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On-going projects

Longitudinal Study on System Indicators—Organization of Workshops at the Cluster Level

To collect second round data on 43 various indicators workshops were organized in Kathmandu, Chitwan, Banke, Kailali and Morang under the longitudinal study on system indicators. School head teachers, former Village Development Committee chairpersons, representatives of the Municipalities, Regional Education Directors and officials, District Education Officers, and administrative officials from 16 sample districts covered by the study took part in the workshops. In Kathmandu the workshop was organized 23 to 25 January 2006 and in other places the workshops were organized 3 to 7 March 2006.

Case Studies
Five case studies on various research topics are being conducted. These studies were started in January 2006 and will be completed by the second week of July. Two other short-term case studies known as micro researches were also begun in May 2006. These two studies will also be completed within the second week of July. A brief description of all these studies is given below.

Life skill education: nature of the issues and their linkage to system provision

A good education system provides life skills which enable students to face the challenges of life. Life skill education helps develop abilities for adaptive and positive behavior. It also fosters generic skills related to a wide variety of areas such as health
and social needs. For Nepal, the thematic report on EFA has recognized the need of survival skills for developing employment and earning potentials.

It looks at transferable skills as no less relevant. Life skill education was one of the major areas covered in the formative research last year. CDC has attempted to include life skills in the health education and NCED is working on the training aspect of life skill education.

The study aims to link life skill education to the system provision and to identify ways to make it operational in a child-friendly way (in the classroom) through the curriculum and teacher training.

The research questions provided for this study relate to educational response to life-skill needs. Case study, which is the frame of this study, includes classroom observation and interviews with parents, teachers and other stakeholders.

**Effectiveness of school/community-based monitoring system**

Monitoring is very crucial to the operation of the CMS program in the community-based schools. It relates directly to a wide range of things such as CMS operation, quality of education, use of incentive grants and SMC initiatives. In order to achieve the goal of the reform under the decentralization program, DEP and SIP were introduced as steps towards fostering the decentralized reform initiative in education.

There are challenges to efficient operation of primary schools and to the monitoring and supervision of community-based schools. Several training programs were launched on hefty budget. Despite policy stress local monitoring, has been only sporadic in practice.

The study intends to identify the extent of success in the monitoring.

**Gender equality and gender friendly environment in school**

In pursuance of the spirit of EFA goals (to be achieved by 2015) the Ministry of Education and Sports has been making efforts to bring gender equality in education. So the policy reform of MOES aims to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education and achieve over-all gender equality in education by 2015.

This study intends not only to identify the determinants of girl-friendly and female-teacher-friendly environment in the school but also to draw implications for policy decisions and strategies which will ensure girls’ access to quality education by 2015.

Reviews of the relevant educational policy documents and reports of research studies on gender education will be made. Various research tools such as FGD, interviews (male/female teachers, head teachers, girls, parents and community people) will be used during field study.

Data pertaining to the research questions will be collected through observation, interview, FGD and peer interaction.

**Situation of inclusive classroom in Nepal**

Inclusive education responds to the needs of various types of children including the disabled and disadvantaged ones irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, etc. In Nepal, the groups focused under the IE program are the children who are disabled (blind, deaf, mentally retarded and physically disabled), emotionally disturbed, remote-area-based and ethically disadvantaged, or marginalized, and also the children who were victimized by the conflict or are living as street-dwellers.

Inclusive education is relatively a new concept in Nepal. Initially, the IE program was introduced as a pilot program in four districts in 2000. In 2005, 150 schools of 14 more districts were included in the program, and the total number of schools and districts reached 210 and 22 respectively. There is a target of including 500 more schools by the year 2009.

The objective of the study is to explore the system and mechanism that have been used in identifying the differing needs of children (in the classroom), assess teachers’ awareness of and sensitivity towards special needs children, evaluate teachers’ capacity in meeting the learning needs of such children, and examine the practices used in setting the classroom with inclusive environment.
A Comparative study of the effectiveness of school-based and community-based ECD program and the role of INGOs/NGOs in the implementation of ECD program

School Based Early Childhood Development (SBEC) and Community Based Early Childhood Development (CBECD) Centers are being operated in three modes: (i) through government initiatives (ii) on INGO-NGO partnership, and (iii) on Government-INGO partnership. The CBECD centers operated in Ilam on the partnership of DEO, DDC and UNICEF were found better in terms of physical facilities and finance. Now ECD programs are being operated in other districts on the partnership of DEOs and INGOs like Save the Children/US and Plan Nepal.

The main objective of the study is to compare the effectiveness of SBEC and CBECD programs, to score the role of INGOs/NGOs in the implementation of ECD, to assess relationships among community, parents and ECD centers, to assess the activities being carried out in SBEC and CBECD centers, and to examine the effectiveness of INGOs/NGOs partnership in the ECD programs.

Under this study, the effectiveness of INGOs/NGOs partnership will be assessed on the basis of indicators like distribution of SBEC and CBECD centers, development of physical infrastructure, training, distribution of Children Learning Materials (CLMs), collection and mobilization of fund, and monitoring. Selected districts, ECD centers, respondents at the central, district and grassroots levels will be selected for obtaining necessary information.

Mainstreaming the Madrasas in Nepal

A big majority of Muslim children (40.71 per cent) of primary age have no access to mainstream education because Muslim parents prefer Madrasa education to mainstream education. Currently, 41.22% children are in the Madrasas.

Lack of religion-based education (in a Muslim environment), poor financial condition, language problem, Purdah system, conservative mind-set of parents are the reasons for low participation of Muslim children in the mainstream education.

However, according to a recent FRP study, Muslim parents are opting for an education system that integrates mainstream education and religious needs of their children. This study aims to identify ways to the inclusion of Islamic values in the public school curriculum and also focuses on suggesting a curricular framework that seeks the integration of the major subjects of primary school and the Madrasa and vice versa.

Various study tools and techniques such as in-depth interview, FGD, peer discussion (key informants) and document analysis will be used.

Education of internally displaced children: provisions and challenges

An Amnesty report says that many Nepalese children are hard hit by poverty, lack of access to basic opportunities, discrimination, trafficking and sexual abuse. The Community Study and Welfare Center cites a large figure of forced displacement of young people from home as a result of the conflict.

The present study will focus on the conditions and status of internally displaced children, the provisions available for the physical, psychological and educational needs of such children at the government, NGO and INGO levels, the effectiveness of programs being run by various organizations, and their coverage and process of normalizing the existing status of children in general.

Various study tools will be used for gathering data and information necessary for the study. This will include field survey, FGD and observation. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected.

Organization of Meetings and Workshops

FRAG Meetings

Formative Research Advisory Group (FRAG) meetings were held to
review the research proposals, discuss with the external evaluation team members and meet the Norwegian consultants to review the progress of the project activities. Chairperson of FRAG Dr. Ishwar Prasad Upadhyaya chaired the FRAG meetings.

Selection Committee Meeting
Selection Committee meetings were convened to select researchers on the criteria developed by the committee for conducting case studies (in the current year) and review the proposals submitted by them. The meetings were chaired by Dr. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya, the Executive Director of CERID.

Meeting of MOES and CERID
Meetings of the officials of the Ministry of Education and Sports and CERID were regularly held to review the progress of the FRP activities and the Institutional Cooperation and Capacity Building programs. The meetings also analyzed and reviewed the annual work plan and budget for the coming fiscal year.

Consultative Meetings
All the researchers involved in conducting case studies organized consultative meetings with the concerned officials of MOES and DOE. The first-level consultative meeting was held to discuss the project proposals and research tools and the second level to discuss the preliminary findings of the studies. The researchers will conduct the next round of meeting on completion of the studies.

Workshop on Qualitative Research Methods and Case Studies
A 2-day workshop on Qualitative Research Methods which have been prominently used in the Formative Research Project was organized for the researchers and associate researchers on 10 and 11 February 2006 at CERID, Balkhu. The content of the workshop included perspectives on educational research, concepts and methods of qualitative research and case studies, frameworks of case studies, and critical aspects of research implication. All the researchers and associates currently involved in FRP participated in the workshop. Prof. Bajra Raj Shakya, (FRAG member), Prof. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya (Executive Director of CERID), Dr. Shreeram Lamichhane and Roshan Chitrakar, (Associate Professors at CERID), Mr. Bal Chandra Luitel (Associate Professor of Kathmandu University) and Dr. Kishor Shrestha (Coordinator of FRP) presented papers on various topics and facilitated the sessions. It was found that the workshop helped to re-energize the research potentials of the FRP researchers and associates. It was felt that such workshops should be organized at least twice a year to sort out various important research issues.

Dissemination Seminars
A series of 2-day seminars on dissemination of research findings and collection of key research questions for the coming year were organized in the 5 Development Regions of the country. Nepali abstracts of research reports (2005) under the Formative Research Project for EFA 2004-09 were disseminated to the participants. Nearly 45 people participated in each of the seminars. The participants included Regional Educational Directors (REDS), District Education Officers (DEOs), school supervisors, resource persons, officials from DEOs, representatives from District Development Committee, District Education Committee, Municipalities, VDCs, Teachers’ Unions, Indigenous Peoples’ Organizations, Dalit Organizations, Mothers’ Groups, I/NGOs, Journalists, Civil Society, SMCs, PTAs, and selected Head Teachers and Teachers. The seminar was held in Banke, Chitwan, Kailali, Sunsari and Kaski districts from 7 May to 2 June 2006.

Seminar on ‘Child-Centered Education’
A 1-day seminar on “Child-Centered Education and Its Development” was organized by CERID on 31 May,
2006 at Yak Palace, Hotel Narayani, Pulchowk. The seminar was a part of the capacity building program under FRP for EFA 2004-09. The seminar was facilitated by Prof. Lars Monsen, (Lillehammer University College, Norway) and Prof. Kristin Tornes, (Research Advisor, FRP).

The main purpose of the seminar was to open up a discussion on how child-centered education can be put into practice in the Nepalese primary school classrooms. The seminar reviewed the conceptual background of child-centered education, made an overview of the existing practice in terms of curricular and teacher preparation initiatives, and reflected on the research findings related to classroom instructional practices.

The paper Concept of Child-Centered Education and its Development was presented by Prof. Lars Monsen. Similarly, Mr. Ananda Paudel from CDC presented a paper on Practice of Child-Centered Education undertaken by CDC/NCED. Mr. Ganesh Singh, FRP researcher, presented a synthesis paper on his research findings on the Situation of Child-Centered Education in Nepal. The seminar was participated in by officials from MOES, DOE, CDC and NCED, FRP researchers and selected NGO/INGO representatives and school teachers.

Evaluation of FRP

An evaluation of FRP was conducted by the Centre for Health and Social Development (HeSo), Norway. The evaluation team from Norway visited Nepal 9 to 20 January 2006. The team was composed of Mr. Stein Erik Kruse and Mr. Wim Hoppers from HeSo and Ms. Basudha Gurung from Organization Development Centre (ODC)/Nepal. The team reviewed the FRP documents and research reports. The team also interviewed the researchers, FRAG members, resource persons, associates and officials at MOES, DOE and CERID. The interviews were conducted individually as well as in groups. The team also visited the Kavre district and discussed with the teachers and SMC members of the two FRP sample schools involved in the longitudinal study. The team interviewed the authorities of the Dhulikhel Municipality and resource persons at DOE, Kavre. At the later part of the visit, the evaluation team shared the preliminary findings of the study with the FRP researchers of CERID and key officials from MOES and DOE.

Visits to and from Norway

A study visit team led by the Coordinator of Formative Research Project Dr. Kishor Shrestha, visited Oslo/Norway 24 to 30 March 2006. Other members of the team were Dr. Shreeram Lamichhane, Mr. Raju Manandhar and Mr. Rom Prasad Bhattarai.

The objective of the visit was to study the Norwegian experience related to formative research in Norway (introduced in 1994 and 1997), and to develop an institutional linkage between the Norwegian and Nepalese institutions involved mainly in educational research and development programs. The technical advisor of FRP, Prof. Kristin Tornes, facilitated the visit. The team visited the Lillehammer University College and held a discussion with Prof. Lars Monsen on educational reforms in Norway. The team also visited the Central Bureau of Statistics of Norway and shared ideas with the authorities on possibility of establishing institutional linkage so as to share technical expertise on data analysis of the longitudinal study on system indicators. Ms. Merit Vedeld and her colleagues from NORAD presented their views on future cooperation to
the study visit team, when the team visited the Head Office of NORAD. The head of NIFU, Mr. Per Olaf Aamodt and other members of the institution on the visit to NIFU said, they are enthusiastic about further strengthening the institutional linkage between CERID and NIFU. The team also visited Utdanningsdirektoratet, the Department of Education, to learn about the organizational structure and share experiences of the educational reform in Norway. The study team also visited a primary school—Lesterud Skole.

Mr. Stein Erik Kruse and Mr. Wim Hoppers from HeSo visited Nepal for the purpose of evaluation of FRP activities 9 to 20 January 2006.

Prof. Kristin Tornes, Research Advisor to FRP, visited CERID 24 May to 1 June 2006. During her visit Prof. Tornes reviewed the draft research reports and provided necessary comments and suggestions on them. She also visited some of the project schools in the Kaski district. Besides, she visited the District Education Office and took part in an interaction session which was participated in by the Officiating DEO, school supervisors, resource persons, representative from the Regional Education Directorate and teachers.

Prof. Lars Monsen from Lillehammer University College visited CERID 26 May to 2 June 2006. Prof. Monsen had a series of meetings with the FRP researchers. He also met the FRAG members and MOES and DOE officials and shared his experience of conducting formative research in Norway in 1994 and 1997. He also paid a visit to the Kaski district and observed some of the schools there. He was a key speaker at the seminar on Child-Centered Education and Its Development organized by CERID on 31 May 2006.

Capacity building activities

Under the capacity building program of FRP, MOES and DOE initiated various activities. The seven different issues were identified during Norway visit by MOES/DOE officials to initiate the capacity building activities. Based on these issues various programs and action steps have been developed. For public hearing a series of sessions were organized in order to share the government plans, policies and education-related issues. The website is being updated with more information and documents related to education programs and policies. A dynamic website has been created at MOES. The process of vertical communication and sharing system is being transformed to more horizontal communication and sharing. There has been a visible change in the culture of sharing after the initiation of the capacity building program. The publication of school level information at the district level is in the offing. Under this program efforts are being made to make computers available to all the district education offices and prepare required human resources by organizing on-the-job training focused on the use of software. This is expected to increase the efficiency of the education system at the district level and help publish Flash Reports. A policy committee has been formed consisting of relevant Hon’ble Ministers, Secretaries, Civil Society Organizations and professionals. For tracking and timely reporting of financial matters computer software has been introduced on a trial basis in order to bring uniformity in government accounting system. As a result, all the cost centers have made a positive impact on the financial reporting system.