; as provincial and district education departments develop institutional capacity, the programme and its individual schools will transfer to government management. This is achieved in three stages: the introductory stage (1st and 2nd months) when agreements are drawn up between CARE and the community, and teachers attend the initial teacher-training course; the School Support Stage (Years 1 and 2) with regular monitoring of the teachers and further training of the VECs; the Phase-out-of-NGO-to-local-authorities stage (last six months of Year 2) with teacher trainers and community mobilizers visiting once a month. By 2004, 112 COPE schools were fully handed over while 125 were partially handed over to the government. In 2004–05, as COPE schools became integrated into the formal system, COPE school enrolment fell by 50%. When integrated with the formal system, the VEC becomes a parent–teacher association (PTA) with responsibilities for promoting education in the community and helping teachers manage student educational problems. Integration, however, diminishes the VEC input to school finance, teacher hiring and community school management.

Sources: *Balwanz (2007); Educational Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP):*
www.equip123.net/docs/CrisisProfile-Afghanistan.pdf
www.equip123.net/docs/e2-Afg_CARE_Case_Study.pdf.

Underprivileged Children's Educational Programmes (UCEP), Bangladesh

These programmes are for urban working children in Bangladesh and offer accelerated primary and lower secondary education with technical and vocational elements followed by the chance of full technical training in skills such as textile weaving, plumbing and car mechanics.

Context

For working children of the urban poor who have missed out on several years of primary education in Bangladesh, the Underprivileged Children's Educational Programmes (UCEP) offer a 'second chance' programme of primary and lower secondary education for girl students who are at least 10 years old and boy students who are at least 11. According to UCEP, the eradication of child labour is effected by providing education and skill training while the child continues in paid employment, so that during their UCEP education, the income generated by the child continues to support the family (earning and learning). The major categories of such children are domestic servants, hawkers, factory workers, shop-assistants, rag pickers, porters and day labourers.

Description of the programmes

The programmes, started in 1972, offer an 'integrated general and vocational education' (IGVE) where the eight years of primary and lower secondary are covered in four years with an 'abridged national curriculum with the basics of technical education'. Altogether there are 48 IGV schools in Bangladesh and eight Technical Schools, generally operating in a local cluster of four IGV schools with one Technical School. At present the programme covers 32,000 children with centres in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal. UCEP IGV schools follow the curriculum and textbooks prescribed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and students follow the mainstream subjects: Bangla (mother tongue), English, mathematics, vocational, social environment and hygiene. The eight Technical Schools operate in Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi and run training programmes in 16 trades linked to the employment market in the area where the school is located. The Technical Schools run two four-hour-10-minute shifts per day, again to suit the employment needs of working children. The gender balance in the schools is 50:50, although girls cluster in certain trades such as tailoring, wool knitting and electrical repair, and there is a preponderance of boys in auto-mechanics and plumbing. Children are selected into the IGV school programme by entrance test, and only the top students move from IGV into the Technical Schools.

Organizational structure

UCEP operates as a hierarchy with a Director General and central management team, a UCEP Headquarters in Dhaka and divisional management teams in each of the urban areas where UCEP operates. There is a Board of Governors. From small beginnings, UCEP has recently achieved significant growth and is set for further expansion.

Funding and costs

In 2008, mainstream UCEP programmes were being supported by a consortium of donor partners composed of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), DANIDA, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Save the Children Sweden-Denmark. New partners coming into the funding include the Netherlands, AusAID and CIDA. Partners for special projects include Plan Bangladesh, the Directorate of Primary Education, funded by the World Bank and SDC. Other funding sources include beneficiaries' contributions, sharing of cost by industries, sale of training products, and philanthropic donations. A UCEP education costs significantly more than its government equivalent. For example, TK13,810 is the annual cost of a government vocational education at a technical centre and the equivalent is TK30,000 in UCEP. However, UCEP emphasizes its better outcomes in terms of employment opportunities.

Impact and effectiveness

UCEP cite their high attendance rates (94%) and their employment rates for their students after finishing (95%) as evidence of their success. They work with local employers in each of their urban centres to guarantee a job for their graduates. Recently, UCEP students have started to sit government examinations. For example, 158 UCEP graduates took the Secondary School Certificate (Vocational) examination in March 2008, conducted by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board, and 151 were successful. This opens up 'the prospect of linking UCEP Technical training with the mainstream of National Technical Education' (UCEP website).

4

MOVING ON TO POLICY, PLANNING AND COSTING

8 WHAT ARE THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AND PLANNERS?

Planners face an enormous challenge in devising strategies for reaching the hard core of children with no access or limited access to basic education. If substantial progress is to be made in time for 2015, then they must address this urgently and in ways that make a substantial difference. Used judiciously, open and distance learning can make a strong contribution to basic education in a variety of ways, for different purposes, for specific groups, for preparing in advance for emergency or conflict situations, for raising the quality of both formal and non-formal provision and for creating new, more flexible routes to the same or recognized qualifications offered in formal schools. For planners who wish to take advantage of ODL, this chapter outlines some of the broad policy steps for achieving this, including the mapping of access problems, the mapping of providers and the potential synergies between the formal and non-formal sectors.

8.1 Wider context of ODL

Open and distance education in its various forms (including correspondence education, educational broadcasting-led distance education, multi-media distance education, and e-learning) is extensively used as an essential component of educational provision worldwide. Applied to non-formal education, the provision of alternative routes of access to primary, secondary and tertiary education, the strengthening of schools-based education, professional, vocational and technical education, continuing, adult and lifelong education, etc., it has over the years proved its worth as a means of expanding educational provision (often to new and disadvantaged groups) without diminishing, and often by improving, the quality of what is offered. It has also in appropriate circumstances done this at a lower cost per student than that achievable through traditional face-to-face methods.

This does not mean that ODL is never either poor quality or expensive: it can be both. But with proper planning and quality assurance and control mechanisms, it has proven its worth – so much so that its methods have been widely adopted by traditional educators faced by falling budgets and pressures to expand. As a result many of the distinctions between face-to-face, ODL, and

e-learning have been lost as academics have drawn on all three 'approaches' to design courses to meet the specific needs of a target population. This 'blended learning' approach is now the norm.

Although many people see e-learning as a new education paradigm, different from both ODL and face-to-face education, it is arguably just another form of education reliant on technology for its delivery, and hence a form of ODL along with correspondence education (ODL reliant on print), and educational broadcasting (ODL reliant on radio or television).

8.2 A starting point

As we have highlighted in earlier chapters (particularly in Chapter 2), the impact of EFA has been to increase awareness that all children and young people have the right to benefit from basic education and this has given a higher profile to many of the groups who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. There is also now a greater acceptance of the fact that formal schools cannot reach all children and there is therefore a need for non-formal alternatives which can be tailored to local and family circumstances.

The starting point for any planning needs to be the development of parameters for minimum criteria and conditions for good basic education in relation to the personal development of children and young people. These parameters would lay down the basis for identifying basic learning outcomes and thus the construction of core curricula and set criteria for quality and equity in provision. Some of the barriers to inclusive education are poverty, deprivation, disabilities, conflict and work and family responsibilities (especially for children living with HIV/AIDS). The removal of social exclusion, coupled with the right to basic education, is the starting point for addressing the needs of children in such circumstances.

Another starting point for planners needs to be a stock-taking of the multiple forms of basic learning: NFE, community and religious schools, skills development and ODL. These need to be in the form of meaningful analytic data including the basic characteristics of the provision, learning programmes, factors affecting quality, cost structures, management, governance and support arrangements and its articulation with the formal education system. It is important to understand what makes an initiative successful, partially successful or a failure. With a vision of basic quality and equivalent outcomes, room can be made within the system to include other forms of basic education including community schools, religious schools and other open learning variants.

Policy makers and planners will find that Hoppers' paper on *Non-formal education and basic education reform: a conceptual review* provides a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the issues (Hoppers, 2006).

8.3 Understanding the potential role of open and distance provision

For planners, perhaps the second step is to understand what can be done at the basic education level through open and distance education. Open and distance provision at the basic education level has always been able to address the needs of:

- individuals who are:
  - out-of-school but who can be reached at home or in institutions (Sri Lankan Open School)
  - in-school but cannot access the courses they want (independent study of specific subjects supported by a non-subject specialized mentor, e.g. National Extension College, UK)

- groups of individuals who:
  - are out-of-school, by setting up provision that they can reach (e.g. Telesecundaria, Mexico; NIOS, India)

- are in-school, but who lack access to subject specialist teachers (e.g. National Extension College, UK) and trained teachers in certain subject specialisms (e.g. Radio Matematicas, Nicaragua)
- lack access to national qualifications frameworks.

8.4 Overcoming social exclusion

The third step is to map the circumstances that act as barriers to individuals and groups, and then to look at how these barriers might be overcome by using open and distance learning methods. CREATE's zones of exclusion provide a useful framework for examining this. This is set out earlier in Section 2.3.3, 'Meaningful basic education'.

Tables 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 identify some of the capacity, financial and access barriers that exist and indicate how open and distance learning methods might help. In some cases, however, the barriers cannot be broken down directly by open and distance learning methods, but need instead facilitative structures within which distance education systems can flourish. Examples would include getting rid of barriers that prevent or make it difficult for distance teaching programmes to prepare their students for national examinations and qualifications (by, for example, removing restrictions governing the prior educational qualifications of students embarking on senior primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary level qualifications; removing regulations tying qualifications to the completion of a fixed number of years of schooling, disadvantaging those who drop out of school on a temporary basis; and drawing specific distinctions between qualifications gained by one route – traditional schooling – as against another – open schooling). Also, of course, distance education methods may be used in conjunction with traditional classroom approaches in a variety of blended learning approaches.

Table 8.1 Use of open and distance education to overcome capacity barriers

Access barriers	Conventional solutions	Use of open and distance education methods
Lack of schools (including situations where existing schools have been closed/destroyed)	Provide more schools	Set up satellite schools staffed with facilitators to teach to structured curricula with distance education materials as the main medium of instruction.
Lack of school places	Increase capacity of schools	Use distance learning provision coupled with facilitators to support learning, thus increasing the number of places without requiring a proportionate increase in teachers.
Class sizes too big	Lower pupil:teacher ratio to 40:1 or less	Use distance learning provision coupled with facilitators to support learning, thus increasing the number of places without requiring a proportionate increase in teachers.
Lack of trained teachers	Train more teachers	Use distance learning materials coupled with facilitators to support learning to teach teacher-shortage subjects. ODL can also be used to train teachers – either in initial teacher-training programmes, or more crucially on the job through in-service teacher training programmes.
Poor quality and/or teaching not available in mother tongue	Enhance quality by providing excellent learning materials in appropriate language with quality content	Use distance education materials to replace poor teaching and poor content or to meet the needs of different language groups.

Table 8.2 Use of open and distance education to overcome access barriers

Access barriers	Conventional solutions	Use of open and distance education methods
Children cannot get to schools because none situated close by, or in a conflict or emergency situation schools are used for other purposes, destroyed or too dangerous to travel to	Provide more schools	Set up satellite schools staffed with facilitators to teach to structured curricula with distance education materials as the main medium of instruction.
Children unable to attend school	Teach children at home	DE solution: Provide learning materials so that parents or home teachers can teach children at home. Enable girls constrained by family and cultural mores from attending a public school to access education at home.
Children drop out from school before completion	Address quality issues in order to improve retention/reduce dropout	Provide flexible routes to education to enable likely drop-outs to circumvent some of the causes by for example: ● flexing course loads and pace ● circumventing space and time barriers to access.
	Provide bridging programmes to enable children to catch up and re-enter normal schools	Use distance education to provide bridging programmes.

Table 8.3 Use of open and distance education to overcome financial barriers

Financial barriers	Conventional solutions	Use of open and distance education methods
Family unable to pay school fees and participation costs	Support family to meet costs of education, either in whole or in part, through stipends	
	Extend period of schooling over a greater number of years so that cost of child's education is spread over a greater number of years Support family to meet costs of education, either in whole or in part	Open learning solution: Adopt modular approach with flexible regulations so that children can spread their education over more years, while allowing those who wish to proceed at a faster rate to do so.
Opportunity costs of child's participation deemed to be too high an economic price for the family (e.g. because of cost of schooling, because attendance affects family income when child cannot work)	Pay a child's attendance allowance to keep individual children in school	
	Extend period of schooling over a greater number of years so that cost of child's education is spread over a greater number of years	Open learning solution: Adopt modular approach with flexible regulations so that children can spread their education over a more years, while allowing those who wish to proceed at a faster rate to do so.
	Adopt flexible school hours	Open learning solution to enable children to combine work with schooling.

8.5 Scoping the characteristics of the children

Early on in the planning process, it will be important to identify the specific categories of children whose needs are to be addressed (e.g. children in rural areas living at too great a distance from existing schools, refugees, girls prevented by cultural practices from attending secondary school, street children), and then scope more precisely the nature of specific communities. This scoping exercise will involve identifying some or all of the following characteristics:

Age and educational stage (and prior educational qualifications) of the children, including numbers by age and stage (note that age/stage may not coincide, in which case the nature of the educational experience – stage – may need to be adapted to fit with age):

- kindergarten
- primary age
- junior secondary
- senior secondary.

Geographical and physical location

- where are the children are located
  - urban
  - rural – high density
  - rural – low density
- density of population (this may impact on the possibility of setting up learning centres and on the size of centres and classes)
- proximity to transport to school/barriers affecting transport to school
- time to travel to school assuming various forms of transport/movement
- transmission shadows in mountainous terrain affecting reception of broadcast materials.

Climatic and seasonal factors affecting participation

- extreme cold/heat, flooding
- agricultural seasonal labour demands

Family circumstances

- family structure: two-parent/guardian, one-parent/guardian, no parent/guardian
- number of dependent children
- carer status of family members
- literacy/educational levels of household members
- socio-economic status
  - employment status of family members
  - income
  - disposable income
- living space/accommodation/utility access
  - none (street children)
  - temporary structure
  - permanent structure
  - access to water, electricity, etc.
  - access to space to study
- ownership/access to
  - radio
  - television
  - reliable postal/courier services
- factors affecting ability to study
  - malnutrition
  - visual, hearing, and mobility impairments
  - health issues (including lack of facilities for girls when they are menstruating)
  - seasonal migration of families
  - first language different to language of instruction.

Safety and security considerations affecting children at home, at school, and en route between the two

Some communities have highly specific access problems which need careful consideration:

There is a stark absence of policy debated on the peculiar situation of migrant labourers, who belong neither to their villages not to the destination areas. They forgo the government welfare benefits in their villages, and cannot access these at the migration sites either. Migrant labourers often cannot participate in elections and census data collection, thus resulting in their thorough disenfranchisement. This labour force is 'invisible' as migration sites are located in remote areas, far away from habitations and the general public view. Research on this subject is highly limited as is any reference to this category of the population in media and development discourse.

Smita (2008:4)

8.6 Choosing methods and technologies

Once the nature of the target audience has been clarified, it will be possible to choose the appropriate media and technology. For the purposes of this study a medium is taken to be a generic form of communication associated with particular ways of representing knowledge, *viz.* text, video, audio, face-to-face, and a computer-based environment involving virtual realities, modelling, hypertext, etc. (Bates, 1995). A technology is a specific means of delivering a medium (e.g. audio, radio, audio-cassettes, telephone, audio-conferencing, CDs, etc.).

In choosing media/technology, planners will need to consider many issues (Bates, 1995), some of which are:
- Access to the technology – either at home or in local centres or through commercial providers.
- Cost – different technologies incur different orders of cost and have different cost structures. Planners will also need to consider:
  - the absolute cost of the technology to providers and users
  - the relative efficiency of each technology given the number of students and level of usage.
- Teaching and learning – technologies differ in the ways in which they present content or inculcate skills.
- Interactivity and user-friendliness – some technologies are best used to present information, while others allow people to communicate with each other. Communication can be rapid (face-to-face discussion, telephone) or slow (postal services), synchronous (telephone) or asynchronous (postal communication), or synchronous/asynchronous as required (computer-based conferencing).
- Organizational issues – the use of technology has widespread repercussions for organizations, which have to set up structures to install, maintain and replace the technology, and develop, produce and deliver the materials and learning situations that they enable.
- Novelty – there is always a tendency to focus on technology at the leading edge, but not all new technologies survive and not everyone has access to technologies – particularly new ones. Access and cost and sustainability are key issues here. In practice, then, it is usually best to use technologies that are well embedded in the market.
- Speed – one of the issues that govern choice of technology is the frequency with which the materials carried by a technology need to be updated. Where materials need to be updated rapidly, there is advantage in using a technology that allows this to be done.

8.7 Defining the point of delivery

A crucial decision is whether the educational programme is to be delivered:
- within existing schools (perhaps opened up to allow for a three-shift system – morning, afternoon, evening)
- in a new school or learning centre of some type
- at home.
It is, of course, open to planners to mix these three options.

8.8 Defining the level of openness

Another area for decision-making is in the degree of openness allowed. In general, the greater the level of flexibility, the more likely it is that children and their families will be able to fit access to basic education into their lives. Key areas to consider are:

- Flexibility as to age of entry/completion, including delayed start by age, and accelerated/ slowed progression.
- Modularization of courses/subjects coupled with credit accumulation, with students allowed to take any number of subjects, being examined on a subject-by-subject basis as and when they are ready, and being able to accumulate credits towards particular qualifications at a rate that suits them. The extreme alternative is to adopt a fixed subject load and prepare pupils to take a 'grand-slam', all or nothing examination at the end of a fixed period of study. This latter option is best served by paced study systems (see below).
- Paced (i.e. set starting dates and finishing dates to terms) as opposed to unpaced study (flexible start and finish dates) for terms. The former implies group/class organization with some degree of class interaction and scheduled delivery of services (mailings, classes, broadcasts, completion of assignments, etc.) whereas the latter implies a highly individualized framework of study.
- Qualifications. The choice here is between no formally-recognized qualifications at all, institutionally-framed qualifications in which the institution is both provider and examinations board (as in the case of NIOS), and a situation in which the provider prepares students for national qualification examinations (as in the case of the National Extension College in the UK, and the Mexican Telesecundaria). In general the third option is likely to be more popular with parents, guardians and pupils.

In a number of national formal education systems, a key barrier to openness is the link between the regulations that determine whether or not a child is eligible to gain a qualification, and the characteristics of the traditional formal education system. All too often students are debarred from:

- embarking on a particular programme of study leading to a qualification unless they have satisfactorily completed the prior educational stage (e.g. they must have their primary school leaving certificate before they embark on junior secondary education)
- taking formal primary and secondary school qualifications if they have not attended a traditional school
- taking a qualification if their education has been interrupted
- sitting and passing examinations on a course-by-course (subject-by-subject) basis, with a view to accumulating (possibly over a number of years) the required number of subjects needed to gain a qualification (as opposed to the all-or-nothing end-of-stage examinations that often exist in the school system – an approach, incidentally, that disadvantages not only weak students but also gifted and talented students studying within the traditional, formal schools system).

In addition, the qualification awarded to students who have studied at a distance or through a non-traditional school or mode of study may indicate that their qualification has been gained by non-traditional means. In societies where distance education is devalued, this can have an adverse (and unwarranted) impact on a student's future employment prospects.

We know enough about non-traditional educational systems to know that students can successfully study by any means, provided that the programme supports them and is well managed. We also know that non-traditional students who sit national examinations can do as well as, and sometimes better than, students who have come up through the formal school system, and that this is true even when they have been disadvantaged in some way at an earlier stage in their education.

8.9 Organizational framework

One final and crucial area of decision-making involves the organizational structure to be adopted. Here the options are to set up:

- an open school to meet a variety of needs. This is a fairly common approach. Schools may be public (state-funded and run) or private, large or small (in pupil number terms); and may prepare students for a variety of qualifications, including their own. They tend to focus on the individual, home-based pupil.
- a parallel school system that creates centres of its own at which pupils follow a centrally determined curriculum that prepares students for standard national qualifications or for a new qualification designed by and special to the parallel system. Such systems tend to be large-scale and hence government-funded. As such systems expand, they may accept private schools in a partnership arrangement, and thus slowly evolve into the third type of approach – the facilitative framework (as with BRAC and NIOS).
- a facilitative framework that provides a number of services (e.g. advice on curriculum, centrally prepared learning materials, a shared learning management platform, quality assurance systems, and access to national qualifications), into which private providers can opt. Such approaches may include within the structure both state-funded learning centres and private schools that have opted in to the services offered.

The first of these options can be very successful, but each school is likely to fairly small. Collectively, a number of providers may educate many thousands of students, but the overall outcome is likely to be patchy and uncoordinated, catering for a variety of target groups, and offering a variety of qualifications to variable standards. This is in many ways what currently exists.

If open schooling is to have real impact, it needs to address the needs of large numbers of pupils in order to satisfy the entitlement that hard-to-reach children and children whose education has been disrupted have to education. This argues for a network organizational model that draws together collaborating partners. Fortunately distance education is well fitted to such collaborative, networked approaches because it tends to:

- depend upon a division of labour between those who plan, design, and develop courses and materials, and those who deliver them over a number of years to (potentially) many thousands of students
- require specialist technical staff to support the various media and technologies used
- require a highly professionalized administrative system to manage and operate complex logistical and student support processes
- deliver courses over wide areas, thus requiring a geographically-distributed delivery system.

It follows from this that the 'value chain' within a distance education system can be broken up and given to a number of partner organizations. Table 8.4 shows how each of the functions needed to organize an open school might be divided up between central and distributed partner organizations. The table is based on a two- or three-tier structure: a Central Open School that establishes the overall strategic direction, develops learning materials, and enters into partnerships with Partner Schools. These last constitute the 'second' tier of the structure. Partner Schools might be located in a single place, or themselves have a number of distributed classrooms. These last would constitute the third tier of the system. As Table 8.4 makes clear, there is room for a blurring of functional distinctions between the tiers.

If the open schooling is to have a major impact then a networked organizational structure that teaches to national qualification levels must be the route to go. This will require planners and policy makers to develop facilitative frameworks into which a large variety of providers can slot themselves to the mutual benefit of themselves and the state as a whole, and it is this route that we are recommending in our report.

Table 8.4 Responsibilities within the value-chain in open and distance education organizations: a possible model

Function	Location of responsibility	Notes
Strategic management (educational policy, strategic planning, partnership management, overall financial and HR strategy, etc.)	Central Open School (OS)	The Central OS would of course work closely with central Government ministries and agencies, local (provincial/state) governments, aid agencies, NGOs, and other organizations, as required.
Operational Management of Central Open School: Finance, Human Resources (HR), Estates, Secretariat, Partnership Management, etc.	Central OS	
Curriculum policy and planning	National Curriculum Authority	It may also be possible for the Central OS and also for some of the Partner OSs to develop curricula to meet specific needs outside the national qualifications framework for schools, but ideally the basic education curriculum followed by the Central Open School (OS) should be the same as for the formal education system.
Subject courses design	Central OS and Partner OSs	While the Central OS might design many of the subject courses covering a national curriculum, this would not preclude Partner OSs designing courses to meet local and even regional needs. Partner OSs might have a particular role in designing courses in minority and regional languages, including courses teaching these languages as a second language.
Materials development and selection (from pre-existing materials) to underpin subject courses	Central OS and Partner OSs	The Central OS would almost certainly develop the appropriate courses/materials for use in nationally-delivered subject courses (or select from the bank of pre-existing materials now available). This would not preclude Partner OSs developing materials and buying in pre-existing materials for local and regional courses. Partner OSs might have a major role to play in the development of course materials in minority or regional languages.
Production of materials	Central OS or Partner Schools, possibly working in conjunction with third parties	This could be done centrally or locally, taking account of local facilities (e.g. existence of printeries), the relative costs of central v more distributed production v the costs of handling and transporting materials long distances.
		Actual production of materials might be done in-house, or through commercial printeries, audio-visual production houses, etc.
Distribution of materials		Distribution of materials might be done centrally or through postal and courier services.
		Final distribution of materials to learning centres and individual students would probably be done locally unless there is an efficient postal service. For example, distribution of materials to students could be done manually at the third-tier level, i.e. within remote classrooms.
Identification and selection of categories the OS will seek to attract	Central Open School	This task would certainly need to be done in conjunction with relevant government ministries and agencies, and with advice from partnership organizations, NGOs, etc.
Partner school mapping	Central Open School	The purpose of this function would be to ensure that Partner Schools are set up or selected (in the case of a school seeking to enter a partnership arrangement) in localities geographically within reach of specific target populations.

Establishment/selection of partner schools	Central Open School	
Periodic inspection and 're-licensing' of Partner Schools	Central Open School	
Strategic Management of Partner Schools	Partner Schools	As independent bodies each Partner School would have its own directorate responsible for strategic management, etc. However, Partner Schools would also be significantly influenced by the context set by the Strategic Management of the Central Open School.
Operational management of Partner Schools: Finance, Human Resources (HR), Estates, Secretariat, etc.	Partner Schools	
Planning, selection and kitting out of distributed classrooms	Partner Schools	
Recruitment, enrolment, fees and payments billing and collection, management of bursaries, teacher–pupil allocation, timetabling, teaching, formative assessment, record keeping, management of student progress	Partner Schools	Summary returns on student numbers, student progress, demographics, etc. to be made to the Central OS.
Recruitment, management, observation and monitoring of teachers	Partner Schools	
Fee setting, etc.	Partner Schools (or possibly Central OS)	
Management of public examinations including marking of papers	As per national examination system arrangements	
Management of credit accumulation records leading to final Certification	Examination Bodies and Partner Schools	This will be a key function.
Management of Central OS or local Partner School examinations	Central OS or Partner Schools	
Certification	Examinations Body	For national examinations.
	Central OS	For Central OS qualifications.
	Partner School	For purely local certificates.
Issue of Transcripts	Central OS or Partner Schools	

Summary

Open and distance learning can make a strong contribution to basic education in a variety of ways. If planners wish to take advantage of ODL, steps to consider include:

- **developing parameters for minimum criteria and conditions for good basic education**
- **enacting the right to basic education**
- **analysing the multiple forms of basic education**
- **investigating the potential role of open and distance learning**
- **overcoming social exclusion**
- **identifying the specific categories of children whose needs are to be addressed**
- **choosing the appropriate media and technologies for the target audience**
- **defining the point of delivery, level of openness and organizational framework.**

9

FUNDING AND COSTS OF ODL APPROACHES TO BASIC EDUCATION

Reaching hard-to-reach children to ensure that they are provided with an education costs money, and this chapter looks in turn at some of the funding issues that are involved in funding open schools; the basis on which decisions to fund open schools are taken; the costs of open schools; and the factors that affect costs.

Ros Morpeth

▲
Children attending an NGO school in India

9.1 Challenges for government and planners

Planners face enormous challenges in devising strategies and finding the funding to reach the hard core of children with no or limited access to basic education. Rumble and Koul (2007:34) provide a realistic analysis of the situation faced by government in India.

The contradiction between meeting the needs of the poorest and charging fees
Most governments fund primary education and have a policy that it should be freely available for all children. Many fund at least some secondary education on the same basis. In India, for example, free and compulsory education is a fundamental right under the constitution. But governments have generally been less willing to provide funds in the same way for alternative approaches to basic education. As a result, many of the out-of-school, or school equivalence, activities discussed throughout this report are funded in other ways. Some rely on non-government funds, some of them on international sources. Others, like the MV Foundation in Andhra Pradesh, India, are supported by a consortium of funders including central government, state government, Indian and international NGOs and UN Agencies like UNDP.

Open learning systems based around the use of learning materials as a substitute for student–teacher interaction differ from traditional approaches to education in that they generally have high fixed costs (which sustain the management and logistical systems and the materials underpinning

Obviously, much more needs to be done, but paucity of funding does not favour educational re-engineering on conventional lines. At present, the Central and the State Governments collectively constitute the only means of taking education to the masses or bringing out-of-school children into the fold of secondary education. The State Governments, however, are not in a position to do much in the process of universalizing secondary education and much less in improving its quality, as they are already spending on average nearly 22% of their aggregated annual budget on education. Within the secondary sector, 92% of the State expenditure goes to salaries. Obviously, much of the burden will have to be taken by the Central Government, which is raising funds and also adopting alternative modes of education for the purpose.

While the number of private schools and the size of student population they cover are increasing progressively, this growth is in no way near the pressure that is building on the secondary sector of education The financial requirement for universalizing elementary education is estimated to be 3% of GDP, and that of universalizing secondary education 2.33% of GDP. Put together, 5.33% of GDP per annum is required to universalize elementary and secondary education in the country. Such a provision once made has to be reviewed periodically, but it has not been possible to fulfil the requirement of providing 6% of GDP to cover elementary as well as secondary education (as estimated in the National Policy on Education, 1968), and so the systems, especially the latter, have to be run under immense financial constraints. It is here that an analysis and the resulting understanding of the cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the ODL operations should be of great value to the planners and the field level operatives.

Rumble and Koul (2007:34)

the curriculum), but low variable costs. The low variable costs arise because substitution of materials for the labour of teachers in the classrooms substantially increases the student:staff ratio, leading to potential savings (although the extent to which this will be true is partially dependent upon the student:staff ratios found in traditional schools; in systems where large class sizes are the norm, the scope for savings will be correspondingly less).

The average cost per student (A) is a function of the total fixed costs (F) divided by the number of students (S), plus the direct variable cost per student (V), such that $A = F/S + V$. In systems where there are high fixed but low variable costs, the average cost per student falls rapidly, at least to begin with, as student numbers increase. This is because the fixed costs are spread across more and more students. These economies of scale are reaped fairly early on in expansion. Eventually the cost curve flattens and it becomes very difficult to achieve further economies of scale. If money needs to be saved, then further efficiencies will need to be found through economies of scope – for example, substituting less expensive technologies for more expensive ones, by finding cheaper ways to develop materials, by improving the efficiency of the logistical operations, and by ensuring that services are targeted at those who need them. It is also possible to reduce the variable costs of the system by cutting services to students – for example, by reducing the cost of marking pupils' work by reducing the number of tests they have to do, or by reducing contact between students and teachers. Any actions of this kind that cut into learner support services inevitably threaten quality and outcomes because they directly impact on the support services provided to students.

BRAC funding and costs

Once heavily dependent on donors, over the years BRAC has become increasingly self-reliant, and now finances about 80% of its work. However, the BRAC education programme (BEP) still obtains most of its support from development partners - much of it in the form of pooled funding by the donor consortium - and various aspects of the programme are supported by DFID, CIDA, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Oxfam, NOVIB, UNICEF and AusAID. Total BEP expenditure in 2007 was US$48,857,818. A year in a BRAC primary school costs about US$20 per child, with all costs covered by BRAC rather than the families. Estimates for government schools range from US$29 to US$52 per year. The estimated cost per child who completes the full four-year BRAC primary cycle is US$84, compared with US$246 for each child who completes in government-recognized schools. The main cost-efficiency is on teachers' salaries, which are less than 40% of overall costs (compared with about 90% in government schools). This leaves more funds for smaller class sizes, books and supplies, curriculum development, training, management and support at the local level.

Ryan et al. (2007); BRAC (2008); BRAC (n.d.)

All costs have to be met from some source. One approach is to fund open schools in the same way that traditional schools are in general funded: that is, to give the open school a fixed amount for every student it enrols. This approach is simple and works reasonably well in traditional schools where fixed costs are low and variable costs are high, and where expansion of the system does not lead to significant economies of scale. When applied to open schools, however, it fails to take account of the difficulty such schools have in their start-up and early operational phases, when student numbers are low and average costs per learner are likely to be high. At this stage, what open schools need are monies to fund the development of systems and materials. Any funding system that bases the flow of funds on the *per capita* costs of traditional schools will grossly underfund the open school. Later on, when student numbers have grown and average costs have fallen, continuation of a funding regime that provides the open school with *per capita* funds similar to those supporting traditional schools will grossly overfund the open school because the approach will not take account of the economies of scale that expansion brings.

Accordingly, open learning approaches – for example open schools – are best funded by providing two distinct streams of money: one stream to meet their fixed costs (that is, the costs of running the institution and maintaining its curriculum), and another to meet the direct costs of teaching and supporting the pupils.

The next task is to determine the source of these two streams of funding. Open schools have sometimes been funded on the basis that there is an annual grant to cover their fixed costs, but the variable costs of teaching and supporting the learners are met from student fees. This is financially more attractive to governments than payment on a *per capita* basis, where the more successful the agency is in reaching students, the higher are its demands on public funding. But it means that agencies face the dilemma of either holding down their fees so that learners can more easily pay them, or holding down expenditure on student support, which generally has variable costs, even though there is reason to think that good support systems are the key to educational success and effectiveness in this kind of education.

Nevertheless, because the variable costs per student are generally much lower in open schools than in traditional schools, asking the pupils and their families to cover these costs through fees in general means that the burden of costs met by the families is relatively modest – while government is protected from the rise in total costs consequent upon any significant increase in pupil numbers in the school itself.

9.2 Basis for making decisions about the allocation of funding

In any out-of-school approach, funding models therefore need careful consideration. Making allocation decisions between conventional and non-conventional methods of education is also often difficult. Various results from using a non-conventional method (e.g. broadcasting-based education, open schools) as contrasted with a conventional one are possible including:

1 results better, costs the same or lower
2 results worse, costs the same or higher
3 results better, but costs higher
4 results worse, but costs also lower.

Categories (1) and (2) provide simple guidance for the planner. But more often, results fall into categories (3) or (4).

Many alternative approaches fall into category (4): expenditure on the most disadvantaged children is likely to yield less educational success than that on the most privileged. And, for the funding reasons discussed, governments have seldom been willing to fund out-of-school approaches at the same level as conventional schools.

Good allocation decisions depend on information about outcomes and about costs. We tend to be short of data on both. Furthermore, there are real difficulties in comparing both outcomes and costs. Often students who are being compared are not matched: in real life students do not live in a social science laboratory, and comparisons between the performance of the pupils in two different traditional schools may often be unfair unless the data is contextualized to take account of the many differences that arise (e.g. socio-economic differences between the families, proportion of students studying in a language other than their mother tongue, etc.).

Comparisons between open and traditional schools add to these factors the fact that open school pupils may be studying part-time, whereas traditional school children study full-time. The nature of the learning experience is inevitably different. Outcomes may be difficult to compare, with the two groups taking different examinations, either in whole or in part. Even with courses leading to a common examination, where this might in principle look easy, different regulations may apply to the two groups of students. Part-time students may be able to pick off subjects one at a time while full-time ones have to take a group all at the same examination sitting, with the result that the full-timers by and large complete the educational stage leading to the exams in a fixed number of years – generally two or three – whereas the part-timers may take longer to achieve a comparable number of subject passes. Also, in some open school systems there will be some students who are attempting to add to the number of subject passes they have, so as to become eligible for a particular school level certificate. In such cases, the student's ultimate level of achievement will reflect inputs from two different approaches to schooling.

So the comparison of outcomes in terms of what makes for a successful student is not necessarily easy. Nevertheless, at school level the best comparison is to allow traditional and open school children to work towards the same set (or sets) of standard national qualifications, with outcomes being measured in terms of (a) subject passes and (b) basic qualification passes.

Telesecundaria, Mexico

The Mexican Telesecundaria used educational television to enable children in rural areas to follow the national curriculum in remote classrooms that were organized by monitors who stood in for trained teachers, of whom there was a considerable lack. With an overall pass rate of 86%, Mexican Telesecundaria students did better than students in Federal general secondary schools (79%), State general secondary schools (77%), private sector general secondary schools (73%), Federal technical secondary schools (73%), State technical secondary schools (74%), private technical secondary schools (65%), and secondary-equivalency programmes for workers (64%). At least initially the Telesecundaria was more efficient than the majority of traditional state schools: its average cost per student in 1975, with 33,840 students, was just 76% of the cost of teaching in traditional schools. However, as Telesecundaria expanded into ever more remote and smaller communities, class sizes fell and its economies of scale were eroded. By 1981, with 170,000 students, its cost per student was 1.09 times that of traditional schools, while in 1988, with over 400,000 students, its cost per student had risen to 1.32 times that in traditional schools.

Arena (1989)

The cost structure of distance education

At its simplest, the basic structure of any education system is captured by two cost equations, one for the calculation of total costs (TC), and the other for the calculation of average costs per learner (AC). These cost equations are: $TC = F + (V \times N)$, and $AC = V + (F \div N)$, where TC = Total Cost, F = Fixed Costs, V = Variable Costs, N = the Number of Students, and AC = the Average Cost (per student). The high fixed costs but low variable costs per student of distance systems mean that the distance system has to reach a critical volume of students before the average cost per student falls below the average cost of a traditional face-to-face system, where fixed costs are generally low, but variable cost per student (and in particular the cost per student of teachers) is high.

The cost functions given here are very simple. Most distance education systems involve a number of cost drivers that make the situation more complicated. For example, they may have learning centres or schools: the more centres the greater their costs. Also, the costs of technologies are driven by different factors. The costs of some technologies (text, face-to-face teaching) are driven by the number of learners. Broadcasting costs, however, depend on the number of hours' programming developed and transmitted, and possibly (where receivers and listening centres are provided) by the number of groups covered.

Orivel (2000)

The second issue is that the cost structures of conventional education and its alternatives are different. Teachers' salaries form the largest element in many educational budgets, especially for basic education – often more than 80%, sometimes more than 90% of the total. While, up to a point, class sizes can be increased, as a rule, as school numbers increase so do the number of teachers and so do the costs. Two approaches have been used to get away from this fixed relationship between teacher salaries and cost per student. First, some schemes have employed monitors, or untrained teachers, rather than regular teachers, paid them less, and so been able to hold down the costs, even while keeping a similar cost structure. Second, open learning relies on using teaching material (e.g. print or broadcasts) to carry much of the burden of teaching. The development of resources of this kind represents a fixed cost and the proportion of open-learning budgets spent on tutors can then be lower than in conventional education.

Typically, open learning systems have higher fixed costs but lower variable costs than conventional schools. They can therefore bring economies of scale: up to a point, you can increase student numbers without the inexorable increase in budget associated with conventional education.

One consequence of this is that it has been relatively easy for open-learning agencies to recruit large numbers of students. Each new enrolment may cost little. They may then show costs per student significantly lower than costs per student for conventional schools. But, typically, they have lower completion and success rates, putting them into category (4) of those identified above. As a result they may have higher costs per successful student even while their costs per student are lower. In any comparative study that is to be used as a guide for policy, it is therefore critically important to examine costs per successful student and to find a definition of 'successful student' that allows comparisons to be made.

Table 9.1 Comparative costs: Community-based primary schools and formal primary schools (currency: 2006 US$)

		Annual 'per pupil' cost	Completion rate	Cost per completer	Meeting learning outcomes	Cost per learning outcome
Afghanistan	Community schools	$38	50%	$453	94%	$482
	Home-based schools	$18	68%	$132	99%	$134
	State schools	$31	32%	$485	NA	NA
Bangladesh	BRAC primary schools	$20	94%	$84	70%	$120
	State schools	$29	67%	$246	27%	$911

Source: DeStefano et al. (2005)

Against that background we can look at the actual costs that have been achieved in conventional and non-conventional education. Despite the difficulties, standard microeconomic approaches have been developed which allow comparisons between the different approaches. We use one detailed example below for NIOS, but note that there have not been enough cost studies specific to the situation in Asia, and it is therefore necessary to collect data on a worldwide basis. Perraton's *Open and distance learning in the developing world* (2007) is one of the few recent studies that has conducted such international comparisons and we include an extract in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2 Costs of some school equivalency projects (currency: 2005 US$)

Country, project, date	GNP per capita at date of study		Student no.	Cost per learner	Comparative cost
	Current $	2005 $			
Botswana, BOCODOL 2004	4,360	4,489	6,000	Recurrent cost for four subjects $243 to $259 (P1108–80)	Primary school cost about 2000: $188 per student ($212)
Namibia, NAMCOL 1998	1,940	2,315	10,300	Cost per distance-education learner $124 per subject	Government schools unit costs per exam pass $243 to $259
Mexico, Telesecundaria 1997	3,680	4,460	817,200	(recurrent) $584	Cost per student 16% less than alternative
Brazil, Telecurso 2002	2,830	3,060	>200,000	About $400 in telesales	Comparable to cost of conventional schools
Malawi, Correspondence Study Centres 1978	150	482	2,884	$476 per student; $3,549 per examination pass	Cost per student 62% cost at day school; cost per pass 81% higher
1988	160	263	17,000	$128 per student; $451 per pass	Cost per pass now only 34% of day school rate

Source: Adapted from Perraton (2007:134)

Many people will tend to focus on the issue of quality, and this is of course important, but the fact is that there are both successful and failing traditional schools, just as there are successful and failing open schools. The idea that open schooling is automatically of poorer quality than traditional schooling is simply wrong. Open school pupils may achieve as much as traditional school pupils (in examination terms). What is true is that their experience of schooling will be different to a greater or lesser degree. Beyond this, what matters is whether open schooling is more or less likely in given circumstances to reach hard-to-reach and out-of-(traditional)-school children, and whether the costs of doing so are acceptable or not. The next section of this report will therefore look at costs – using the specific case of NIOS as a vehicle to introduce some of the issues.

NIOS: case study of cost effectiveness

The National Institute of Open Schooling has been profiled in several places this report. Here the focus is on its cost effectiveness. NIOS was chosen for this case study because it is one of the few ODL providers offering school equivalence, with data available to provide a detailed analysis of its funding and costs.

Four cost studies have been undertaken of NIOS (Rumble and Koul, 2007). The first, conducted in 1986 when the then Open School was a relatively small experimental operation with an enrolment of just 3,164 in 1982/83 rising to a projected 11,000 in 1986/87, showed that the cost per student in the Open School was just under two-thirds of the cost of the conventional day schools run by the Delhi Administration, but between 3.2 and 3.9 times as expensive as the Delhi Administration's correspondence school (Patrachar Vidyalaya).

The second study was undertaken in 1997, by which time the now autonomous National Open School had 40,884 learners. The 1990s saw the Government of India's contribution to the costs of the school's operations fall from 34% in 1990–91 to just 2.08% in 1995–96 as the school's earnings from enrolment and examination fees rose. The study showed that the cost per student at the National Open School was lower than that in the comparator schools – it was just under two-thirds (0.62) of the cost per student in state government schools.

In 2006 a third cost study was undertaken (see also Bist, n.d.). By then the National Open School – now the National Institute of Open Schooling – had been upgraded to an 'apex institution' responsible for school-level open and distance learning in India. It had 2,745 accredited institutions and accredited vocational institutions supporting its courses, with 1,427,000 enrolees on its five-year programme, and with some 290,000 new enrolments each year. Just over 90% of its expenditure was met from its own funds, with just under 10% (9.57%) coming from government funds. While this third study looked at the amount of government funding going into three different systems, it did not look at the cost per student.

The fourth study, undertaken by Koul in 2007 (see Rumble and Koul, 2007) showed that with 290,983 students, the cost per student in 2006–07 to take five subjects over five years was INR 1,542 including examination costs, and INR 1,213 excluding examination costs. Just 6.4% of NIOS's income in 2006–07 was met from government funds, with the rest coming from admissions fees (50.3%), examination fees (30.2%), and miscellaneous income, interest, materials sales and other sources (13.1%). Comparing NIOS's cost per student per course with other providers showed that the 2005–06 NIOS cost of educating a student to completion of his or her secondary education over five years (INR 1,151) was just 7.8% of the cost of educating a student over the two year full-time secondary level course in the Kendriya Vindyalayas central schools catering for the children of central government and services personnel (INR 14,817), while the 2006–07 cost to completion in five years at NIOS (INR 1,213) was just 10.7% of the two-year cost of educating a student at secondary level of INR 11,343.

Koul makes the point that NIOS's students register for less than the permitted seven subjects at secondary level – their actual enrolment being an average of 5.36 subjects at (junior) secondary level and 5.39 subjects at senior secondary level. He suggests that one of the reasons for this may be affordability. NIOS charges differential course fees for male students (INR 200 per subject), women (INR 150 per subject), and students attracting concessions (members of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes, ex-Servicemen, and those with disabilities) (INR 110). Examination fees vary depending on whether the courses have practicals (INR 130) or not (INR 90). Overall, the private cost to the students of studying with NIOS (excluding examination costs) over a five-year period ranges from INR 604–1,054 at (lower) secondary level, and from INR 695–1,220 at senior secondary level, with students contributing from 49–86% of the five-year cost of study at (lower) secondary level, and between 57–99% of the cost at senior secondary level. What Koul's research does not show is whether, in addition to these costs, NIOS students are paying for additional private tuition within what Bray (2007) has referred to as the 'shadow education system'.

9.3 The lessons

If the evidence on costs is mixed, analysts are at least able to explain why open school projects are likely to be more or less expensive than traditional schools. Among the factors influencing the relative cost-efficiency of open schools are the following:

- the number of students
- the life of learning materials
- the number of courses
- the use of technology in the place of labour

- the choice of technology
- the amount of learning materials given to students
- the adoption of low-cost labour strategies
- the challenges
- the need of students for support
- the need for good logistics.

We look at each in turn below.

The number of students

In general, an ODL education system involves a considerable investment in the design of learning materials, so the more students there are studying, the more these costs can be spread across the learners, and the lower the average cost per learner will be. However, particularly in open schools, the students may also be given some face-to-face support in local learning centres or schools, and costs may then increase if group sizes become smaller. This occurred in the case of the Mexican Telesecundaria when the school began to set up remote television classes in more and more, smaller and smaller, villages and hamlets, so that in spite of a significant increase in the overall number of students between 1975 and 1981, and again between then and 1988, the average cost per student increased.

The life of learning materials

Once designed, ODL learning materials may be used for several years. However, over time the materials will date and eventually, unless replaced, there will be a fall in the quality of the programme. In general, then, courses will need to be replaced in order to incorporate changes in the subject matter. Also, changes in curriculum can force providers to change the materials. This is particularly true in schools teaching a curriculum laid down by an independent examining authority.

The number of courses

The more courses that are provided, the more materials need to be developed. Most institutions therefore limit the number of courses they offer. This inevitably means that less popular subjects tend not be offered. On the other hand, designing a materials-based version of a course for use in schools may be a sensible way to provide certain subjects in schools where there is insufficient demand to warrant the appointment of a specialist subject teacher in that subject.

The use of technology in the place of labour

In a sense, ODL education is based on exactly this substitution, since learning materials are provided as a substitute for the teacher's role of imparting information (although not the teacher's role in marking and commenting on work submitted by the student, nor in answering students' pleas for help with their studies). The problem is that it takes more time to develop one hour of learning materials than it does to teach a one-hour class. If it takes from 2–10 hours to prepare a class, it takes 10–20 hours to prepare a one-hour audio programme, 50 hours to prepare a text that will occupy a student for an hour, and even more time to prepare video and computer-based learning materials. The substitution only pays off because once developed, the materials can be studied by many students (and also because in general the amount of individualized support provided is reduced). A further problem arises where an imported technology is introduced. This is particularly the case with computing, where both the equipment and the software tend to be developed and manufactured in developed countries. While the cost per pupil per hour of e-learning may be lower than the cost per pupil per hour of a teacher in a school in a developed country such as the United States, where teachers' wages are high, the per pupil per hour cost of computer-based instruction may exceed the per pupil per hour costs of face-to-face teaching in a developing country where the salaries of teachers are low. As Orivel (2000) commented, with e-learning 'for the first time in the history of educational systems, the price of an educational input is determined not in accordance with the local purchasing power, but by world standards which apply in a similar way to rich and poor countries.'

The choice of technology

Each technology has its own cost structure – that is, the balance of fixed and variable costs that interact with cost drivers to determine the overall level of expenditure, and hence the average cost per learner. In general the most cost efficient technologies are print, radio/audio, and video when recorded and used several times for mass audiences, while for very small numbers of learners, face-to-face teaching may actually be the cheapest option in overall expenditure terms, and particularly so where class sizes are large. The costs of e-learning are themselves complex, with the costs of materials designed for delivery via the Internet showing a very wide variation in the costs incurred to provide students with material that will keep them studying for one hour; while the cost of teaching over the Internet tends to be higher than the cost of face-to-face teaching in a classroom. This is why many providers are now pressing for Web 2.0 approaches to be adopted, in which students are expected to search for their own materials under guidance of a webliography, and to rely on each other to help each other learn. The inclusion of copyright materials also pushes costs up unless student numbers are very small.

The amount of learning materials given to students

Systems that provide all the materials that a student needs to follow a course tend to have higher costs than those systems that require students to buy textbooks and only provide a study guide.

The adoption of low-cost labour strategies

Here two strategies are of particular importance: the first is to substitute low-cost labour for high-cost labour. Untrained teachers acting as mentors, with the main teaching being done through the learning materials, are an obvious strategy to keep costs down. The second strategy is to hire both materials developers and teachers/mentors on contracts for service rather than contracts of service basis. A contract of service is a contract in which one hires a person as an employee to work for one for so many hours per week. A contract for service is a contract in which a person is hired to undertake a particular service (for example, write a teaching text, teach a class for so many hours, mark an assignment) and they are paid only for the work they undertake.

Finally, the experience at NIOS, coupled with the experience gained within the commercial correspondence sector, suggests that it is possible to offer ODL education courses at schools level either on a full cost-recovery basis, or at least on a basis that does not rely on a significant proportion of funds coming from government. The relatively high proportion of household and other finance, relative to government funding, at NIOS, is clearly an important factor in the many situations where government resources are inadequate to provide a sufficient quality and quantity of education.

The challenges

Good open schooling rests on three main structures. These are the provision of:

- excellent learning materials
- responsive support structures
- efficient and effective logistics.

In financial terms the challenges are to provide excellent, relevant and up-to-date learning materials.

From a financial point of view, textual material, audio and recorded video materials can now be provided relatively cheaply provided that economies of scale are there to be had. Such economies of scale are achieved easily in large population countries and in countries where there is a central provider, as with NIOS in India. However, it can be harder to get private and NGO-based institutions to adopt course materials, particularly if the providers insist on rights payments. Adoption of an open coursework framework will help here, and planners should

therefore consider the Creative Commons licenses framework and apply it to the provision of secondary education materials (see creativecommons.org/about/licenses/meet-the-licenses, accessed 24 July 2009) governing the use of Open Educational Resources (www.oercommons.org/, accessed 24 July 2009). There is considerable pressure to adopt e-learning approaches, in part to ensure that school children are equipped to participate in the knowledge-based and e-commerce-based economy of the future, but as this section makes clear, the costs of e-learning pose challenges. Finally, curriculum reform can place a significant burden on providers of open schooling if materials have to be revised quickly – and those planning curriculum reform should ideally bear this in mind when scheduling change.

The need of students for support

In general, the younger they are, the more support students will need. The system adopted by the Calvert School in the USA relies on parents supporting their children as home learners, or alternatively on the adoption of their materials by schools on a franchise basis. The former approach can be difficult to achieve where parents also lack education; the latter can help provide schools in the absence of a ready supply of trained teachers. At secondary level students may be expected to become independent learners – and this is indeed the strategy adopted by NIOS. This reduces the costs of support. Similarly, (cheap)-labour-for-(expensive)-labour substitution can help provide schools where schools currently do not exist, as the Mexican Telesecundaria experience showed. In general, however, the level of support provided needs to be rationed and focused on individual needs rather than offered in the form of an overall and perhaps therefore under-utilized capacity.

The need for good logistics

Good logistics involves a range of processes starting with recruitment and covering the allocation of students to resources (learning centres, tutors, examination centres), the management of teaching and learning support (materials despatch, assignment marking and return, scheduling, etc.). Here the aim should be to keep processes as simple and clear-cut as possible in order to achieve economies of scope and scale.

A new library paid for by fundraising

Summary

This chapter has focused on para-formal schooling systems. Fortunately, in an area where there is generally a paucity of data on costs and effectiveness of particular initiatives, a recent study by Rumble and Koul and additional contributions from Rumble (Rumble, 1997, see pp.120–60; Rumble and Koul, 2007) have provided access to detailed data on one para-formal school in Asia – NIOS. In general, the following conclusions can be reached:

- Traditional and open schools have very different cost structures: the former have low fixed costs and high variable costs; the latter have high fixed costs and low variable costs.
- The differences in cost structures mean that open schools need to be funded in a different way from traditional schools. Whereas traditional schools can be funded on a pupil per capita basis, the funding of open schools needs to distinguish between support for the school's fixed costs (its management and logistical systems, and the delivery of a curriculum through learning materials) and the variable costs of its learner support and teaching system. Any other approach is likely to result in serious underfunding when student numbers are low, and serious overfunding as student numbers increase.
- In exercising its responsibility to meet the costs of education, the State may choose to pass on the variable costs of the system to the learners and their parents, by charging fees to cover the per pupil cost of the actual teaching and learner support. Where economies of scale have been achieved, the lower unit costs of open schools may make it easier to pass the full costs of the school on to parents.

In deciding whether or not to use open learning methods to meet the needs of hard-to-reach and out-of-(traditional)-school children, decision makers should bear in mind that in terms of the examination results achieved by pupils, open schools can be as good as traditional schools. What matters is whether open schooling is more or less likely in given circumstances to reach hard-to-reach and out-of-(traditional)-school children, and whether the costs of doing so are acceptable or not.

There is a range of factors that affect the costs of open schooling. These include the number of students; the number of years learning materials can be used before they need to be replaced; the number of courses or subjects offered within the curriculum; the extent to which technology is used in place of labour; the cost structure of the technologies that are used and the extent to which the technologies chosen result in the lowest cost given the number of students covered; the amount of learning materials given to students; and the extent to which low cost labour strategies are adopted.

Print and radio tend to be low-cost media. Radio often demonstrates low unit costs in terms of learners reached and sometimes of learning gain. Computer-based instruction tends to increase costs – particularly in societies where labour costs are low.

Open schooling may be more cost efficient than traditional schooling. In general the per pupil costs of traditional primary schooling is so low that alternatives to it are unlikely to be cheaper. Alternative schools using radio in conjunction with lower-qualified (and hence lower-paid) monitors rather than teachers are likely to have lower per pupil costs than traditional schools, although class size will have a bearing here.

Once open schooling approaches have been adopted, their use can be extended to cover the in-service professional development of teachers without needing to take the teachers out of school or out of their communities for training. This is not only cost-efficient, it also enables whole cadres of teachers to be updated at the same time efficiently and effectively.

5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools can be reconstructed as more child friendly, with better access for the disabled, or with separate latrines for boys and girls, for example. New strategies can be developed to provide for all children to complete at least elementary education. These might include building full-grade schools close to home, or supplementing face-to-face education with forms of distance learning to ensure that children in remote areas have a better opportunity to complete their education.

Evans (2008)

A recommendation to consider the potential of open and distance learning (ODL) often appears in education reports, but in general ODL remains underexplored and underexploited.

This report has attempted to address this by unpacking what ODL means in this context. We have examined in some depth whether ODL has a role to play in extending opportunities for basic education to hard-to-reach children, including those in conflict or disaster zones, and if so, in what ways and for what purposes.

The short answer to the question is yes, ODL could play a large role, but certain issues need to be considered:

- Children need to learn within a social environment. ODL at basic education level is not appropriate as a *substitute* for direct teaching and face-to-face contact with other children, teachers and carers. Its value in basic education for children may lie in non-conventional schooling structures operating closely with the formal schooling system, as a means for enriching the learning resources in schools, teacher support systems, family-based opportunities for learning and pre-planned responses to conflict and emergency situations.
- ODL needs to be embedded in government policy and articulated with the rest of the basic education system, particularly with respect to accreditation.
- ODL needs to play a clearly identified role (or roles) within a broader policy framework of basic education for children. ODL has a history of attracting both overenthusiastic advocates and overcritical detractors. It has a particular attraction to developing countries and their donors because it holds out a compelling quick-fix promise that it can solve big educational problems of quality, quantity, access and cost. History has shown that where enthusiasm has outstripped careful planning and judicious implementation, that promise has fallen far short of reality.

10.1 Recommendations

1 Hard-to-reach children require new planning practices

Our first recommendation is that educational planners could re-examine the statistical, analytical and conceptual basis from which they work in relation to these groups of hard-to-reach children.

These groups of children challenge existing planning practices and alternatives need to be found.

- *Unreliable statistics* – Although the challenge of providing education for these groups is recognized, the extent of the situation is almost certainly underestimated and under-recorded: existing statistics about these groups vary, sometimes quite considerably. Hard-to-reach children are exactly that – hard to reach – and as a consequence they are difficult to officially record, monitor and plan around in the usual ways. Planning for them therefore needs to be more open-ended and flexible, and to adopt strategies that proactively seek excluded children to get them enrolled in school and included in learning.

- *Needs-based v non-exclusion* – A further challenge is that a needs-based approach, often used by planners, can obscure the complexities of vulnerability and commonalities among these groups of children. The targeting of some specific groups may still be necessary but the principle of non-exclusion would provide a stronger starting point for planning responses. Many children belong to more than one category, resulting in multiple disadvantage and exclusion. There are also patterns of enrolment, attendance and dropout, for example, which transcend individual groups and which have implications for the design of educational initiatives.

- *An expanded vision of access* – For children and families facing multiple disadvantages, barriers to access are more complex than a question of school supply. Perception of a school's quality, its responsiveness and relevance to their lives, the opportunity costs and outcomes will all inform decisions about participation. This requires new and innovative ways of thinking about access.

- *Meaningful education* – Clear definitions of what constitutes a meaningful basic education (whether in formal or non-formal provision) are often missing in planning and in discussions around a child's right to education. Planning needs to start from clear parameters for minimal conditions and criteria for good basic education.

Two agencies in particular have a lot to offer in these areas. UNICEF's work and publications in the area of basic education for hard-to-reach children, both internationally (UNICEF, 2007) and within the South Asian region (UNICEF, 2008b) put it in a strong position to guide and influence government approaches for these groups. The child-seeking, child-friendly and child-enabling strategies and principles (Davies *et al*., 2009) that flow from their rights-based framework provide a means for addressing the complexities discussed above.

The work of the Centre for Research on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE – www.create-rpc.org, accessed 24 July 2009) also provides an expanded way of thinking about access and of conceptualizing exclusion (Lewin, 2007; CREATE, 2008a, 2008b). For example, it identifies seven different 'Zones of Exclusion' from formal education, each with its own characteristics and each requiring different policy dialogue and strategies to overcome exclusion.

2 ODL must be integrated into policy and planning

Our second recommendation is that educational planning needs to be built on a comprehensive mapping and evaluation of current provision in terms of its scale and effectiveness. However, a fine balance needs to be achieved between the creation of enabling frameworks (which facilitate inclusiveness and coherence for the learner) and over-bureaucratic frameworks (which drive the NFE sector away from the formal system).

If ODL is to play a constructive role in basic education for vulnerable children, it must do so in a way that contributes to a broader policy and planning framework for basic education. In analysing that role, certain dimensions of that framework emerge as critically important.

Joined-up strategic planning

Any substantial progress in extending equitable educational opportunities to these children can only be made by abandoning the *ad hoc*, second-best, project-based, non-formal provision characteristic of the 1980s and 1990s, and moving to responses informed by strategic planning that are based on careful analyses of capacity, access and financial barriers. The barriers are likely to be partly a question of school supply, partly of school quality and partly, for some children, the inappropriate and inflexible nature of the formal school model itself. Planning needs to address all the different barriers through current or new initiatives. Planning also needs to be based on a comprehensive national mapping of existing provision and policies for these groups.

One recurrent theme of our research was the lack of a comprehensive or clear picture of provision, and often evidence of different ministry departments working in the area but with no links to or knowledge of each other's initiatives. We got a sense of lots of small projects, with much duplication of effort, working in isolation from each other, and sometimes insignificant in relation to the scale of demand. Opportunities are being missed for sharing knowledge, for networking and collaborating, for coordinating effort and funding, for establishing some criteria for measuring quality in order to identify the worthwhile or expose the more dubious players.

Coordinating diversity

The scale and diversity of the needs can only be met by a diversity of responses, approaches and providers – both formal and non-formal – but this needs to happen in a more coordinated way. Some provision may need to be on a large scale and address a general access issue (such as overcoming the lack of schools in remote areas or second-chance provision for older children). Other provision may need to be relatively small-scale, highly-targeted NGO approaches for particular groups (such as seasonal migrant workers).

Access cannot be an end in itself: there is also the need to plan for a life-cycle approach to provision so that children have progression routes through levels and between different providers. They also need access to formal or equivalent qualifications. All this implies well-coordinated and joined-up planning. A coordinated approach, however, challenges old dualities – non-formal education (NFE) v formal, state v non-state – and leads to practical considerations about how best to manage a range of learning opportunities, how to divide responsibilities between the state and other partners, between national and decentralized levels, how to facilitate transitions and negotiate articulation between the formal and non-formal sectors, and how and where to manage accreditation.

Multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral responses

Vulnerabilities such as poverty, gender, malnutrition and lack of safety have a cross-cutting impact on access to education among hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups, and require multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral educational responses, addressing issues such as the psychosocial aspects, health and nutritional support, proactive child-seeking practices, supporting birth registration procedures, providing stipends. Governments and other agencies have to accept that addressing poverty can be expensive: highly bespoke approaches, for example, will necessarily be more costly because they have to provide for children what a family would normally provide – food, shelter, medicine, transport and clothes.

Quality

Rights-based discourses emphasize the importance of providing routes to formal or equivalent qualifications for these groups. This is key to equity and provides a passport to more education and better work and better lives. That said, it is important that a preoccupation with qualifications

does not obscure a more important, more fundamental right for these children (all children): the right to a quality, meaningful and child-friendly education. High-quality materials and teaching, using informed child-centred pedagogies, must always be the main aim of any educational initiative – ODL or otherwise. BRAC's provision for these groups, for example, illustrates that even without qualifications, proven quality education can be the real underlying passport to progression. A certificate is a measure of quality, not an end in itself.

3 ODL has great potential for supporting basic education

> **Our third recommendation is for governments to accept the need for alternative and flexible routes to access formal qualifications, and to actively establish such a route, which is built on a system of credit accumulation and transfer. This on its own will have a significant impact on opening up access for hard-to-reach groups, and has the potential to provide a route to recognized qualifications for NGOs and other NFE providers.**

Our research across South Asia has uncovered a large number of ODL basic education activities serving different purposes, run by a range of state and non-state providers, and operating at different scales. Among this vast range of activities, there is evidence of some initiatives with effective outcomes (sometimes better than in formal schools), of child-friendly and engaging pedagogy, of strong experience and commitment, tangible impact, and working at significant scale or having the potential for scalability, transferability and acceptability. There is therefore a strong foundation of experience, expertise and ODL infrastructures to build on.

Open and distance learning can provide different routes to the completion of basic education by:

- providing para-formal or alternative schooling systems
- supporting transition to and performance in formal schools
- raising the quality of schools by providing ready-made structured educational resources
- providing networking and training for intermediaries (e.g. teachers, broadcasters, mentors)
- providing communication for development (C4D) strategies.

Each introduces flexible, open qualities, which remove barriers to participation in basic education for hard-to-reach children and operate (or could operate) at scale.

BRAC, for example, has demonstrated that well-developed management systems with centrally-produced, high-quality, open learning curriculum resources (for teachers and learners), regular teacher training in child-centred pedagogy and community ownership can result in impressive completion, achievement and transfer rates in under-resourced rural areas.

NIOS has shown that investment in an open schooling framework, based on open learning resources (for teachers and learners), a national delivery system and an external route to national qualifications and examinations, make it possible for:

- other non-formal providers to set up, use and adapt the materials
- schooling to be re-started quickly in emergency zones
- cross-border refugees or the children of families working overseas to continue accessing their own national education in a different country
- formal schools to benefit (from the resources).

MVF's feeder programmes provide a second-chance route back to formal schools and a way out of child labour.

The way that BRAC, NIOS and MVF have all not only diversified their provision (for a wide variety of hard-to-reach groups) but have also become apex organizations (supporting other providers with expertise, training, networking and ready-made resources), provides planners with existing models and infrastructures which could contribute towards developing more coordinated, joined-up basic education provision which reduces duplication of effort.

Both para-formal approaches open up the potential for students to transfer in and out of the formal system with portable qualifications. Both approaches, if scaled up, have the potential for making a significant impact on extending basic education to hard-to-reach children and children in conflict and disaster contexts. That potential, though, is dependent on improved links and synergies between the formal and non-formal sector within a coherent, flexible system. Strategies could include sharing physical resources, sharing education personnel, strengthening teacher-training programmes, sharing accreditation and certification, setting up an efficient management information system (MIS), and ensuring inter-agency cooperation.

UNESCO (2006:36–37)

Open and distance learning can be used not only to open up access to education, but also as a route to the formal recognition and accreditation of learning. However, the area of certification is complex. It has fundamental implications for the formal/non-formal divide and a more enabling framework for certification could eventually lead to a truly open approach to basic education.

There is ample evidence that ODL methods can help to address some of the barriers to access in the formal system (e.g. distance to school, physical access for disabled students, hidden costs of books, uniforms, etc., age restrictions, language, bureaucracy, formal teaching methods) which increase with the transition into secondary level where there is competition for places, and rule-bound examination systems where a whole year has to be repeated if one subject is failed. While accepting the need to improve the quality of the formal system to be more inclusive and learner-centred, there will always be a need in the foreseeable future for alternative and flexible routes to access formal qualifications.

4 Teacher training and professional development can benefit from ODL

Our fourth recommendation is that more attention needs to be paid to the potential of ODL in supporting teachers and other intermediaries involved in basic education.

ODL has enormous potential for extending initial and continuing professional development to teachers, mentors, and teacher educators. The distance education infrastructure and technologies are in place and well-developed in the larger-population South Asian countries, in the form of well-established open universities and educational broadcasting services. Open universities have established experience in developing teacher education programmes for different stages in a teacher's development and for different types of teachers. Radio and television teacher-education programmes often linked with print materials have great potential, but remain underexploited as a means for delivering topical professional development for teachers working in both the formal and non-formal sector of basic education.

There is a need for more teachers trained in multi-grade teaching and also accelerated learning approaches, so that they can act as teachers or writers of resource materials for children whose educational careers have been disrupted or discontinued.

5 ODL can play a strong role in supporting basic education in conflict and emergency situations

Our fifth recommendation is that research should be commissioned to ascertain how existing ODL resources and infrastructures, e.g. from Open Schools, could be used in advance planning for conflict and emergency situations.

With careful advance planning, ODL could play a significant role in conflict and disaster areas. Teachers and radio broadcasters with training for emergency situations could develop a bank of ready-made educational resources which could be deployed in emergencies and could provide children with immediate educational continuity, whether informal or formal.

For example, open-source resources mapped against the national curriculum for students or teachers and radio programmes (ECCE, psycho-social approaches, and more structured educational programmes). Radio has a strong potential for providing psychosocial support, learning opportunities using child-to-child, and family-centred approaches as a prelude to more formal approaches.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has recognized the potential of open schools and has made this one of its development priorities. With the experience of COL under its existing agreement with UNICEF to mainstream child-friendly schools into pre-service and in-service education programmes, COL would be well placed for further collaboration with UNICEF to build on and extend the effectiveness of open schools, particularly in their capacity to develop education programmes suitable for children in emergency and conflict situations.

10.2 Challenges ahead

The implications for access to secondary and tertiary level education

The impressive rise in primary school enrolment and other routes to basic education in South Asian countries in recent years is inevitably creating more demands at secondary level. The same access issues at primary level – of school supply, school quality, teacher supply and the inappropriateness of the formal school model for some hard-to-reach communities – will recur at this level. There is likely to be a need for a diversity of provision for both conventional and non-conventional routes to academic, and, increasingly, vocational and professional learning.

Planners need to anticipate this increased demand, and the need for a multiplicity of routes within a much broader, inclusive, lifelong learning framework, one which clarifies conventional and non-conventional pathways from basic education to secondary and tertiary education and to vocational and professional qualifications. The development of a national qualifications and credit framework may provide the means for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved.

It may help governments to:

- determine needs
- identify broad levels of equivalence between qualifications of different types
- integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems
- improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society
- effectively introduce and manage the coordination of a more richly diversified and equitable educational system
- facilitate transparency, mutual understanding and recognition between different countries and sectors.

10.3 Areas for further research

There is a great deal of excellent work and experience in this field, but much of it has never been written up. Mistakes have been made but they are not documented so others cannot learn from past experience. NFE educationalists tend to be committed activists and when projects are written up the audience is usually funders or potential funders, and the writing is therefore

descriptive rather than analytical and understandably focuses on successful outcomes. There is a dearth of comparative, critical and analytical research, and particularly research about outcomes, costs and funding. Evidence from the literature suggests that researchers are over-dependent on a few highly publicized, self-proclaimed 'star' projects. But if governments and planners are to make informed decisions about how to allocate scarce resources, they need good research to help them.

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) at UNESCO has commissioned and published some excellent studies which we have found very valuable for this research (www.iiep.unesco.org/information-services/publications.html, accessed 24 July 2009).

Organizations like UNICEF and other funding agencies can help by facilitating a 'research culture'. The Commonwealth of Learning produced a series of self-study materials called Practitioner Research and Evaluation Skills Training (PREST), which are freely available on line (www.col.org/resources/publications/trainingresources/Pages/PREST.aspx, accessed 24 July 2009). These are aimed at ODL practitioners who want to undertake research. Another possibility is a dedicated cross-South Asia networking for those involved in basic education for the hard to reach including workshops, presentations, pooling of resources, and a dedicated website with opportunities for discussion.

Various areas for further research emerged during the preparation of this report, which we list below.

Exclusion and access

- Studies examining the links between early childhood care and education (ECCE), nutrition, health and access.
- Exclusion from school as a process not a single event – life histories of children, tracking them individually and in groups as they join school, move up the grades or drop out. Longitudinal studies about factors which affect decision-making and choices about schooling at household level.
- Language issues and access: how language issues – mother tongue, majority-language, English-language – impact on decision-making about schooling at household level.

Non-formal approaches and the formal schooling systems

- Raising quality in the formal schooling system – what can be learned from successful NFE programmes, in terms of pedagogy, planning and implementation, institutionalization and teacher learning, and how can these best be shared and built on to the benefit of the formal sector? A review of successful interventions for raising the quality of the formal school system, with a particular emphasis on rural areas.
- The relationship between the NFE programmes and the formal system: how is their articulation with the wider system actually negotiated? What strategies are needed to facilitate better articulation? The viability of small schools and how these link with the formal system. What strategies exist for strengthening non-formal and formal system links at a basic level? Integrating formal and non-formal basic education: what are the policy and practice lessons?
- Costs and funding of formal and non-formal basic education: the dearth of studies suggests a need for commissioned case studies examining the investment and costs of NFE initiatives, including opportunity costs to provide insight, and the costs involved in expanding basic education by incorporating and building on non-conventional alternatives.
- Low-cost private schools: what evidence of their educational effectiveness exists?

Training needs of basic education intermediaries

- A review of the current training and training needs of basic education intermediaries, e.g. teachers, mentors, teacher educators, inspectors (but could also include broadcasters, script and open learning materials writers, community leaders, community centre managers).
- Comparison of formal and non-formal teachers' education practices. An evaluation of teacher education approaches in rural community schools initiatives such as Escuela Nueva (Colombia), BRAC (Bangladesh) and COPE (Afghanistan), and whether there are any lessons for the formal system.
- The potential role of open and distance learning in the training of basic education intermediaries.
- Radio and its role in basic education: a review of the role and potential of radio in formal and non-formal basic education (including the training of teachers).

Secondary education

- The potential role of ODL in secondary education.
- A review of the current training and training needs of secondary education intermediaries, e.g. teachers, mentors, teacher educators, inspectors.

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The aims of the materials are to make practical research and evaluation skills training accessible and to improve the quality of research and evaluation in the ODL field.

Core modules
A1: Doing educational research and evaluation in ODL
A2: Planning research and evaluation
A3: Getting and analysing quantitative data
A4: Getting and analysing qualitative data
A5: Mixed research methods
A6: Reporting research to support or influence change

Handbooks
B1: Using programme monitoring in research and evaluation
B2: Measuring outcomes
B3: Costs and economics of open and distance learning
B4: Programme evaluation and its role in quality assurance
B5: Researching marginalized and disadvantaged learners
B6: Researching tutoring and learner support

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The Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, UK
The Institute of Education and Development, BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh
The National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Delhi, India
The Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
The University of Education at Winneba and The University of Cape Coast, Ghana
The Institute of Education, University of London, UK

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Education in emergencies and conflict
Key international actors and networks

Inter-agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE)	The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is a global network of around 1400 individual and organizational members who are working together within a humanitarian and development framework to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction. Specific task teams include adolescents and youth, inclusive education and HIV/AIDS. INEE has recently partnered with Oxford University's Conflict and Education Research Group (CERG) to study the effects of education on fragility. See www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/cerg_study/ (accessed 21 July 2009). Further information: www.ineesite.org/ (accessed 21 July 2009).
International Rescue Committee	Programme focus areas for children displaced by conflict include: formal primary and secondary schooling, kindergartens and pre-schools, non-formal learning and recreational programmes during emergencies, youth groups, literacy, numeracy, skills-training, and other adult education, accelerated learning programmes, human rights and peace education and conflict resolution. Further information: www.theirc.org/media/www/education.html (accessed 21 July 2009).
Save the Children Alliance	Their toolkits and analysis have pushed forward the education agenda within the humanitarian community. Current education priorities are captured under Save the Children's Rewrite the Future campaign. The focus is on improving access to quality education for children out of school as a result of conflict. They are working to: ensure that 3 million children in conflict-affected countries enter school by 2010; improve the quality of education for 5 million additional children; make schools safe – a key tool in protecting children affected by conflict; influence national governments and international institutions to prioritize quality education for conflict-affected children. Further information: www.savethechildren.org/publications/rewrite-the-future/delivering_education_emergencies.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).
Care International	Emergency education programmes focus on increasing basic education attainment through enrolment and school completion rates and improving gender equality in basic education. Further information: www.care.org/careswork/whatwedo/education/?s_src=170960110000&s_subsrc (accessed 21 July 2009).
International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO	IIEP focuses on research, training and partnerships on education in emergencies and fragile contexts. Its primary mandate is to build national government capacity in this field. Further information: www.iiep.unesco.org/capacity-development/technical-assistance/emergencies-and-fragile-contexts/introduction.html (accessed 21 July 2009).
UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	UNHCR produced a three-year education strategy covering the period 2007-09. The overall goal of this strategy is to increase school enrolment rates amongst children and adolescents in camp-based environments by 30% by 2009 (10% per year) through reducing education gaps in terms of accessibility, safety and quality and post-primary education. To download the education strategy: www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/467797a22.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).
World Bank	The World Bank has formally identified fragile and post-conflict states as one of the institution's six key corporate 'strategic themes'. Consequently, the provision of quality education in fragile in environments is a key work area. One example of its work in-country is the Bank's Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC) project in Bangladesh, which is supporting community-managed programmes to educate 500,000 currently out-of-school children. Further information: go.worldbank.org/V76PLNI3Y0 (accessed 21 July 2009). For the ROSC project: web.worldbank.org/external/projects main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P086791 (accessed 21 July 2009).
Interagency Education Cluster	The global humanitarian system is going through a period of significant reform, to improve the predictability, accountability and efficiency of global response to humanitarian crises. Key to this process is the establishment of a cluster approach to coordination of humanitarian actors. As part of this, an education cluster has been established to coordinate all actors seeking to provide an education response in times of crisis. The joint lead agencies for this cluster are UNICEF and Save the Children. Further information: www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Default.aspx?tabid=115 (accessed 21 July 2009).
USAID Global Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP2)	EQUIP2 is a USAID-funded programme that supports building educational quality by facilitating access to technical expertise and resources. Further information: www.equip123.net/equip2/index_new.html (accessed 21 July 2009).

The Center for Universal Education	Founded in 2002, the Center for Universal Education (CUE) is the first major think tank focusing exclusively on the provision of quality, universal basic education among the world's poorest children, including a focus on those affected by emergencies and conflict. Further information: www.cfr.org/thinktank/cue/index.html (accessed 21 July 2009).
Norwegian Refugee Council	With a focus on war-affected populations, NRC follows three approaches to education in emergencies: Where a school system is running, a 'catch-up' scheme invites affected, out-of-school children and adolescents to join for a year before transferring to mainstream schooling. Where there is no school, Accelerated Learning Programmes are established as a temporary measure to allow 'over-aged' children and adolescents to complete basic education in half the normal time. Many young people above 14 will not be able to enter and complete an ordinary full time primary school. A one-year Youth Education Pack has been developed, offering literacy, life skills and vocational skills training for young people. Further information: www.nrc.no/?did=9220961 (accessed 21 July 2009).
BBC World Service Trust	The Trust runs projects that use media – radio broadcasts, audio classroom materials, television programmes and print publications – to support education and teacher training in areas where children are out of school, particularly as a result of conflict. Somalia and Afghanistan are current project locations. Further information: www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/whatwedo/issues/education/index.shtml.

Key literature

Whilst the topic of education in and after emergencies and conflict is a relatively young field, the body of literature is growing quickly. This is not an attempt at a comprehensive list, but rather a selection of some of the pivotal resources and publications produced over the last few years, from academic research to aides for practical implementation.

Davies, L., Harber, C., Schweisfurth, M., Yamashita, H., Cobbe, S. and Williams, C. (2009). *Education in Emergencies in South Asia: Reducing the risks facing vulnerable children.* **Report prepared for UNICEF ROSA by the Centre for International Education and Research (CIER), University of Birmingham UK.**
Research commissioned by UNICEF ROSA to identify groups who face particular vulnerability to temporary or permanent disruption in access to education during an emergency. The report sets out proactive approaches to reducing this vulnerability.

Dennis, C. and Fentiman, A. (2007). *Alternative Basic Education in African Countries Emerging from Conflict: Issues of Policy , Co-ordination and Access.* **London: DFID.**
This study explores the perspectives of young people, parents, communities, governments, international agencies and international non-governmental organizations on what aspects are crucial for reconstructing education in particular post-conflict contexts. Using detailed country studies from northern Uganda, southern Sudan and Somaliland, plus case studies from Namibia and South Africa, it looks at lessons learned, with a particular focus on Alternative Basic Education.
www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/education-emerging-conflict67.pdf
(accessed 21 July 2009).

INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction, (2004).
The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies facilitated a consultative and broad-based process in the development of global minimum standards that articulate a minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies, chronic crises and the early reconstruction phase. This is a handbook for implementation, but also an expression of commitment that all people have a right to education during emergencies. The handbook is accompanied by an online toolkit.
www.ineesite.org/index.php/post/inee_handbook/ (accessed 21 July 2009).
www.ineesite.org/toolkit/ (accessed 21 July 2009).

Midttun, E.K. (2006). Education and Emergencies. *Journal of Education for International Development,* **2:1.**
This paper examines the global situation and the prospects for education in emergencies, including natural disasters and armed conflicts. It reviews the roles of different actors in emergencies and their coordination and cooperation.
www.equip123.net/JEID/articles/2/EducationandEmergencies.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).

Nicolai, S. (2003). *Education in Emergencies: A tool kit for starting and managing education in emergencies.* **Save the Children.**
In providing a framework and practical tools, this toolkit is primarily aimed at field staff responsible for setting up and managing education projects during a crisis. The sets of tools are in the form of checklists, forms or workshop templates with a focus on simplicity and user-friendliness.
www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/education_in_emergencies.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).

Nicolai, S. and Triplehorn, C. (2003). *The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict.* **ODI, Humanitarian Practice Network.**
This is a paper that argues the case for a reappraisal of the position of education in emergency programming. It investigates some key questions. How does conflict affect a child's education? In what ways can education enhance the physical and psychosocial protection of children in war-affected or displaced communities? What risks does education programming in these contested environments present?
www.odihpn.org/documents/networkpaper042.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).

Penson, J. and Tomlinson, K. (2009). *Rapid response: programming for education needs in emergencies.* **UNESCO, IIEP, CfBT.**
This publication focuses on a number of programming issues relating to child-friendly spaces, school feeding and provision of education kits.
www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Info_Services_Publications/pdf/2009/RapidResponse.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).

Refugees Studies Centre (2006). <u>Education and conflict: research, policy and practice</u>. *Forced Migration Review,* **Supplement, July 2006**.
See particularly: Winthrop, R. (2006). *Emergencies, Education and Innovation*, p. 12.
repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:4503 (accessed 21 July 2009).

USAID Working Paper (2006). *Meeting EFA: Reaching the Underserved through Complementary Models of Effective Schooling.*
This USAID paper synthesizes the ?ndings from nine case studies of successful complementary (non-state) education programmes. The research demonstrated that the programmes are more cost-effective than government schools in delivering education services and that they achieve higher learning outcomes through, for example, adjustments in school size and location, curriculum and language of instruction.
www.equip123.net/docs/e2-MeetingEFASynth_WP.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (2004). *Global Survey on Education in Emergencies.*
An attempt to understand how many refugee, displaced and returnee children and youth have access to education and the nature of the education they receive.
www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Ed_Emerg.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).

World Bank (2005). *Reshaping the Future: Education and Post-Con?ict Reconstruction.*
Washington D.C.: World Bank.
This paper offers an overview of the key ?ndings of a study of education and post-con?ict
reconstruction and draws on a literature review, a database of key indicators for 52 con?ict-
affected countries, and a review of 12 country studies.
siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-
1099508849130/Reshaping_the_Future.pdf (accessed 21 July 2009).

Other literature
Back on track – A website for countries funded through the Education in Emergencies and Post-
crisis Transition programme. www.educationandtransition.org (accessed 21 July 2009).

IIEP (2006). *Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction.* Paris:
International Institute for Educational Planning.

Kirk, J. (2008). *Building Back Better: Post Earthquake Responses and Educational Challenges
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Sinclair, M. (2002). *Planning education in and after emergencies.* Paris: UNESCO/IIEP.

Talbot, C. (2006). *Research framework for 'certification of the learning attainments of refugees
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conflict and post-conflict situations'.* Unpublished paper. Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.

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World.* Available at www.unicef.org/publications/index_49985.html (accessed 21 July 2009).

ANNEX

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our research combined in-depth fieldwork in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and a fact-finding visit to India, with desk-study reviews of South Asia countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). We sought advice, information and direct inputs to the research from a range of informants: users with direct involvement in basic education (children, parents, teachers, employers); educational, governmental and non-governmental experts working in the field of education for hard-to-reach children and those in conflict and emergency situations; development experts in the South Asian countries including INGOs, UN agencies like UNICEF itself (ROSA and regional offices) and donor agencies; ODL professionals who work or have worked in South Asian countries and with the target groups.

Our conceptual framework for this research drew on rights-based (e.g. Tomasevski, 2001; UNICEF 2007, 2008a) and human development approaches to education (Sen, 1992, 2001), on an expanded view of access to basic education (CREATE, 2008a, b and c), recent debates and discussions about non-formal basic education and its relationship with the formal system (Rose, 2007a and b; Hoppers, 2006, 2007; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; Carron and Carr-Hill, 1991; Guyot, 2007) and equivalency programmes (Kirk, 2009; Talbot, 2006; CHAP, 2005). Chapter 2 of the report discusses this framework in more depth.

Further, to help us frame the research, we commissioned specific inputs from experts: Jack Campbell, who has worked for the international NGO ActionAid and the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), provided two detailed scenarios for analysing the educational needs of children in natural disaster and conflict zones as well as the *Education in Emergencies and Conflict* section in the grouped bibliography. These outlined the typical characteristics of the scenario, alongside needs over time (in the case of disasters) and with different groups (in the case of conflict); we also commissioned specific inputs on the costs of open schools and the implications for planning from Professor Greville Rumble, an acknowledged expert in the field and co-author of a recent study on open schools (Rumble and Koul, 2007).

Although our desk research was extensive and supplemented by a literature review of South Asia from Dr Barbara Spronk, we found a lot of literature was descriptive and short on critical evaluations of outcomes. Unpublished and other 'grey' literature was hard to get at and there was an over-dependence on highly publicized, self-proclaimed 'star' projects. Our fieldwork and consultations with experts and their input provided a crucial balance to this and gave us insights into the personal, political and policy issues involved in basic education for these groups.

The research had the following six stages:
1 Initial identification of conceptual framework and research questions through discussion (with the research team, UNICEF, informed experts, in-country experts and documentary analysis).
2 Fieldwork by visiting researchers in close collaboration with in-country UNICEF colleagues. The fieldwork included interviews with various stakeholders, including NGOs, government organizations, children, teachers, parents, employers and experts in the field of hard-to-reach

children and those in conflict and emergency area. Local literature was surveyed and two country reports prepared for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and project reports for India. Further details can be found in the companion volume *Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Country Studies*.

3   Ongoing review of literature and discussions to inform the conceptual framework and to add to the data on policy and practice. Literature included theoretical papers, national and agency policy documents, local and comparative research reports, grey literature and toolkits and other practical resources.

4   Specially commissioned contributions from experts in the fields of conflict and emergency, policy and planning, funding and costing and the South Asian overview.

5   Critical reading of each draft by the members of the project team and the research advisor Dr Hilary Perraton.

6   Detailed comments from UNICEF ROSA (who also coordinated comments from some of the UNICEF country offices) on the first and second drafts of the report and the country studies.

Fieldwork methodology

This research was carried out between January and June 2009. The methods used included both qualitative and quantitative data as mixed methods research, although the quantitative data used came from secondary sources and was not generated during the project. Document analysis was also central to the research, importantly including 'grey' literature available within the countries where the field study was carried out. The qualitative data gathering was carried out through interview, observation and sitting-in/participation in meetings and workshops. A significant number of focus-group discussions were carried out with parents, students and teachers in various urban and rural educational settings, and for these, an agreed schedule of questions was used. Qualitative data was gathered from key informants and strategic decisions were made on the range and type of informants, in discussion with UNICEF, before the project began. With an inevitable focus, given the length and type of project, on qualitative data in the form of a small number of case studies – usually focused on particular initiatives – triangulation of findings was particularly important.

There was a participatory approach to the research overall. From within the research team itself there was, as the project began, in-depth experience gained from recent, previous work in South Asia, particularly in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This was augmented by drawing on the expertise of others within the wider group of CDEC/Von Hugel Institute researchers and the advisory team to this project headed by Dr Hilary Perraton. The progress of the research was the subject of robust discussion and debate at two in-house seminars in March and April within the Von Hugel Institute.

Field studies in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

The main focus of the field study was on Bangladesh where we were looking at the full range of children unable to access or unable to complete education, including during times of natural disaster. In Sri Lanka our focus was only on children's education in times of conflict.

The questions framing the field study in Bangladesh were:
- Who is dropping out of the formal system? How detailed a picture in terms of gender, income, class, caste, ethnicity can we gain? Why do each of these sub-groups drop out?
- To what extent does the basic education offered by NGOs give an acceptable and equivalent alternative to education in the formal system?
- What is open learning already providing – and for whom?
- How acceptable is open learning, and in what ways is it acceptable (for example in terms of quality, equivalence, reintegration, employability, prestige)?
- What infrastructure for open learning is already in place such that it could be activated for an emergency?
- In what ways is provision for open learning built into new sector programmes?
- What are the gaps in current policy and practice in basic education, and how could further development of open learning help to fill them?

In Sri Lanka, our questions were:

- What does data disaggregated for gender, ethnicity, caste, etc. tell us about dropout from formal schooling in areas of conflict?
- Is conflict a separate/separable set of issues/reason for dropout/non-access to formal education or part of a wider set of reasons?
- What set of circumstances have children satisfied so that they can join open schools or reintegrate back into formal schooling?
- How easy is it to reintegrate into school – and is it more/less difficult at particular grades?
- Does government policy recognize serial disruption to education?
- What would teacher training have to look like to make teachers prepared for teaching in conflict situations, and how realistic is it to suggest that this could be part of current teacher training?
- What would good open learning look like in a situation of conflict? For example, what would need to be in place in terms of materials, attitudes and curriculum?

The parameters of the fieldwork – in terms broadly, for example, of where in both countries we were going to visit, and the types of participants we were going to were going talk to – were discussed and agreed with UNICEF ROSA before the visits began. Importantly, those initial agreements were then refined once we were in country, through discussion with the local UNICEF office and with our other contacts in each country. For example, we had originally planned to visit Chittagong in Bangladesh, to look at education for ethnic minorities and in remote rural regions. However, on the advice of UNICEF Dhaka, we went to Sylhet Division as it was felt that the education of hard-to-reach children in Sylhet was under-researched. Similarly in Sri Lanka, it was in consultation with the UNICEF office in Colombo that the decision to focus on the resettlement areas was taken, rather than, say, looking at education in the IDP camps.

Summary of activity in Bangladesh
- Initial discussions with UNICEF Dhaka to focus on perceived priorities and help shape plans for fieldwork out of Dhaka.
- Collection and analysis of documents and data (much 'grey' literature collected in Dhaka),
- Field visit locations:
  - Dhaka: UNICEF offices and government offices for meetings with government officials and policy makers, head offices of NGOs, education sites in slum areas, technical and vocational schools
  - Gazipur: Open University and Open School
  - Badda
  - Sylhet Division – Srimangal District, Maulvi Bazaar – NGO school sites – particularly in the tea plantation area, regional and head offices of selected NGOs
  - Sylhet town: technical school, slum area.
- Final visit to UNICEF Dhaka for discussion of findings.

Summary of activity in Sri Lanka (across two visits)
- Initial discussions with UNICEF Sri Lanka to focus on perceived priorities and help shape plans for fieldwork.
- Collection and analysis of documents and data (much 'grey' literature collected in Colombo and also sent on after the first field visit).
- Field visit locations:
  - Colombo: UNICEF offices and government offices such as MoE/NEC/NIE for meetings with government officials and policy makers, Department of Open School, head offices of NGOs, Open University
  - Batticaloa: primary resettlement schools, TRC, CRC, government offices such as zone directors of education, UNICEF office
  - Trincomalee secondary resettlement schools in Muttur and Muttur East, zone directors of education, UNICEF office.
- Final visit to UNICEF Colombo for discussion of findings.