The Formative Research Project is being undertaken by the Tribhuvan University, Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) for the Ministry of Education and Sports, His Majesty's Government, Nepal.

FRP Publication

The Formative Research Project conducted various research projects under five different areas during the year 2002/03: (1) Access and Retention, (2) Learning Achievement, (3) Management and Capacity Building, (4) SIP-Based Development, and (5) Overall.

A booklet entitled FRP Major Findings, which has recently been prepared, contains in brief all the crucial findings of all the FRP activities, action steps to be undertaken and identification of the authorities to undertake the actions suggested. This booklet serves as an information kit of the FRP studies undertaken.

List of Study Reports Published

Formative Research Project of 2002

1. Development and Implementation of District Education Plan (Study Report 1)
2. Quality and Accuracy of School Reported Data (Study Report 2)
3. Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups (Study Report 3)
4. Effective Classroom Teaching/Learning (Phase 1: Classroom Delivery) (Study Report 4)
5. School Effectiveness in Nepal: A Synthesis of Indicators (Study Report 5)
6. Stocktaking of the BPEP II Studies (Study Report 6)

Formative Research Project of 2003

1. Effectiveness of Incentive/Scholarship Programmes for Girls and Disadvantaged Children (Study Report 7)
2. Management of Community-based Early Childhood Development Programme of Department of Education (Study Report 8)
3. Access of Muslim Children to Education (Study Report 9)
4. Effective Classroom Teaching/Learning: Transfer of Training Skills in the Classroom Delivery (Study Report 10)
5. School Effectiveness: A Synthesis of Indicators (Phase II) (Study Report 11)
6. A Study on Multi-grade/Multi-class Teaching: Status and Issues (Study Report 12)
7. School Improvement Plan and Its Implementation (Study Report 13)
8. Management Transfer of Public Schools (Study Report 14)
9. Longitudinal Study on System Indicators (Study Report 15)
10. Stocktaking of the Studies Related to BPEP II (Study Report 16)

FRAG Meetings

- 24 November 2003 - The Formative Research Advisory Group (FRAG) meeting reviewed the action steps of all the FRP projects carried out during the period 2002-2003.
- 15 February 2004 - FRAG made a progress review of all research activities of the 3rd year programme of FRP.

Apart from the two major meetings, several smaller meetings were held for the purpose of evaluating and monitoring the in-depth study of each research project.

New Comers in FRP

- Dr. Kishor Shrestha, Associate Professor, CERID has been appointed coordinator of FRP, effective from 1st January 2004. Dr. Bijaya Thapa, who had been working as the coordinator of the project since its inception, is on a sabbatical leave.
Mr. Diwakar Dhungel, Chief of the Monitoring Unit and Under-Secretary, MOES, HMG has been associated with the FRP activities of CERID since 22 September 2003. Previous to this Mr. Hem Raj Lekhak, Under-Secretary, MOES had worked with the project. CERID is indebted to Mr. Lekhak for the valuable contributions he made to the project during his tenure.

Dissemination Seminar

A dissemination seminar on Major Research Findings and Suggested Action Steps for the Fiscal Year 2002/03 was organised in Kathmandu on 4th November 2003 for the donors and key stakeholders.

Current Status

FRAG approved the Major Research Findings and Suggested Action Steps for the fiscal year 2002/03 to be submitted to the Planning Division of MOES for implementation.

Out of the fourteen studies, eight are undergoing first-round field activities and two are at the stage of finalising the technical research proposals. Requests have been made regarding the remaining topics for submitting preliminary proposals based on research questions.

Visits to and from Norway

Visits of Norwegian Experts

Prof. Kristin Tornes, Technical Advisor of the Formative Research Project, visited Nepal from 22 October to 4 November 2003. The main purpose of her visit was to assist CERID in carrying out the Formative Research Project by addressing the current challenges of Basic and Primary Education Programme II. During her visit she had a series of meetings with the FRP researchers. She also had formal meetings with MOES, DOE and CERID personnel. She reviewed the ongoing FRP activities including the in-depth studies and a longitudinal study on system indicators. Dr. Kai Bedringas also participated in the progress review and also held meetings with CERID, MOES and DOE personnel.

Mr. Dankert Vedeler and Mr. Hakon Bjornes from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research visited CERID from 29 January to 5 February 2004. During their stay in Nepal they had fruitful meetings with FRP researchers of CERID and high-ranking officials of MOES, which focused mainly on research findings, reviews of research reports and new projects, FRP’s final report and an overall assessment of project activities.

In addition, an interaction and discussion session was conducted at the Ministry of Education and Sports, HMG, Keshar Mahal on the conceptual proposal of FRP Phase II. Mr. Vidyadhar Mallik, Secretary of MOES and other officials from the Ministry were also present in the discussion.

Prof. Kristin Tornes was in Kathmandu again from 19 to 27 February 2004. During her visit, she had important meetings with the FRP researchers on the ongoing progress of the project activities.

A review of research reports and the proposed research proposals to be conducted during the period 2003-2004 was also made during Prof. Tornes’ visit. She had a detailed discussion with the concerned authorities of MOES on the completion process of FRP Phase I, which is due for the end of July 2004. The discussion has enhanced the good relations that already exist between the two Ministries.

Visit to Norway by Nepal Formative Research Project (FRP) Team (Oslo, 13-19 October 2003)

A delegation from Nepal led by Mr. Vidyadhar Mallik, Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, visited to Oslo, Norway from 13-19 October for a follow-up study of FRP and also to participate in the conference on 'Fighting poverty' organised by NORAD on the occasion of Poverty Alleviation Day (17 October). The other members of the delegation included: Mr. Ramsarobar Dubey, Joint Secretary, Planning Division of MOES, Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane, Director, Department of Education, Mr. Hemraj Lekhak, Under-Secretary, Monitoring Section, MOES; and Dr. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya, Executive Director, CERID, Tribhuvan University.

Highlights of the Visit

A seminar meeting was held at the Ministry of Education and Research, Norway on the experiences of Formative Research and its utilisation in Norway and on the FRP
experiences of Nepal with BPEP II. Another seminar was held at the Department of Education, Oslo on the process of Curriculum Reform in Norway. A working meeting was held to discuss the future course of formative research in Nepal.

The Executive Director of CERID, Dr. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya shared the experiences of the current phase of FRP in Nepal - the challenges, the important lessons learned, and the progress made. Dr. Bajracharya listed the following as the important points for effective undertaking of FRP activities in the country:

- Adaptation of the FRP approach to Nepalese contexts by involving implementers in research studies as resource persons and for direct research-based interaction and feedback.
- Research focused on the critical examination of tangible findings that are relevant as well as understandable at utilisation level. The emphasis should be on the usefulness, not just on knowledge expansion.
- Internalisation and utilisation of the research by the users in different ways and at different levels: stakeholders' group (FRAG) supported MOES/DOE in preparing research based action steps in a simple and direct form.
- Synchronising the FRP activities, including research and reporting, with the decision-making cycle: Budget process, ASIP, annual review meeting, etc.

**Ongoing Research Projects**

- **School Effectiveness: Head Teacher’s Leadership**

  His Majesty’s Government in pursuance of the 7th Amendment of Education Act intends to transfer the management of schools to the communities in order to improve school effectiveness through the School Effectiveness Programme. The main thrust of this programme is greater participation of the local people and school community. The intention and spirit of HMG is praiseworthy; however, non-clarity of policy on transfer of management on the part of HMG has created confusion among schools and communities. As a consequence, some schools have done well whereas a majority are in a worse condition than before. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to assess the instances of successful management, by identifying the teachers and the community factors that have contributed to strong leadership and better school management.

- **Effective Operation and Sustainable Development of ECD programme: Strategies for Rapid Expansion**

  During the Tenth Plan period HMG intends to establish at least 26,000 ECD centres to provide services to 32% of the total number of children aged 3 to 5 years. The Education for All (EFA) National Plan of Action has a target of 74,000 ECD centres to be established by the year 2015 to serve 80% of the total number of children of that age group.

  The above target of HMG is so ambitious that even if the ECD centres are established, the challenge of sustainability will remain a major constraint unless the communities actively and realistically participate in the programme. Thus, the study is intended to assess the operation of the ECD programme, examine the efforts made for sustainable development, and develop strategies for a rapid expansion of the ECD programme.

- **Effective Classroom Teaching-Learning (Phase 3) - School-Based Assessment**

  One of the major focus areas of BPEP is quality improvement, i.e. improvement of the teaching-learning process. Thus, for the enhancement of quality, studies on various inputs including curriculum, curricular materials and transfer of training skills have already been carried out. As assessment is one of the major elements of the teaching-learning process, types and quality of assessment instruments need to be examined and re-evaluated for better results. This study, therefore, aims to assess levels of learning and to maintain linkage with national levels of learning and the practice of CAS for the improvement of teaching-learning.

- **Community Managed Schools in Nepal**

  The Education for All National Plan of Action has set several goals and adopted different strategies in the process of providing quality primary education to all. Of the many strategies, mobilization of the local community and organizations for planning, arrangement, operation and monitoring are the significant ones. With this in view the government has decided to transfer the management of 600 schools to the communities. The decision of the government has raised issues regarding the non-preparedness of the local bodies to assume the post-transfer responsibilities. This situation has led to dependence of CMS on government budget and skepticism about the sustainability of the programme. The purpose of the study is to highlight the policy related to CMS, the factors that motivated the community to run the school, the status of CMS operations, problems associated with it and so forth.

- **Longitudinal Study on System Indicators**

  This study has been conceptualised so as to provide quantitative database information to other qualitative research undertakings. It is assumed that such information will produce strategic information for the Ministry of
Education and Sports on a periodic basis. The study focuses on five major areas of BPEP, namely (1) physical facilities, (2) access and retention, (3) learning and achievement, (4) management and capacity building, and (5) SIP-based development programme. It has been so designed that it could include new indicators and variables so that BPEP can be implemented and new instruments and incentives be developed. At least 40 indicators (out of 171) have been selected after a series of discussions with the Ministry.

**Access of Muslim Children to Education: Phase 2**

Although the Muslim population comprises about 4.2% of the total population, its literacy percentage is far below the national average and is recognised as Special Focus Group (SFG) under BPEP. Thus the study aims to identify the main obstacles in the access of Muslim children to education and thereby find out the educational status of Muslims in the sample areas, trace the flow of Muslim children to traditional and modern schools and the reasons for their choice, analyse the regularity of the students’ participation in schools, and explore the possibility of utilizing Madrasas in providing mainstream education.

**Situation Analysis of the Special Needs Education Programme for the Expansion of Inclusive Education**

HMG is conducting Inclusive Education (IE), which is a new concept incorporating the special education programme for the disabled and disadvantaged children of all types and categories in the existing educational system. The programme intends to bring all types of children to the educational platform without any discrimination. This sort of programme needs an extensive collaborative support and active participation of the communities.

The objectives of the study are to underline good experiences of the pilot programmes on IE, identify lacunae between policy and implementation in special needs education, explore the problems encountered in the implementation of the policy and provide suggestions for improvement.

**An Analytical Study of Existing Multi-grade and Multi-class Teaching Practices in Nepal**

The practice of multi-grade teaching is concerned with teaching two or more age groups or grades together in the same classroom by the same teacher. But the situation prevalent with multi-grade practice is confused with multi-class teaching. This needs clear identification of the basic specifications and requirements for effective instructional delivery in both the settings. This study, therefore, is expected to find out specific strategies to address the issues of the use of appropriate instruction arrangements based on the contemporary national context and the broad pedagogical needs of the nation. Thus, the study focuses on existing educational policies, basic specifications for multi-grade and multi-class teaching, suggestions for effectiveness of the systems and indexes by which to consider a school for multi-grade teaching.

**Research Studies Completed**

Given below is a list of the research studies conducted during the year 2002-2003, together with the major findings and recommendations.

**Effectiveness of Incentive/Scholarship Programmes for Girls and Disadvantaged Children**

Nepalese girls and children of ethnic and minority caste groups are suppressed, neglected and forced to live in deprived conditions. The incentives provided and the scholarship programmes launched did improve and increase enrolment of girls and disadvantaged children in schools, but there was the problem of ensuring efficiency. The implementation and monitoring should have been rigorously and vigorously done.

- parents want their daughters to get married rather than to go to school
- preference is given to Madrasa in the Muslim community
- failure and repeater rates in grade I are very high
- school age children prefer working as porters to going to school
- physical facility supply is inadequate
- classroom space is insufficient and teacher supply is inadequate

**Recommendations**

The problems need to be solved through (1) community mobilization, (2) reduction of gaps, (3) distribution of incentives in time, and (4) managerial support.

* Management of Community-based Early Childhood Development Programme of Department of Education (CBECD)

Financial support provided to the centres was not enough. The chairperson/members were not given training on how to manage the CBEC centes at the community level. The facilitators were not adequately trained on how the CBEC centers would be managed after the government discontinues providing financial support.

This study clearly indicates the need to involve the local community in the planning, implementing and monitoring of the CBEC centres.

**Major Findings**

- The way of managing the Community-based Early Childhood Development (CBEC) programme at the district level through the District Child Development Board (DCDB) in Ilam was found satisfactory as far as the management of physical facilities and collection and mobilisation of the fund was concerned.
- Financial support provided by DOE to the CBEC centres for making them sustainable was not found effective because DCDB or DEO or NGO has provided financial support only once in Ilam and Kailali in spite of the provision of this support three times (in three consecutive years). Furthermore, DEO has not provided this support to CBEC centres of Jumla because none of them deposited the matching fund.
- The mobilisation of local NGOs with the support of UNICEF for the implementation and monitoring of CBEC programme was found to be effective in Ilam.
- Some of the MC chairpersons/members were not aware of how to manage the CBEC centres at the community level, because they did not receive any training or orientation in this direction.

**Recommendations**

- The CBEC programme should be conducted in other districts with the partnership of the District Education Office (DEO) and the District Development Committee (DDC) through DCDB, as in Ilam.
- The school supervisor (SS), who works partially as FP for the CBEC programme, should be made fully responsible for the management of the programme.
- The DOE should release the budget to DEOs for granting the financial support to the CBEC centres three times (in three consecutive years) as per the DOE policy, and the amount of such support should also be increased so as to help the centres to be sustainable.
- There should be flexibility in the ratio of the financial support to the matching fund depending upon the economic status of the target group.
- A system of NGO mobilisation as practised in Ilam should be implemented in other districts.
- A practical package of management training for both the MC chairpersons/members and the facilitators should be developed and implemented by DOE.

* Access of Muslim Children to Education

This research study was focused on identifying the obstacles to the participation of the Muslim children in school general education. The obstacles have been explained under the titles - economic factor, religious factor, cultural factor, language mistrust, skill training and incentive distribution.

**Major Findings**

- 52 percent of the population is economically inactive and all women depend on men's income.
- Madrasa education is mandatory.
- General schools do not teach the Islamic code of conduct.
- Muslims want their children to learn Urdu, which general schools do not teach.
- The Muslims feel that getting general school education is a way to government job where they will be discriminated.
- They want income generating skills to be included in school curriculum.
- Government incentive in monetary form did not reach the Muslim children.

**Recommendations**

- Creation of environment - (i) The government should permit the teaching (in Urdu) of the Islamic code of conduct in public primary schools for Muslim children and (ii) BPEP should develop a bridging course (containing mainstream subjects) to help Madrasa educated students enrol in public schools.
- Policy decision - The government should provide at least one mainstream subject teacher to each registered Madrasa, as well as an option to each Madrasa to register as an educational institution.
- Teacher Molvi - Motivational and trust building activities should be conducted regularly, particularly for the Molvis (teachers) with the help of religious and social leaders.
- Further research - MOES should start a pilot study (in-depth) at least in 6 districts where Muslims make up more than 10 percent of the population. Example districts: Mohattari, Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Kapilvastu and Banke.
Effective Classroom Teaching-Learning: Transfer of Training Skills in the Classroom Delivery

Training is indispensable but it has not been of sufficiently high-quality. The monitoring aspect should be effective and there should be no communication gap between the trainers and the trainees. Training should yield results.

Major Findings
- The transfer of training skills into classroom delivery were found dependent on the level of teachers' confidence in the techniques/methods suggested; sufficient opportunities to discuss, demonstrate and practise; and consistent practice of each skill during training.
- The content of activities and the examples in the training manuals are relevant and effective in a number of cases; but some need revision/improvement.
- Training delivery quality/effectiveness differed from trainer to trainer.

Recommendations
- Provide training to the trainers covering training delivery skills.
- Adopt evaluation procedures.
- Provide focused training covering basic, essential skills. Give emphasis to discussion, demonstration and practice.
- Model classroom situations in training.
- Monitor the practical use made of the training skills, etc.

Multi-grade/Multi-Class Teaching: Status and Issues

Multi-grade and multi-class teaching are arrangements where children of more than one grade or class are taught together by a single teacher in one single classroom. Multi-grade teaching has long been a practice in both developed and developing countries with different institutional arrangements and modalities. The main focus of this study lies in scrutinizing the existing situation and practice of multi-grade teaching in Nepal.

This study focuses on the success pertaining to the existing situation and the practice of classroom teaching in the multi-grade environment, analyses teacher training and reviews the global concept.

Major Findings
- MGT has been considered by a majority of the teachers as an unwanted reality. They practise it only as a stopgap.
- About 73 percent of the primary schools of the sample districts were found to have a fewer number of teachers than the grades actually required, and the rest (27 percent) were found to be ‘teacher-complete’ schools.
- In the sample schools, 23 percent of the classes were multi-grade - 36 percent were multi-class and 41 percent were mono-grade teaching.
- For 68 grades, there were only 60 rooms of which six were used for office and store purpose in 15 observed schools. Considering that multi-grade teaching took place 13.3% in rooms and 12 percent on open ground, it seems to be practised in 24 percent of classes.
- Teachers’ guides were only partially available in a big majority (86.7%) of the schools.

Recommendations
- As the practice of multi-class and multi-grade is very common in the schools of Nepal, the need for a scientific mapping of such practice is strongly felt in order to identify the exact number of schools with multi-class and multi-grade practices.
- The schools waiting for the teacher quota as per the increasing number of students' enrolment in the school should be defined as multi-class schools whereas small schools of the rural-remote area where the number of students is too low to get additional teacher quota should be defined as multi-grade schools.
- The government should develop basic specifications for the practice of multi-grade and multi-class teaching, and implement them strictly.
- Multi-class teaching should also be considered while providing MGT training to the teachers.
- To make MGT training demand-driven and need-based, coverage, intensity, and duration of MGT recurrent training should be duly addressed by making it more adaptable and flexible in terms of content and instructional strategy.
- A strong monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanism is necessary to facilitate multi-grade/multi-class and mono-grade teaching.

School Improvement Plan

Human resources and skills have a profound impact on school effectiveness. Physical facilities are unarguably important. Political interference should not affect the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Appointment of teachers should be based on qualifications, experience and personality. Supervision and monitoring should be effective and efficient and training should be organised for teachers. Since the time factor was given little consideration, SIP implementation has suffered from time management problems. All stakeholders should be dedicated to SIP.
The school improvement plan is indeed a praiseworthy effort of HMG in translating the vision of decentralization in education.

Major Findings
- SIP has been regarded and followed as a major decentralisation reform measure to improve school affairs at the policy level.
- SIPs have only been informally discussed by SMCs; hence, it is difficult to develop the feeling of SIP ownership (in the schools).
- SIP initiated planning exercises at the school level; hence, it is expected to promote bottom-up planning for school improvement.
- As the training programme has little impact on enhancing planning skill at the school level, it appears that SIP preparation lacks necessary expertise.
- The SIP implementation process has become instrumental in the involvement of local bodies.

Recommendations
- Insist on SIP as a basis for reform endeavour in education.
- Adopt SIP as an official document and get SMC approval for it.
- Institutionalise SIP at the school level by fostering closer proximity between the school and the community.
- Develop a manual that is precise, simple and contributory to enhancing local stakeholders' skills and competencies necessary for school development efforts.
- Make SIP a basis of funding for all development programmes of the school.

Management Transfer of Public Schools
Transfer of the management of public schools to the community is an attempt to involve community members in the management and operation of local educational activities, which expects the SMC, parents and teachers to act responsible and be accountable.

This study has reviewed the process of management transfer of the public schools and sheds light on the present status of the community-managed schools.

Major Findings
- Management transfer did not evolve spontaneously from the communities.
- No prior preparation was made for the transfer.
- Only primary schools got approval to turn into CMS.
- Local bodies were indifferent to matters of management transfer.
- SMCs did not demonstrate any capability to run the CMS.
- Management transfer did not make CMS independent.
- Local monitoring has not yet been evolved.

- The focus of decentralisation is not consistent; it differs from one document to another: Education Act, Local Self-Governance Act and CMS Operation Directives.

Recommendations
- Streamline the CMS Operation Directives, the Education Act and the Local Self-Governance Act, to facilitate decentralisation at the village level.
- Orient the SMC members, school community, local level community leaders and parents on all aspects of management transfer.
- Empower SMC to make critical decisions on all school affairs including teachers' recruitment and transfer.
- Involve local bodies for the management of schools and resource mobilisation in order to supplement the government grant.
- Include the secondary level in the process of management transfer.
- Conduct further research to suggest better strategies for the improvement and strengthening of the community-managed schools.

Stocktaking of the Studies related to BPEP II

The study reviewed 22 research/study documents related to various components of BPEP II.

Major Findings
- The Flexible Schools Programme (FSP) and the School Outreach Programme (SOP) should be continued. They could be expected to cater for the educational needs of the out of school children and also to meet the wishes of children and parents to use these alternative modes of education.
- Alternative schooling has been advocated as a system complementary to formal schooling. However, it is found that over 50 percent of the alternative schooling completers do not join the regular primary schools. In spite of this, there is one important positive aspect. These programmes have been successful enough to reach the 'hardcore' groups identified by BPEP.
- The facilitators are selected by DEO either on the recommendation of names (by VDC, RP, and NFE Supervisions) or on the basis of screening tests.
- Training provided to facilitators has been useful. But there is no involvement of Mother schools and Resource Persons in the training. RC and 'Mother' school resources are not utilised in the training.

Recommendations
- Proper facilitator selection is crucial for maintaining the quality of the alternative school programme. It is recommended that the responsibility for facilitator selection be given to Mother schools and Resource Centres. The Resource Centres should provide technical and administrative support.
Sad Demise of FRAG Member

Dr. Trailokya Nath Upreti, FRAG member passed away on 20 March 2004. He was 81. Dr. Upreti, a renowned educationist, ex-Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University and diplomat was associated with different activities of CERID from the beginning and especially since the inception of FRP. We are saddened by the demise of Dr. Upreti, and we know we have missed his guidance. We pray for his eternal peace in the heavenly abode.

School Effectiveness: Synthesis of Indicators Phase II

The study was conducted to identify (and assess) factors contributing to school effectiveness with focus on issues of access, quality and management including the role of the headteacher and resource persons in school supervision and monitoring.

Major Findings

- Children of some deprived and socially disadvantaged groups, e.g. Musahars, still remain out of school. The parents’ major concern is mostly of equitable access rather than physical access to education.

Access to quality school/education is yet to be ensured in a majority of public schools.

Indiscriminate opening of private schools has curtailed enrolment in public schools and eventually reduced the size of the teacher quota.

SMC members lack basic knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in the contextual change brought about by the Education Act (7th amendment).

Recommendations

- To reorganise the education of the socially disadvantaged communities their social, cultural as well as economic concerns need to be studied and addressed judiciously.

- Planned intervention, discontinuation of indiscriminate opening of schools and seeking private-public partnerships (including the provision of lease-out) is desirable.

- Participatory and incremental strategies can be adopted for the mobilization and allocation of such resources.

- Orientation to the SMC members (in the changed context) on their roles and responsibility is necessary.