

Report No. 19548

# Education in Bangladesh

## A Country Sector Review

June 30, 1999

Operations Evaluation Department



## Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Terms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
EU	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GEP	General Education Project
ICR	Implementation Completion Report
IDA	International Development Association
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
PCR	Project Completion Report
PEDP	Primary Education Development Project
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
SAR	Staff Appraisal Report
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

**Fiscal Year**                      July 1—June 30

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June 30, 1999

## MEMORANDUM TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS AND THE PRESIDENT

### SUBJECT: Education in Bangladesh: A Country Sector Review

Attached is the report *Education in Bangladesh: A Country Sector Review* prepared by the Operations Evaluation Department. This Country Sector Review assesses the relevance, efficacy, and efficiency of IDA's assistance to the education sector since 1964 and makes recommendations for future assistance. A draft report was sent to the Government of Bangladesh. No comments have been received.

Since 1964, IDA has financed 12 completed and three ongoing education projects in Bangladesh. The strategic foundation for this lending was a sectoral study conducted in 1978. The strategy it outlined focused on four goals: expanding and improving primary education, opening effective skills training to greater numbers of people, improving agricultural extension, and improving management training. In this review, OED assesses the extent to which these goals were achieved over the next 20 years.

#### Outcomes

Lending helped achieve only one of the four goals, albeit the most important one. The provision of primary education for the poor, particularly girls, has been impressive and has attracted considerable financing from other donors. While IDA made an important contribution to this effort, the goal was achieved primarily due to the government's long-term commitment to make the country's population literate and halt the population increase. Although quality must still improve, the foundations of the system have been laid.

The satisfactory outcome in primary education sharply contrasts with the disappointing outcomes in other subsectors. The management projects did not impart useful skills to students and the agricultural and technical-vocational education institutions missed the appropriate trainees.

On the whole, the choice of which education subsectors to finance was in alignment with Bank policies, though primary education implementation was delayed. IDA consistently supported the government's policies to increase access to primary education, particularly to girls, through lending and non-lending services. The consistent primary education policies were probably an important reason for the effective use of IDA funds in this subsector. IDA policies were less clear for other subsectors.

#### Relevance and Efficacy

Investment in agricultural, vocational-technical, and management education was relevant to the country's needs in the 1970s and remains so today. But the design of the projects in these areas was inappropriate for achieving their goals.

Although project documents emphasized quality of instruction and institutional development, these areas received little attention during implementation (except in the General Education Project). Overall, IDA interventions focused more on the *concrete means* (buildings, equipment, fellowships) and less on the *linkages* that would enable students to acquire and use relevant information. Thus, *IDA projects have opened doors for many students on every level of education. But the doors do not necessarily lead to the acquisition of useful knowledge.* Primary education students have low levels of basic skills, while graduates of the other IDA-financed subsectors acquire few skills applicable to the work they are expected to do.

### **Sustainability**

Support to primary education had sustained outcomes in raising the basic skills level of the population. Aside from buildings (which are standing but not well maintained), the outcomes of the agricultural, vocational-technical, and management projects were not sustained.

### **Institutional Development**

Activities centered on training and, overall, little was achieved. No project attempted to change the incentive structure of educators or improve the efficiency of institutions. Systemic changes were needed for significant improvement, but IDA was unable to undertake such changes in the early projects. Interviews with administrators and beneficiaries of completed projects indicate that financial mismanagement, rent-seeking, and procurement irregularities were unstated yet large issues that IDA had no effective way to combat in the early projects. These corrupt practices undermined the country's weak institutional structures.

### **Preparing a Strategy for 2000-2020**

*IDA has a clear comparative advantage in donor coordination, and some advantage in provision of hardware and development of systemic reforms.* Although not successful with civil service reform in the past, IDA has a strong interest in increasing the accountability of public-sector institutions and may marshal considerable resources for this work.

*IDA has no comparative advantage in improving the quality of education, particularly of classroom instruction.* Unless there is a clear decision to hire expert educators and to spend considerable time during supervisions on instructional issues, the institution should identify other donors who can do this work. Such donors will have developed technical competency and will be able to put in the field experts with long-term commitment.

Given its comparative advantages and long-standing sectoral issues, IDA may concentrate on:

*Making use of partnerships:* Dovetailing the comparative advantages of donors and civil society in various areas related to education; monitoring the comprehensive development framework and forging partnerships to ascertain that there are effective donors or civil society institutions filling every slot; and financing hardware and reform-oriented activities in the projects of various subsectors while partnering with donors knowledgeable in supporting instructional delivery.

*Clarifying policy and persevering in its implementation:* Merely inserting policy items in documents is not sufficient; long-term goals may be forgotten during short-term implementation urgencies. Policy dialogue and reference to the original reasons for which lending was given must be carried out consistently during supervision missions.

*Strengthening institutions, accountability, and financial management:* Increase accountability in educational institutions at all levels, change incentives so that employees carry out their expected duties, and reduce mismanagement and corrupt practices. This can be done through:

- Cross-sectoral consultation with beneficiaries and special-interest groups (e.g., teachers' unions) to discover the real (and often micro-level) causes of problems and arrive at possible solutions. Some IDA support may be in the form of non-lending services.
- Efforts to bring about changes in antiquated rules and laws that diminish the effectiveness of the public sector; facilitating civil service reform while taking into account the Bank's limitations and failures in the education sector in Bangladesh and elsewhere.
- Reforming higher education; overhauling the financial and instructional conditions of various universities and colleges to share costs with students, reduce wastage, teach marketable skills, and alleviate the education budget for attention to other subsectors. The government needs donor help to tackle this difficult and political issue.
- Continuing support to beneficiary institutions; one-time batches of hardware did not support sustained outcomes for educational institutions. They need sustained budgetary and instructional support to evolve according to changing needs. IDA might consider lending or non-lending operations targeted specifically at instructional and institutional development in a number of the institutions it has financed in the past.

*Safeguarding the post-primary education of the poor:* The 36 percent of students who will continue to be extremely poor need an educational safety net as private education expands in secondary, higher, and vocational-technical education. Loan schemes may not be sufficient in the face of unemployment uncertainties, particularly for women, and in the earlier years, scholarships did not go to the poor. An affordable, long-range safety net is needed. Examples include "cash transfers" to families to pull children out of labor and into secondary school, subsidies to local governments to ensure the provision of adequate quality services to the families of the beneficiaries in education (and in some cases, nutrition and health).

*Improving upon past performance:* Perennial delays in project implementation indicate a need for much closer monitoring and faster resolution of obstacles during supervision. Though implementation capacity has improved, projects have also become more complex. Task managers are consumed by administrative and managerial issues and can devote little time to technical issues. This conflict may militate against attention to policy and detail. IDA might resume the use of additional supervision resources, such as the donor-funded monitor who kept detailed track of developments in the General Education Project.

*Building in an overpopulated country:* Past projects have focused on short-term savings, building school buildings with foundations too weak to permit future expansion. But current and projected overpopulation dictates great care with how land is used. Before more low-cost buildings are built in rural or urban areas, IDA needs to study land prices and construction costs to determine if its use of land and building density is appropriate.



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<p>This report was prepared by Helen Abadzi (Task Manager) and edited by William Hurlbut. Pilar Barquero provided administrative support.</p>
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## Executive Summary

Since 1964, has IDA financed 12 completed and three ongoing education projects in Bangladesh. The strategic foundation for this lending was a sectoral study conducted in 1978. The strategy it outlined focused on four goals: expanding and improving primary education, opening effective skills training to greater numbers of people, improving agricultural extension, and improving management training. In this review, OED assesses the extent to which these goals were achieved over the next 20 years.

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# 1. Improving Education in Bangladesh

It is easier to put together a US\$500 million power project than a US\$10 million primary education project.

– Kazi Fazlur Rahman  
Retired Secretary of Education

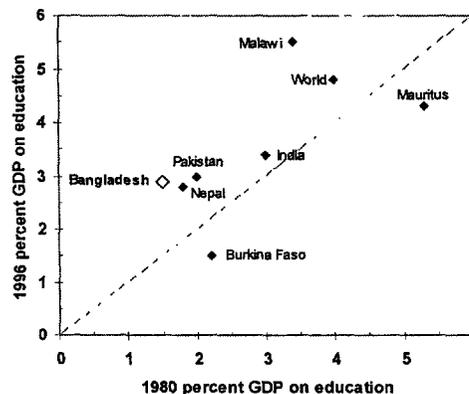
1.1 Around 10 am on work days, thousands of boys and girls stream into the streets from poor houses and rich, in villages and in city slums, walking along narrow paths, crossing bridges, taking boats, to go to school. Thirty years ago, most of them would have never had the chance. The illiterate girls would marry in their early teens, bear many children, helplessly watch as some sickened and died, lose their own health, and earn a pittance through unskilled labor. Thanks to the government's commitment since the early 1980s and to donor coordination led by the International Development Association, most Bangladeshi children now have access to primary schools. For adults who were not so fortunate, nongovernmental organizations run literacy centers financed by IDA and the Asian Development Bank. To continue in secondary school, poorer girls may receive a scholarship through an IDA-financed project. Partly because of expanding education in the country, many premature marriages are postponed; young people, able to obtain needed information, can make educated decisions about family size and earnings.<sup>1</sup> The success of these poverty-oriented projects has attracted much international attention.

## Education Indicators

1.2 It has been a long road of change in attitudes and priorities for one of the world's poorest countries. Education in Bangladesh must still improve, access and quality remain imperfect, but the foundations of the system have been laid. In 1961, just 3.4 million students were enrolled in primary schools.<sup>2</sup> By 1978, there were about 8 million primary-school students in a population of 85 million, and by 1997 the number had doubled to about 16.3 million<sup>3</sup> while the population increased to about 118 million.

1.3 In comparison to other countries, Bangladesh has done quite well in increasing access to education relative to its expenditures. The achievements have been remarkable because of the country's extreme poverty. Bangladesh had the lowest percent of GDP spending on education in 1980 (1.5%), but nearly doubled it (to 2.9%) by 1996 (Figure 1). During that 15-year period, primary-school gross enrollment rates increased by 37%, from 61% to 84% (Figure 2). By comparison, Nepal devoted 2% of its GDP on education in 1980 and increased it to 2.9% in 1996; gross enrollment rates increased by 27%. Pakistan started with extremely low gross

**Figure 1. Bangladesh has increased expenditures on education...**



Source: World Development Indicators, 1999

1. Interviews with secondary-school female recipients of scholarships (Ahmad 1998). See Annex E for a discussion of educational opportunities for girls.

2. Bangladesh: Education and Training Sector Memorandum (2 vols.). June 1978. Report no. 2037-BD (vol. 2, p. 21).

3. Data sources differ. According to the Directorate of Primary Education, 1997 enrollments were 18.03 million. Accordingly, enrollments may have increased by 51% between 1980 and 1996 rather than by 37%.

enrollments in 1980 (37%) and nearly doubled them to 74% in 1986, while increasing its expenditure on education from 2% to 3% of GDP. In Africa, Malawi spent 3.4% of its GDP on education in 1980 (more than double that of Bangladesh) and had 60% gross enrollments. By 1996, spending on education had risen to 5.5% of GDP, while primary-level gross enrollment rates were 89%. Burkina Faso, whose spending on education dropped from 2.2% to 1.5% of GDP between 1980 and 1996, doubled its extremely low enrollment rates from 17.5% to 39.6%.<sup>4</sup>

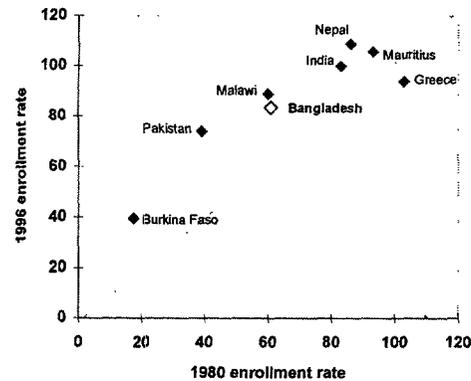
1.4 Bangladesh has not done as well in increasing literacy among the young (ages 15–24). The literacy rate increased only by 19 percentage points among boys and by 15 points among girls between 1980 and 1997, while in other South Asian countries literacy increased by twice as much. In a country that is linguistically and ethnically homogeneous, this trend is puzzling, and suggests a low quality of education and high dropout rates. Figure 3 compares the literacy rates (ages 15–24) for Bangladesh with those of several other countries.

#### IDA Lending to Education

1.5 Historically, education was a small sector of IDA investment, accounting for only 7% of its portfolio in Bangladesh in 1972–98.<sup>5</sup> As of 1999, 12 projects had been completed (Annex Table A1).

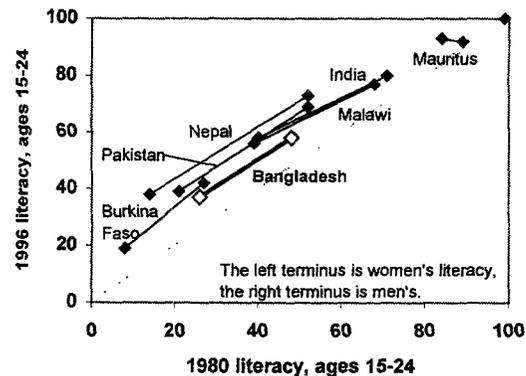
1.6 The first two projects, focusing on agricultural and technical education, were started when Bangladesh was East Pakistan and were interrupted by the war of independence. A follow-on project repaired the buildings destroyed by the war. Thereafter, a series of agricultural, vocational-technical, business faculty, public administration, and more recently primary education projects were implemented. Figure 4 shows the relative sizes of the lending to these subsectors. The first primary education project (Cr. 1054-BD) became effective in 1980 and laid the groundwork for the subsequent large projects in this subsector. These accounted for two-thirds of the funds lent to Bangladesh.

**Figure 2. ...and enrollments have kept pace with those of similar countries...**



Source: World Development Indicators, 1999

**Figure 3. ...but improvement in literacy has lagged**



Source: World Development Indicators, 1999

4. Though comparable at face value, these figures may reflect different data collection processes. Also, it is quite easy for extremely low figures to increase substantially.

5. Compared to 17% for agriculture, 12% for health, and 27% for structural adjustment.

## Gauging the Outcome

1.7 To what extent have the country's educational outcomes been influenced by 35 years of IDA lending? To what extent were its long-term objectives achieved? Were these the right objectives to achieve, relevant to the needs of beneficiaries? Were the projects efficacious given the resources and limitations? How efficiently were resources spent to achieve the objectives? How sustainable were the interventions? How did the projects influence the development of the institutions they financed? How important and how usable has IDA's policy advice been? What would have happened to the sector without IDA financing and policy advice? Quantitative responses to these questions are not possible: 11 of the 12 completed IDA projects lacked benchmarks or monitoring indicators, and almost no data were generated or gathered. To gauge the effects of lending and policy advice on the sector and its supported institutions, this study carried out the following steps:

- The main documents of the 12 completed projects were analyzed. A database of project inputs, outcomes, and other related variables was compiled from the Staff Appraisal Reports (SARs), audits, and completion reports (Project Completion Reports, or PCRs, and Implementation Completion Reports, or ICRs). The goals, objectives, obstacles, lessons, and investment levels in civil works, training, textbooks, curricula, etc., were combined across projects to create an overall investment profile.
- A field survey was conducted of senior government officials involved in project implementation (many retired), directors of educational institutions that received financing, graduates, and beneficiaries of fellowships. Survey interviews were conducted individually or in focus groups. Forty-six post-secondary institutions were visited, and 681 officials and beneficiaries were interviewed individually or in focus groups. (See Annex B for details of the methodology).
- Nine IDA staff members who worked on completed projects in the sector were interviewed.

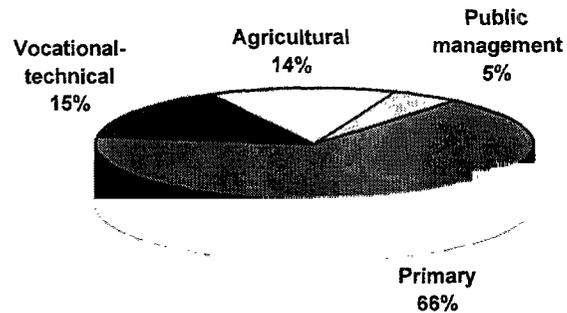
1.8 The field research was carried out by Dr. Muzaffer Ahmad, a Dhaka University professor of management, under the auspices of the Center for Policy Dialogue. A detailed report resulted, *"The World Bank's Role in Developing the Education Sector of Bangladesh."* This document includes highlights of that report along with information garnered from the projects database and from interviews with IDA staff.

## 2. Thirty-Five Years of Lending and Policy in Profile

### How the Lending Strategy Evolved

2.1 Bangladesh lost much of its educated population in the civil unrest and migrations that started with the partition of Bengal in 1947 and peaked with the 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. Lacking revenues, the country depended heavily on foreign aid, but did not have the means to spend it effectively; once the British civil servants were gone, there were few people

Figure 4. IDA investments by education subsector



who could implement projects. Many decision makers had very limited education and ambivalent feelings about strengthening the culture of the villages they had left behind.

2.2 Interviews with IDA staff who worked in the sector in the 1970s and 1980s illustrate the confusion of the government and the dilemmas of donor staff. People urgently needed to be trained to carry out the government's work in these and other areas and it was hard to decide what to do first. IDA itself was learning the development process at the time, so no formal strategy was developed for the first 14 years of lending. The first and only comprehensive sector study was carried out in 1978. It was followed by brief updates in 1980 and 1988, a vocational-technical education study in 1989, and a public expenditure review in 1996. In 1999, a new comprehensive sector study was under preparation with a vision to the year 2020.

2.3 The 1978 IDA study highlighted the problems that were to be repeated in most subsequent sector notes and SARs: high population growth (3% per year), low human capital, chronic underfinancing of education, inefficient instructional delivery, lack of relevance in the curricula, very limited opportunities for women, and major imbalances in the demand and supply of trained workers, particularly in agriculture (Annex Table A2). IDA could provide some of the needed financing to achieve (a) improved agricultural extension, (b) more effective skill training open to more people, (c) improved management training, and (d) expanded and improved primary education. These goals were to be achieved using a dual approach: (a) projects in primary education and related issues like teacher training and (b) limited, sharply focused projects in several segments of the system deemed necessary on the grounds of recognized if not quantified workforce requirements (p. 21). The strategy paper predicted that *"these broad goals could be achieved in less than one generation with a relative (i.e., to GDP) financial effort still well below today's average for low-income countries"* (p. 8).

2.4 The strategy paper was vague on the means by which to achieve these goals and government and IDA policies were also unclear. However, subsequent updates and lending documents show that the strategy was indeed carried out over the next 20 years, although improving primary education, which was originally the first goal, was implemented last<sup>6</sup>. As the Bank increasingly embraced poverty alleviation, the strategy was refocused toward the obstacles that prevented students from coming to schools and acquiring the information provided. The innovative multi-donor projects of the 1990s were highly targeted toward the poor and particularly toward girls.

2.5 This review assesses project objectives and policy outcomes of this 20-year strategy, focusing on the essentials of OED methodology: relevance, efficacy, efficiency, sustainability, and institutional development. It assesses the consistency of the country strategy with the Bank's strategy on education and provides lessons that may be used for the development of the next 20-year strategy.

## Relevance

2.6 According to project documents (SARs, PCRs, audits) the IDA investments were intended to achieve goals that centered on institutional development and dissemination of education (Annex Table A3). The project objectives can be grouped into six categories (Table 1).

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6. Sector Studies and Notes: Bangladesh: Education and Training Sector Memorandum (2 vols.). June 1978. Report no. 2037-BD; Bangladesh: Education Sector Memorandum. June 1981, Report no. 3548-BD; Bangladesh: A Review of Selected Issues in Education; March 1988, Report no. 6770-BD; Bangladesh: Vocational and Technical Education Review; June 1989, Report no. 7604-BD; Bangladesh: Education Expenditure Review. July 1996. Report no. 15521-BD; OED. Bangladesh: Country Assistance Review, 1997.

Of the 29 objectives in the 12 completed projects, seven related to improving quality, seven to management, six to increasing access, and five to providing training. At the time these were the right project goals and objectives, relevant to the 1978 strategy objectives and issues and clearly relevant to the needs of the country.

## Efficacy

2.7 Table 1 shows that only about half of all the objectives were either partially or substantially achieved and that increased enrollment and access, the major accomplishments of the primary education projects, were most commonly achieved. None of the objectives related to the training of farmers, workers, and others was achieved. Perhaps the limited attention to instructional inputs and processes (see Efficiency, below) explains why *objectives related to improving the quality of education were not achieved or only partially achieved*. The efficacy of the IDA investments is analyzed in detail in Section 3.

**Table 1. Objectives of completed IDA projects**

Categories of objectives	Frequency	Achievement		
		Negligible	Partial	Substantial
Improve quality, outcomes of education/training	7	3	3	1
Improve management of institution or agency, strengthen ability to deliver services	7	4	3	0
Increase enrollment, access to education	6	1	2	3
Train farmers, workers, future technicians, employees	5	5	0	0
Reduce unit costs, decrease wastage	3	1	2	0
Increase productivity of sector	1	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

*Note: Achievement rated on the basis of PCR and audit comments*

## Efficiency

2.8 The credit commitments of the 15 projects completed or under implementation through the end of 1998 amounted to US\$632.4 million. Of these, the 12 completed projects account for US\$412 million, though their actual disbursements were US\$354 million (85% of proceeds; Annex Table A1). The country had already repaid US\$15.4 million by December 1998.

2.9 These investments, which amount to US\$2.95 per current citizen of Bangladesh, are low for a country with a 1998 population of about 125 million and a large demographic bulge in the younger ages. (By comparison, Pakistan, with approximately the same population, has had 14 completed projects in education with credits totaling US\$1.01 billion between 1964 and 1998 – US\$8.41 per person.) However, the country was apparently unable to absorb more, at least as past projects were designed; all of them were extended, and their five-year implementation life ranged from six to eight years (compared to an average 30 months for all sectors in Bangladesh). So, IDA consistently overestimated the country's capacity to implement even modest numbers of educational activities.

2.10 On paper, the projects financed included appropriate activities to meet the objectives. Since one-quarter of the objectives were related to quality of education, one would expect considerable investment and attention to curricula, textbooks, library books, technical assistance, and teacher training. *But these expenditure items were underutilized and received little attention in supervisions*. As a result, the beneficiaries of the various projects were not educated efficiently. The reasons were:

*Limited curricular development.* Overall, curricula, textbooks, library materials, and journals accounted for only 7% of investments. These items were often lumped together until the 1990s, suggesting that they received limited attention in earlier projects. The earlier projects did not develop curricula. Syllabi were issued under the first vocational education project (Cr. 912-BD), but no budget was allocated for curriculum development. The business management project for university students also failed to develop updated curricula. Some development took place in the public administration and the second vocational and agricultural projects, but only the primary education projects explicitly developed and disseminated curricula. Even so, the curricula did not focus on higher-order information processing skills (i.e., comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, decision-making).

2.11 *Limited textbook provision.* Even without curricula, students conceivably could acquire information from textbooks written for similar situations. However, only the three primary education projects provided textbooks. The vocational and agricultural projects totally neglected this aspect; audit reports point out the lack of manuals in Bangla and relate the problem to the limited acquisition of information by extension agents, who in turn did not have much to transmit to farmers. Some audit comments also refer to the very limited number of books and journals purchased for the libraries of the institutions built, and the difficulty of acquiring up-to-date information in any language. The management faculty focused on reference works rather than structured textbooks for every course. Overall, *classroom instructional processes received little attention in projects other than primary education.*

2.12 *Unsustainable equipment.* All projects provided some instructional equipment, the procurement of which received considerable attention. (In the early years, foreign consultants were hired to write specifications.) However, very little attention was given to the reasons for procuring specific items and their integration into the curricula. Besides the equipment itself, institutions needed consumables, maintenance, and teacher training, which were not provided. OED consultants that visited some of the institutions that received equipment found that at best half the equipment was usable.

2.13 *Underused technical assistance and fellowships.* Overall, projects planned for about 300 staff-years of foreign and local technical assistance. These items together accounted for 11% of investments. Documents from earlier projects voiced considerable concern regarding underutilized foreign technical assistance; about 80% of the planned staff-years was used. Bangladeshi officials and administrators interviewed for this study generally expressed dissatisfaction with consultant services.<sup>7</sup> The projects also financed 689 staff-years of local and international fellowships, but only about 68% (471 staff-years) was used. In some cases, local fellowships were given without providing travel funds, and beneficiaries could not attend. The majority of persons receiving international fellowships returned, but some did not. Because education staff are considered “floating” cadres, returnees often moved to other positions, leaving institutions again without trained staff.

2.14 *Limited provision of training.* Most projects were also expected to train workers and farmers or to provide in-service education to teachers and other staff. Being cheaper, local training accounted for just 3% of investments. But it fell far short of its goals. Of approximately 35,000 workers, farmers, technicians, and staff that should have received training, only 58% were trained. No reports were found about the effectiveness and relevance of training received.

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7. Given the limited number of trained people, it is surprising that consultants were not used more for disseminating scarce knowledge. Discussions showed that consultants were hired on the basis of technical strengths rather than communication skills or interest in the country and its problems. In earlier years, language skills were probably also important. Perhaps foreign consultants who took an active interest in Bangladesh might disseminate knowledge more effectively.

2.15 *Lack of clarity about institutional development.* Seven of the 29 objectives referred to institutional development. However, staff apparently did not know what to finance to make institutions function more effectively. Institutional development consisted of financing buildings, fellowships, and training for staff. There was no evidence of scrutiny of outcomes and impact. Therefore, it is not surprising that *four of the seven institutionally related objectives were not achieved and three others were partly achieved.*

2.16 *Overemphasis on civil works.* By contrast, a great deal of attention was given to access-related activities, that is, to civil works. Focus groups repeatedly stated that the energy of IDA missions was consumed by the supervision of financing buildings, furniture, and equipment. About 75% of the investment directly devoted to implementation went into these items. Project funds built 20 vocational, agricultural, managerial, or teacher training institutions, mainly at the post-secondary level, and refurbished or equipped 99 others. At least 15,145 classrooms or thana-level<sup>8</sup> farmer training centers were built, while 27,523 others were refurbished.<sup>9</sup> In eight projects, the civil works had been substantially completed, whereas in four others they were partially completed. Civil works were built with the purpose of increasing student places. Depending on class size and number of shifts, about 2–3 million new student places were built, the vast majority for primary school students. Although the number is impressive, it still accounts for only about 25% of the primary education enrollment increases during the time the projects were operational.

2.17 Therefore, implementation of the 1978 strategy focused on access to the detriment of instructional content. By giving civil works and hardware the highest priority, the projects achieved intermediate products, the *means* through which the objectives could be achieved *if* attention were given to student acquisition and processing of information. But since learning outcomes received little attention, the objectives were not met. The relatively exclusive focus on “hardware” was neither an efficacious nor an efficient way to impart skills.

2.18 A very important problem was that numerous obstacles inhibited implementation. Bangladeshi officials who had implemented IDA projects highlighted difficulties with people and rules that prevented better implementation and further lowered the efficiency of the projects (Annex Table C1). Project documents reported frequent lack of counterpart funds, procurement and accounting weaknesses, lack of planning capacity, inability to find or keep trained teachers, and lack of instructional materials. Emphasis on disbursements made staff and management focus on short-term project management, which consumed the energies of staff. Due to frequent turnover, new officials had to be debriefed every few months, and they sometimes had a limited knowledge and interest in education. Thus, the good intentions the Bank had about improving the quality of education were drowned by the urgency of dealing with administrative and managerial issues.

2.19 *Unclear and ad-hoc policies.* On the whole, choices of which education subsectors to finance were in agreement with Bank policies, though primary education was implemented last. In the 1960s and 1970s, IDA financed agricultural, technical, and higher education and it financed primary education only in the 1980s. Nevertheless, perhaps due to overarching short-term concerns, policy strategies and priorities in Bangladesh were not clearly and consistently developed until the 1990s (see Section 5).

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8. A thana is a minor administrative area formerly defined by the jurisdiction of a police station. Bangladesh has 460 thanas.

9. SARs and PCRs do not always give the needed level of detail to get exact figures.

### 3. Efficacy of IDA Investments: A Detailed Analysis

3.1 Implementation difficulties and the focus on “hardware” precluded the achievement of most project objectives, but to what extent were project designs conducive to achieving the major strategic goals?

#### Goal 1: Improving Extension Services Through Agricultural Education

3.2 Feeding a starving population, which was exploding out of control, was critical to Bangladesh. In the 1970s, agriculture provided direct or indirect employment for more than 75% of the labor force and accounted for over 90% of the country’s exports.<sup>10</sup> With the objective of making farmers more productive, IDA focused on agricultural education for about 20 years (1964–84). Five projects (with total disbursements of US\$34.7 million) financed the Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh, the Bangladesh Rural Development Academy in Bogra, a Higher In-service Training Program in Tajhat (Rangpur), seven Agricultural Training Institutes for extension agents, and at least 66 smaller centers for farmer training. Besides IDA, DANIDA (Denmark International Development Agency), and other donors were involved in the sector on a smaller scale. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided scholarships for graduate study to persons who subsequently staffed the institutions of higher learning. These investments significantly increased the number of student places in these institutions. For example, the capacity of the Agricultural Training Institutes increased from 800 in 1983 to 2,676 in the 1990s.

3.3 This investment was to benefit a target population of farmers that was never consulted; IDA had not yet developed stakeholder consultation strategies. It is not surprising, therefore, that the goal of increasing access to agricultural institutions did not address the real stakeholders’ needs. The financed institutions typically catered to students who had 10 or more years of education; these were few, and they typically had aspirations other than working with farmers. Government and IDA staff apparently did not explore the status issues involved in decisions to study and practice agriculture and the lack of desirability and demand for direct work with poor farmers. *Therefore, projects financed student places for a population segment that did not really want to do the necessary tasks.* The graduates who were produced sought university entrance, higher levels of study, and desk jobs rather than direct field work, so they were not always willing or able to work effectively with farmers. Officials in the sector were generalists with rapid turnover and sometimes limited interest in the sector. Therefore, farmer-level training was neglected (Annex Tables C3, C4, C5).

3.4 *Training did not prepare the extension agents to serve their clients well.* Little or no financing was allocated to curricula and instructional materials, and no textbooks were developed in Bangla. The curricula also neglected practical work. Teaching staff who had received fellowships were free to move—and frequently changed positions—making it impossible for institutions to keep a cadre of trained staff. With limited sources for study, the educational level of the graduates was low. Therefore, they had little information to impart. Without proper training, graduates were often unable to find work. Only about a third of them were employed in relevant jobs.<sup>11</sup>

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10. 1981 sector note, p. 2.

11. Ahmad, Abdur Rashid. 1992. Utilization of Educated Manpower in Bangladesh with Special Reference to Technical Graduates. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, I.S.R.T, Dhaka University.

3.5 *Food security increased very modestly as a result of farmer training.* In the 1970s and 1980s, extension services had limited effectiveness in changing farmer behaviors.<sup>12</sup> It has been hard to team educators and agricultural experts to optimize effective training means. Due to these problems, the education department of IDA abandoned agricultural education by the end of the 1980s, and other donors have avoided it. The agriculture department has supported selected activities in institutions, and has had greater success in the 1990s.

3.6 IDA staff in the agriculture department consider the Bangladesh Agricultural University a wise investment. It has produced important agricultural experts and professionals who staff the Ministry of Agriculture and develop policy. However, the university has by far the highest per-student expenditure of all universities in Bangladesh, costing Tk. 53,516 per student in 1992/93.<sup>13</sup> While agricultural universities tend to be expensive institutions, the high cost of this institution is a cause of grave concern. If it had received more donor attention and advice after the agricultural projects, it might now be a smaller drain on the education budget. *It is possible, therefore, that in financing agricultural institutions, IDA helped create unneeded recurrent expenditures.*

## **Goal 2: More Effective Skills Training Open to Larger Numbers of Persons**

3.7 The vocational-technical education system has 77 institutions with about 23,500 students and about 1,750 teachers. It consists of engineering colleges,<sup>14</sup> three-year polytechnics, technical training colleges, vocational training centers (receiving students with grade 8 credentials), and one technical teacher training center.

3.8 Though bilaterals, such as Sweden (SIDA) and Germany, have financed fellowships and technical assistance in selected institutions, IDA has been the main donor in this subsector. From 1971 to 1989, through three dedicated projects and components in three others, IDA financed the construction or equipping of a series of polytechnics, technical training colleges, engineering colleges, and a (dysfunctional) National Council for Skill Development and Training. IDA has not invested in the subsector since 1989.

3.9 The development and problems of vocational-technical education parallel those of agricultural education. About 7,380 student places were to be created in vocational centers and a similar number in technical colleges.<sup>15</sup> However, instructional difficulties prevented the fulfillment of good intentions.

3.10 *Unsuitable curricula and lack of textbooks.* The curricula for various vocational specialties were developed by foreign consultants guided by high-level officials, who designed them based on international norms rather than on the needs of local workers and employers. To study the curricula, students needed a relatively high level of formal education that gave them career options of better social standing. The vocational institutes prepared them for jobs that

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12. Hasanullah, M. Management of Agricultural Extension Services in Bangladesh, an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, IBA, DU, 1998. Research showed that through mass, group, and individual extension activities, only 23%, 32%, and 25% of farmers changed practices. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated the direct general influence of extension activities in changing farmer practices to be 19% (ibid.). SASRD estimates that 50% of farmers change practices.

13. About US\$1,530. The institution with the second highest per student expenditures (Tk. 39,951) was the Cadet College. (Education Expenditure Review, 1996, p. 40.) Officials in 1994 justified the high expenditures because of the agricultural research done in the university, but respondents to the OED survey indicated that little research takes place.

14. Engineering colleges are high-status schools that tend to provide general education for men in South Asia. Even if job prospects in engineering are limited, graduates may find other jobs suitable to their expectations.

15. Information in the PCRs is unclear about total and additional places created.

offered much lower salaries than they wanted and through curricula that did not serve the marketplace. Therefore, a much smaller number of students registered in vocational institutes than expected (e.g., only 64% in polytechnics financed by Cr. 407-BD); those who did tended to have the lowest of the minimally expected qualifications and might lack interest in the subjects. The projects financed procurement of some English-language textbooks, which most students and many instructors could not effectively use. To this date, students have to depend on notes and private instruction. Teachers and administrators often lack industry experience, and cannot effectively impart the appropriate skills.

3.11 *The training provided has been of low quality and unrelated to industry needs.* According to a 1989 sector study, rates of return were negative, and opportunities for women remained very limited. Only about 60% of polytechnic graduates were able to find jobs 18 months after graduation, and only 12% were self-employed.<sup>16</sup> Most institutions are not equipped to help with job placement. The output of all technical institutions has been about 5,000 per year, a very small number for a populous country. It has remained stagnant since 1988.<sup>17</sup> The lower stream of vocational education, in particular, remained under-utilized until a vocational option of the secondary school certificate was established around 1996, giving students a socially desirable diploma.

3.12 Perhaps because of the low productivity of the subsector, the government gives it a low priority. The share of total revenue spending allocated to vocational-technical education by the Ministry of Education (MOE) declined by about 17% from 2.4% in 1990/91 to 1.5% in 1997/98.<sup>18</sup> Teacher appointments often go unfilled, and existing instructors reported to OED consultants that they work more than 40 hours a week. The buildings are in bad condition owing to a lack of maintenance. Equipment was a one-time input, and has been neither renewed nor maintained; at best 50% is usable, and consumables are not replenished. There are no faculty fellowships, opportunities to upgrade knowledge, adjustment of curricula, or experimentation with innovative teaching-learning methods. Underfunding this completely subsidized sector has perpetuated the low quality and low desirability of vocational education. The investments not only failed to alleviate poverty, they also burden the country's budget with *unnneeded recurrent expenditures*. Although it is only a small portion of the MOE budget, the money could be put to better use.

3.13 Many aspects of project implementation proved unsatisfactory. In OED interviews and focus groups, administrators and officials who worked in technical-vocational education stated that the quality of the buildings was substandard, and the design unsuitable for their uses. Consultant services were too expensive and inappropriate, and several fellowships were reportedly misused, with administrators receiving training overseas that they did not need. IDA financed a building for a coordinating agency, the National Council of Skills Development; however, the government had a limited interest in it, and the council never functioned (Annex Tables C6, C7, C8).

3.14 *The correct target group was missed.* The workers who work on the specialties that vocational trainees reject (e.g., welding, turning, carpentry, bicycle, and small engine repair) are trained informally by employers through apprenticeships. They have much lower education (if

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16. Report of the Tracer Study for Polytechnic Graduates of Bangladesh. UNDP/UNESCO Technical Assistance Project BGD/001, Bangladesh Technical Education Board, 1991.

17. In 1988 the MOE operated 51 vocational-technical institutes with a total full time enrollment of about 3,000 (rate of return -1.3%). The Ministry of Labor operated 11 technical training centers with a total full-time enrollment of about 2,700 and part time of 900 (rate of return -4.5%; vocational-technical education sector study of 1989).

18. The Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training of the Ministry of Labor also gives limited financing to technical training centers and apprenticeship programs.

any), and receive much lower salaries. A few receive non-formal skills training and income generation through NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), such as UCEP (Underprivileged Children's Education Program), MAWTS (Mirpur Agricultural Workshop and Training School), Grameen Bank, or BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee). But these institutions have not received IDA financing for vocational activities. IDA and the government really missed the opportunity to train effectively those who could truly benefit.

3.15 The urgent need to train people in useful skills continues. While public institutions stagnate, private provision of vocational education in specific areas (e.g., computers, secretarial work, electronics, accounting) has blossomed. The private sector delivers more efficient and market-oriented pre-service training for those who can pay. For those who cannot, options are limited.

### **Goal 3: Improved Management Training**

3.16 In its efforts to strengthen the leadership in the public and private sectors, IDA financed two management-oriented projects in 1983. Both projects focused on improving the quality and relevance of training for graduate business students and for civil servants receiving pre- and in-service training.

3.17 The business management project built and equipped additions to the business faculties of Dhaka University and commerce faculties of Chittagong and Rajshahi universities. The public administration project built and equipped centers in Savar, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna, and Chittagong for the pre-service and in-service training of civil servants.<sup>19</sup> Both projects provided library materials, technical assistance for curricula and case writing, as well as fellowships to upgrade faculty qualifications. (For business management, 39% of proceeds were fellowships and technical assistance.) Yet, *both projects were designed without extensive consultation with their beneficiaries, and did not directly address their learning needs.*

3.18 The public administration project developed in-house curricula with the help of foreign consultants. The business curricula were to be developed by a consortium of U.S. universities. However, the project underestimated logistical and administrative problems and accomplished very little. An MBA program was set up in accordance with international curricula that devoted little time to the particular problems and business practices of Bangladesh (such as the issues of family-owned businesses or NGO work). Textbooks and instructional methodology received very little attention. Planned consultations with the business community were very few, and executive program seminars were gradually abandoned.

3.19 Fellowships proved a useful project output. Although about a quarter of the business faculty did not return after completing their studies, the graduates significantly raised the level of scholarship in the business and public administration institutions. However, the number of fellowships was judged as too small.

3.20 *IDA did not promote much-needed policy reform.* The request for training in public administration opened the door to civil service reform. Much discussion took place among IDA staff in 1982 regarding the extent to which the opportunity could be used. Ultimately the view prevailed that the project would be overloaded, and the focus was kept on hardware. IDA inserted some policy items on promotions in the documents, but there was no close follow-up, and

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19. IDA was criticized for disapproving construction of foundations strong enough for 15 stories in a Dhaka area of expensive land and thus wasting land and resources. Also, insufficient room space in dormitories necessitated new construction.

policies were not changed. This was unfortunate. Even without extensive reform, IDA had an opportunity to influence the curricula so as to increase the responsiveness of civil servants to the many problems its various projects confronted. However, this did not happen.<sup>20</sup>

3.21 Lack of attention to subject matter in both institutions probably compromises the effectiveness of training. At the Public Administration Training Center at Savar, syllabi and courses to be taught are determined among faculty members with little consultation with civil servants about their needs. This may explain why only 40% of survey respondents viewed the curricula favorably. Fifty-four percent of the trainees found the modular standard courses to be restrictive and of limited utility for their work. Nearly 60% thought that the administration is not dynamic and has failed to develop linkages that would improve the quality of the institution.

3.22 IDA has not financed this subsector since 1990. The business faculties cater to a large number of students, and businesses need graduates with basic business education. The faculty has calculated the internal rate of return on the investment as 25%. In recent years, business administration training has become the domain of private universities, which prepare students from upper-middle-class families. These universities achieve 100% cost recovery, but exclude the poorer students. Given private-sector supply and the fact that the government amply funds public administration training, the priority for future IDA financing is low. At any rate, *neither institution seems to train students effectively in management so as to create the leaders that IDA's sector study envisaged in 1978.*

#### **Goal 4: Expanded and Improved Primary Education**

3.23 Shortly after independence, a national advisory committee urged the introduction of free primary education for all, but the government was ambivalent about expanding primary education in the 1970s;<sup>21</sup> at a time of communist revolutions in Asia, some linked literacy with social upheaval. But access to education was promulgated successfully by NGOs, which eventually managed to communicate their goals to authorities. Presidents Zia and, later, Ershad realized the importance of promoting primary education and thus set in motion the events for large-scale improvements.

3.24 Bank staff working on Bangladesh in the 1970s, mainly engineers, economists, and generalists, were ambivalent themselves about financing an activity that they saw as nation-building rather than skill-building. With some reservations from both sides, the first primary education project was made effective in 1980. Until then, UNICEF had been almost the only donor in primary education. IDA financing opened the door for greater participation of other donors, who followed IDA's lead (e.g., UNDP, UNESCO, Oxfam, Canada, Sweden).

3.25 IDA was not experienced in this subsector. The 1978 strategy included some policies promoted by UNESCO at the time, which proved counterproductive: increasing the student-teacher ratio to 50, building large schools to reduce construction costs, promoting students automatically, and improving early school leaving examinations (grade 5). But there were also more perspicacious items, such as the use of inexpensive local female assistant teachers, in-

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20. Overall, the Bank has not been effective in bringing about civil service reforms due to poor assessment of institutional and political context and failure to build ownership for reforms. In this respect, the failure of the public administration project is not unusual. But in the case of Bangladesh, there was no serious discussion of reforms in the 1980s, when other countries were strongly encouraged to "do more with less." (OED. May 18, 1999. Civil Service Reform: A Review of World Bank Assistance. Fast Track Brief, vol. 2, No. 16.)

21. In 1978/79 the annual development program had seven primary education projects versus 27 university and 30 engineering/vocational/technical projects.

service training, intensive supervision to control low teacher attendance, promotion opportunities for teachers and administrators, and longer school days and school years.

3.26 Primary education proved to be in demand. About 1.4 million pupils attended project schools during the implementation of the first primary education project. In 42 of the 44 project thanas, overall enrollment increased by 8% and female enrollments increased from 40% to 42% by 1984. Attrition among pupils overall fell by 21% between 1982 and 1984. In particular, attrition among girls decreased by 14% in the same period. The project created a multiplier effect, which the second project amplified with the help of SIDA, UNDP, and UNICEF. The third project was the complex General Education Project, with innovative components and extensive monitoring, and multiple donors under IDA's leadership.<sup>22</sup> It has been followed by the Primary Education Development Project (PEDP), under implementation since 1998.

3.27 Though the projects financed many activities (see Annex D), school construction was most prominent. The first project built 6,455 classrooms for 322,750 primary school places; the second improved 5,285 schools for 16,909 additional primary school places and repaired another 3,298 schools. GEP financed the construction or repair of 16,722 conventional classrooms, 5,350 low-cost or community classrooms and 199 satellite schools. Creating suitable designs and contracting the construction of small buildings was a challenging task. Latrines, for example, were a major problem.

3.28 As Table 2 shows, enrollments and completion rates steadily increased with time, dropout rates decreased, and the number of female teachers and students also increased. Can increases be attributed to the three primary-education projects? Direct answers are not available; there are no enrollment data in the immediate areas where schools were built. Educational statistics of the 1970s were "guesstimates," and figures from various sources in the 1980s conflict. IDA staff have had difficulty constructing a longitudinal statistical profile to verify that enrollments have indeed increased in specific areas.

**Table 2. Primary-school enrollments, teachers, and government schools**

	No. schools	Teachers	% female	Children age 6-10 (million)	Gross enrollment (% age group)	Students (million)	% female	Completion rate % entrants	Student-teacher ratio
1971	28,730	n.a.	n.a.	10.1	49.5	5.0	n.a.	20	n.a.
1980	43,936	153859	8	12.5	65.6	8.2	37	20	54
1985	44,180	189900	8	n.a.	n.a.	8.9	40	n.a.	47
1990	47,240	189508	19	15.4	78.6	11.9	45	40	63
1992	49,942	207372	21	n.a.	n.a.	13.2	45.6	n.a.	63
1997	60,710	n.a.	n.a.	19.5	83.6	16.3	n.a.	62	n.a.

BANBEIS: Bangladesh Education Statistics, 1995 p. 123 and other sources

3.29 The summary data available suggest that school construction and other IDA material inputs were *not* directly responsible for enrollment increases. Data from the first and second project do show enrollment increases in targeted areas, but these are small and in line with national trends. The number of places built by the IDA projects was only 2-3 million (depending on use), whereas enrollments increased by about 7 million; furthermore, about two-thirds of IDA construction consisted of repairs, not new classrooms. About 36% of students are *not* in government schools; they are in madrasas (religious schools), community-managed schools, and NGO-run schools that (except for a few cases) have not benefited from IDA investments. Illustrating the trend, the enrollment of girls at the secondary level increased from 28% in 1980 to

22. A quantitative impact evaluation of the GEP effects on students is to be carried out with donor support by PRGME.

42% in 1993 and by 1999 were on a par with boys' enrollments. Yet, secondary education is 95% private and has not received significant investment in buildings, equipment, or textbooks.

3.30 One effect that may be attributable to instructional materials and teacher training is increased retention of students in schools. The dropout rate of about 80% in the early 1970s has been reduced to about 38%. Still, in 1998, out of 17.6 million children aged 6–10 years, 6.9 million were not enrolled in primary schools. Though much has been accomplished, much remains to be done.

3.31 The increased primary and female enrollments are probably *due to long-term government policy decisions*, which the donors supported and reinforced.<sup>23</sup> Persons interviewed mentioned the donor-sponsored 1990 Education for All Conference in Jom-Tien as an important milestone that reinforced the government policy that was formulated around 1980. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia attended, and heavy publicity ensued, which was followed by some awareness campaigns. Government financing of the subsector increased (from 15% around 1980 to 52% of the total annual development program in 1997), and teacher salaries outpaced the increase in government expenditures. The decision to pay for some teacher salaries of non-government schools motivated communities and individuals to start new schools. The statement in the 1978 strategy paper that financing would help achieve broad goals in one generation proved rather prophetic.

3.32 Officials and administrators interviewed by OED highlighted IDA's policy role. At the same time, they believed that despite overall improvements in quality-related inputs, student learning outcomes still had not significantly improved (Annex Tables C9, C10); the projects still gave insufficient attention to instructional processes and to the incentives that maximize time on task. The total number of instructional hours in grades one and two is very low in Bangladesh compared to other Asian countries (444 versus 1,100 in Indonesia and 1,235 in China). Due to population pressures, the student-teacher ratio is 63 at the primary level and 28 at the secondary level. Daily attendance of teachers and students is still low, less than 65%. In addition to absenteeism, teachers may combine two classes and teach three hours per day instead of six. Supervision by thana education officers is lax, and teachers are not punished for absenteeism or for shortening students' instructional time. Though IDA identified these issues in 1978, it has not yet been able to effect changes.

3.33 *As a result of various instructional problems, student performance is low.* A study of basic skills among the rural poor showed that only one-third of those who had completed primary school had mastered basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Achievement of minimal skill levels was 28% of the people tested in reading, 13% in writing, 37% in oral mathematics.<sup>24</sup>

3.34 *Centralized management may hamper government schools.* Many respondents to the OED survey expressed the concern that school management remains centralized and problematic. School management committees were established, but apparently are not very effective because they have no legal or institutional basis. Local communities controlled the schools until 1971 and supervised the teachers. Some respondents were of the opinion that the government should again study this alternative and promote a stronger policy of local school management.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Retired IDA staff recall two officials who took particular interest in the education of rural populations and girls in the 1970s: Mr. Sattar, director of health and population, and Mr. Sharafuddin, director of primary education.

24. Greaney, V. Khandker, S. and Alam, M. 1998. Bangladesh: Assessing Basic Learning Skills. Washington, DC: World Bank, p. 2.

25. Until 1971, the schools of the country were managed locally through the Bengal Primary Education Act of 1930. The government raised local resources for education through specific-purpose taxes and set up district school boards.

## 4. Outcome of the Lending Program

4.1 IDA investments have opened doors for many students on every level of education. But the doors do not necessarily lead to the acquisition of useful knowledge. Primary-education students have low levels of basic skills, while graduates of the other IDA-financed subsectors acquire few skills applicable to the work they are expected to do.

4.2 The projects financed some of the concrete means (buildings, equipment, fellowships) needed to operate schools, but not the linkages that would enable students to acquire and use relevant information. The missing linkages were (a) delivery of up-to-date information in classes in ways that would enable students to learn it, analyze it, synthesize it with other information, and use it when needed; and (b) administrative ability to organize the means of instruction effectively and provide them to students.

4.3 Twenty years after the 1978 strategy formulation, IDA had succeeded in fulfilling one of its four goals. The story resembles a ship that set sail but soon struck a sandbar. One by one, it jettisoned most of its cargo until it became light enough to sail again. The one goal that remained on board, though, was the most important (Table 3).

**Table 3. 1978 long-term goals viewed through the OED evaluation framework**

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Improving extension services through agricultural education</i>	<i>More effective skill training open to larger numbers of persons</i>	<i>Improved management training</i>	<i>Expanded and improved primary education</i>
Outcome	Unsatisfactory	Highly unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Sustainability	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Likely
Institutional Development	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Modest
Relevance to country needs	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
Efficacy – whether objectives were achievable through the project design	Unsatisfactory <i>Farmers could not be effectively reached during project life</i>	Unsatisfactory <i>Those most needing the training did not receive it</i>	Unsatisfactory <i>Curricula did not prepare students for managerial problem solving</i>	Satisfactory <i>Rural poor targeted, targets exceeded</i>
Efficiency in delivering inputs	Low	Low	Low	Satisfactory
Effectiveness in fulfilling goals	Ineffective	Ineffective	Somewhat effective	Effective
Impact	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Significant
Relevance of policy	Insufficient policy content	Relevant but not implemented	Missed opportunities	High
Efficacy of policy advice	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	High
IDA Performance	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Borrower Performance	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly satisfactory

### Sustainability of Project Outcomes

4.4 Policy is key to sustainable results, and lack of a clear policy in three of the four financed subsectors coincides with a lack of sustainability. The main investments sustained from earlier

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Although financing was limited, communities had considerable control and oversight of school operations. In 1973 the government nationalized the schools and all teachers became civil servants, and communities had no responsibility for running schools. (By comparison, West Bengal kept the community act but took responsibility for paying teachers.) Reportedly, centralized management is to some extent responsible for the high teacher absenteeism and limited instructional time. In 1981, the parliament passed an act devolving control to the communities and seconding teachers to them. However, an abrupt change in government prevented its implementation.

projects are the buildings, which still stand despite lack of maintenance. The old projects also left behind outdated books in libraries and equipment that partly functions. Respondents to the OED survey could not name the benefits of technical assistance, which seems to have been the least sustainable investment. On the other hand, fellowships received praise for having raised significantly and permanently the skill level of those instructors who returned and continued to work in their subject matter. Overall, the project completion reports and OED audits rated sustainability of half the projects as uncertain or unlikely (Annex Table A4). Only the sustainability of the primary education projects was considered likely.

4.5 The extent to which students sustained the skills they acquired through IDA-financed investments probably varies. Agricultural, technical, and management students may not have acquired skills of a level that could be sustained or may have forgotten them if they were employed in other sectors. On the other hand, research elsewhere suggests that primary-education students probably sustain or increase their level of knowledge *if* they achieve literacy in school.<sup>26</sup>

### **Institutional Development of Education Projects**

4.6 Respondents and staff often rated institutional development as modest or considered it an achievement of IDA projects. However, this term was often used to mean staff training or provision of management information systems. Though the technical part has been relatively easy to implement, substantial institutional change has been difficult. According to some respondents, it is determined by political and social events, which express themselves in laws, rules, and salary scales that determine the incentives by which staff operate. Clearly, institutional change must often take place far from specific project sites; but earlier IDA projects were not set up to create systemic reforms. Also, neither IDA nor borrower staff had a clear vision of the changes that should take place to reform and strengthen institutions.

4.7 Arcane rules affect the ability of civil servants to serve their institutions. For example, they may have to return to their original places of work to be promoted or retired. So, effective workers may have to leave their duty station to be transferred where they are not needed. Some respondents mentioned the “floating,” unspecialized status of education cadres as an important obstacle to the strengthening of most educational institutions. (Technical education teachers are considered specialized and cannot “float” easily.) Staff in MOE and its dependencies are often college teachers who can fill any position in the education bureaucracy and may move every few years. They often received IDA-financed fellowships and training, but then moved on to unrelated teaching or administrative positions in other institutions or schools. Therefore, college teachers often become primary-school principals, while primary teachers cannot advance. And these “floating” cadres are one reason why directors of institutions outside Dhaka are often absent from work.

4.8 IDA staff have been frustrated by the difficulties that civil servants have had in making decisions and carrying out plans. Capable and educated people may not carry out the expected tasks or may defer minor decisions to senior officials and do not seem accountable for the tasks their positions require. Reasons, incentives, and punishments for these behaviors are unclear. There is concern that employment may involve patron-client relationships that are more important than job descriptions and performance evaluations. Therefore, efforts to supervise school performance or increase teacher attendance may fail because they do not take into account the true relationships among various parties. However, these relationships and the real causes for poor performance have not been researched and identified. The project-based lending could not

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26. Hartley, M.J. and E.V. Swanson. 1986. “Relations of Basic Skills Among Dropouts from Egyptian Primary Schools.” World Bank Discussion Paper.

do much about the large motivational and legal obstacles that thwart institutional development and project implementation. Only near the year 2000 is the Bank developing an effective strategy to bring about systemic institutional reform.<sup>27</sup>

4.9 OED consultants visited approximately 50 institutions that benefited from IDA projects and interviewed administrators, teachers, and students. They found that one-time hardware inputs did not significantly improve the capacity of institutions to deliver quality education. To adapt to market needs and improve instructional delivery, the institutions needed continued budgetary support and access to staff training and to instructional materials. Without continued attention, the IDA-financed inputs were not sustainable.

## **5. Policies, Partnerships, and Financial Management**

5.1 Over 35 years, policy focus developed as IDA matured and clarified its strategies. The earliest projects had no policy content. The documents for projects effective after 1971 and until about 1985 included several conditionalities. These overwhelmingly facilitated implementation (internal audits, procurement, appointment of qualified staff). There were few clearly enunciated sectoral policies. Although those policies were relevant to the fulfillment of objectives, they were not sustainable. For example, IDA unsuccessfully pushed for development of coordinating agencies in agricultural and technical education, as well as for testing and certification standards. However, documents do not show that country dialogue placed much emphasis on these policies, which were not achieved. Perhaps because of the lack of a clear focus, some retired officials described IDA policies as relevant but “ad hoc.” Only in primary education did IDA effectively and clearly state policies of universal education and follow through with extensive dialogue and supportive actions.

5.2 IDA staff did have some early policy guidance in the form of education strategy papers. Table 4 shows that the focus on vocational and skills training was in line with Bank policies in the 1960s. However, IDA strategy in Bangladesh and policies in project documents were sometimes behind the times. Although the Bank expanded its vista in 1974 to include primary education, the Bangladesh implementation lagged behind until 1980. The reluctance to implement primary education projects earlier may be reflected in a lower increase in literacy vis-à-vis other countries which focused on this subsector (see Figure 3). Also, IDA policies did not focus on institutional development, as recommended by the 1980 sector paper. IDA missed the

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27. Bangladesh: Concept Paper for an Institutional Review. World Bank. Draft, February 22, 1999.

**Table 4. Bank policies and their implementation in Bangladesh**

<i>Bank Policy</i>	<i>Implementation</i>
<p><b>1963 Memorandum to the Board</b> – Recommended financing for (a) vocational and technical education and training at various levels and (b) general secondary education. Other kinds of education would be considered only in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>Theme: Manpower development</b></p>	<p><i>In line with Bank policy</i></p> <p>Projects in agricultural and vocational-technical education (Cr. 49-BD and Cr. 87-BD); almost no policy content; concern for women's low participation in the above areas. Little understanding of social, beneficiary, and instructional issues.</p>
<p><b>1971 Education Sector Working Paper</b> – Recommended that the Bank (a) continue capital financing for manpower and economic development; (b) broaden the scope of projects considered; (c) select projects on the basis of a thorough examination of the education system as a whole rather than by a priori designated areas of eligibility; (d) focus contributions to rural development, internal efficiency, increased productivity, new sources of educational finance, and efforts to help governments plan and control the size and shape of school and university systems.</p> <p><b>Theme: Basic education and access</b></p>	<p><i>In line with policy.</i></p> <p>Continued earlier investments interrupted by war without significant changes in policy orientation (Cr. 407-BD).</p> <p>Focus remained on increased access for manpower development.</p>
<p><b>1974 Education Sector Working Paper</b> – Recommended that the Bank (a) help the masses participate in the development process through low-cost, functional, mass education; (b) finance the education needs adult illiterates and out-of-school youth; (c) finance access to basic education in rural areas and poorer countries; (d) in higher-income countries, finance quality improvement at the more advanced levels.</p> <p><b>Theme: Basic education and access</b></p>	<p><i>Not implemented.</i></p> <p>The vocational and agricultural projects of the period did not sufficiently target the poorer learners (Cr. 621-BD and Cr. 912-BD).</p> <p>Policy related to development of performance standards in skills training, which was partly implemented 20 years later.</p>
<p><b>1980 Education Sector Policy Paper</b> – (a) Reinforced and extended policies covered in the Bank's 1974 working paper; (b) emphasized access to primary education; as well as improved efficiency of the system; (c) emphasized borrower participation in project formation; (d) recommended some financing of recurrent costs; (e) emphasized institutional development and planning, and development of analytical capabilities in the more "sophisticated" countries; (f) promoted detailed knowledge and policies for all subsectors.</p> <p><b>Theme: Institutional development</b></p>	<p><i>Implemented primary education after delay vis-à-vis Bank policy (Cr. 1080-BD, Cr. 1574-BD).</i></p> <p>Policy focused on access to primary education for girls and the poor.</p> <p>In efforts to deal with low institutional development, IDA financed two management projects (Cr. 1318-BD, Cr. 1349-BD). No knowledge policies.</p> <p>The agricultural and technical projects were not sufficiently oriented toward the poor (Cr. 1396-BD, Cr. 1490-BD).</p> <p>Some recurrent expenditures were financed. No project consulted beneficiaries.</p>
<p><b>1995 Priorities and Strategies for Education</b> – (a) Reinforced and expanded recent policies of subsectoral papers; (b) stated that the entire education sector was underfinanced and required more resources; (c) called for possible reallocation of public expenditures from other sectors, including defense; (d) expanded the role of nongovernmental source financing; (e) urged the need for participation of project beneficiaries and other country stakeholders in formulating lending priorities and in monitoring and evaluating project outcomes; (f) advocated extensive Borrower responsibility for sector analysis and all stages of the project cycle.</p> <p><b>Theme: Integrated interventions</b></p>	<p><i>In line with Bank policy.</i></p> <p>The General Education Project (Cr. 2218-BD) was multi-donor, financed NGOs, focused on financial reallocations, had extensive monitoring functions, involved borrower extensively.</p> <p>The Female Secondary School Assistance Project (Cr. 2469-BD) pioneered large-scale, effective distribution of girls' scholarships.</p>
<p><b>1999 Sector Strategy Paper</b> – Education focuses on quality of teaching, innovative delivery, relevance of learning, student outcomes in foundation and advanced skills, long-term measurements of success and linkages with labor markets, early childhood education, linkages with education. Bank should invest selectively, according to its comparative advantage.</p> <p><b>Theme: Monitoring</b></p>	<p><i>In line with Bank policy.</i></p> <p>Learning innovation project and other quality-oriented lending under preparation.</p>

opportunity in 1983 to bring about some changes in the civil service through the public administration projects. However, IDA's policy evolved in the 1990s. The General Education Project became a model of innovation, monitoring, and donor coordination.<sup>28</sup>

5.3 *Policy support may have been at least as important as the financial investment.* When IDA clearly enunciated sectoral policy and consistently followed it up in country dialogue, the results were impressive. Conversely, limited and unclear policy was associated with the poorly targeted and ineffective projects of agricultural, vocational, and management education. Clear and systematically discussed policy content might have helped these subsectors do better.

5.4 Performance in the various subsectors illustrates the effects of country policies on the poor, which may retard or hasten growth and the effectiveness of aid money.<sup>29</sup> Low government commitment and limited policy content in earlier years resulted in projects of negligible outcomes that to some extent still burden the recurrent expenditure budget. The policy changes regarding primary education resulted in benefits for the poor that may have long-term effects on their quality of life.

5.5 IDA did not have a comparative advantage in dealing with primary education until around 1980.<sup>30</sup> Attention to this level of education and to instructional issues increased when more educators started working in South Asia in the 1980s. Even so, research about information processing and school effectiveness has been systematized in more recent years; many older educators did not have the knowledge needed to bring about concrete improvements in instructional processes. Therefore, the quality of schools was not improved to the extent possible with a state-of-the-art team and a strong policy content. Therefore, many problems identified in 1978 remain unresolved.

5.6 Possibly the biggest IDA policy obstacle has been that the *institution in some respects put its own internal interests before those of its clients*. Incentives in earlier years were geared toward short-term goals. Staff reported being rewarded for formulating new projects and maximizing disbursements rather than for long-term improvements in a sector. Therefore, IDA's *policy strength was probably compromised by its need to lend*. The institution might have achieved more if it had insisted more on policy issues (e.g., substantial civil service reform in the public administration project), but that might risk the delivery or disbursement of projects to a degree that at the time was unacceptable.

5.7 Paradoxically, now that the Bank knows more and is willing to follow through on policy issues in greater detail, it may have become less important. The number of donors has increased since the 1970s and 1980s, and often there are multiple missions in the country at the same time. Staff do not have the easy access to high government officials of earlier years and perhaps cannot have the impact that they did in 1980.

## **Development Partners**

5.8 External aid finances over 50% of the government's development budget in education. The country has received loans from multiple donors, including IDA, Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Islamic Development Bank (ISDB), and Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC). In the 1990s (a period for which records are relatively reliable), external aid

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28. However, the government split the follow-on project into separate single-donor projects with minimal coordination.

29. Dollar, D. and L. Pritchett, 1998.

30. 1980 Education Sector Policy Paper.

from all major donors amounted to about US\$1.14 billion (Annex Table A5). Of this, about 32% consisted of grants given by several bilaterals. IDA financing accounted for 33% (US\$373.5 million for ongoing and completed projects), and ADB lending accounted for 34% (US\$381.7 million; Annex Table A6).

5.9 Many international donors have provided aid in education. Most is small-scale and specialized. UN agencies, such as UNICEF, have been active in subsectors of interest to them such as nonformal and early childhood education, but have lacked the funds for larger-scale implementation. Bilateral donors have tended to focus on specific geographic areas and on subsectors where their national consultants had a comparative advantage, such as vocational or agricultural education. For example, Sweden provided training and equipment for the technical teacher training college, and Germany provided the same for some vocational schools. USAID provided training and equipment for agricultural schools before it was severely curtailed. Japan has donated equipment and vehicles on several occasions.

5.10 Only IDA and ADB have provided large-scale lending, able to reach significant segments of the population. In recent years, ADB has lent for education in Bangladesh a slightly larger amount than IDA. This institution became involved in the sector in 1978, 15 years after IDA, and has committed US\$438 million, of which completed projects account for US\$239 million. It has focused on secondary and higher education, thus complementing to some extent IDA's work in the sector. Since 1990, it has parallel-financed a primary and a nonformal education project with IDA. ADB projects have experienced many of the same implementation problems as IDA projects. They have been extended for repeatedly and spanned 7–10 years. Disbursements of completed projects amounted to 75% of commitments, slightly below IDA's 85%. Outcomes are most often rated as partly satisfactory. The comparative advantage of ADB was that it could process loans much faster than IDA. Often, it had fewer conditions for project approval, and officials particularly appreciated the ADB-financed study tours. At the same time, however, some respondents expressed concern about the limited supervision of ADB projects and their limited outcomes.

5.11 IDA's comparative advantage may have been its capacity to do economic and sector work. Given the large number, size, and advantages of other donors in various areas, coordination would have been an excellent means to channel resources. IDA took the lead position in donor coordination, but this did not happen until the 1990s. On the contrary, there was some competition for the limited implementation capacity of Bangladesh. Competition between IDA and ADB in earlier years, when starting new projects was very important, may have created the tendency for both institutions to focus less on sectoral performance and policy.

5.12 It has become increasingly obvious that the poor cannot have productive access to education without support from multiple sources. The children must have adequate nutrition and infant stimulation for the needed cognitive development. They must have medical attention (e.g., eyeglasses), support for the handicapped, relatives able to help with homework, empowered mothers able to provide them with basic needs. Schools must meet hygienic standards but also technological standards to offer their students access to technological innovations. Clearly the government cannot do all the work needed. The comparative advantage of various sectors of society must be harnessed in the form of partnerships to support basic education.

5.13 By harnessing the convening power of the World Bank, IDA could be a key player in the future of education in Bangladesh. The Comprehensive Development Framework will provide a framework that IDA could use to build a multi-donor approach fully cognizant of its own comparative advantage as well as that of its potential partners. Annex Table A7 shows that

several partners already have contributed to various areas related to education access for the poor. However, much more needs to be done.

### Financial Management

5.14 Bangladesh has a Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index of 2.7 (10 indicates low, 1 indicates high corruption).<sup>31</sup> Its surveys indicate problems not only with construction but also in the provision of textbooks and in teacher appointments (Box 1).

5.15 Until 1997, mismanagement was raised as an issue only once in education completion reports (for girls' uniforms of a primary education project). Yet, officials of all three major subsectors who participated in the OED survey considered corruption of civil works and procurement the most important obstacle in implementation (Annex Table C1). Respondents estimated wastage in projects familiar to them at 20 to 40% of funds spent locally. This informal estimate coincides with published survey results, which show that of the foreign aid spent in Bangladesh, suppliers receive 11.6%, consultants receive 2.3%, and contractors 2%, while engineers and bureaucrats receive 10.6% as bribes and payoffs.<sup>32</sup> Bank architects involved in construction often reported informally that work was shoddy, but it was nevertheless approved for payment.

5.16 Some survey respondents emphasized to OED interviewers *the destructive effects corruption has had on institutional development*. Objectives and activities may be changed due to rent-seeking motives, while subalterns of corrupt managers become cynical. IDA's inability to stop the profiteering, and the lack of inside knowledge on the part of some IDA staff relying on the advice of corrupt officials have been a particularly demoralizing factor. For the institutions that lack strength, mismanagement may create particular problems. The availability of much donor money for education activities taxed implementation capacity; relatively few people were qualified for project-related work, and there were even fewer supervisors to create effective checks and balances.

5.17 Though IDA advocated decentralization, its procurement rules often created obstacles. It centralized school construction under the facilities department of MOE in the first primary

#### Box 1. Excerpts from Transparency International Survey Reports

Children attending primary schools were supposed to receive books from the schools. About 17% of the households reported that their children attending primary schools did not receive books from the schools. Non-receipt of books reported by households in urban areas (33.3%) was more than twice that by households in rural areas (15.4%). Non-receipt of books by children for households headed by females was 32.3% compared to that of 13.8% for households headed by males.<sup>a</sup>

The affiliated (private) or community primary schools were established by the communities. Once they were established, they were getting grants and assistance from the thana education offices. The affiliated primary schools reported that quite frequently they did not receive grants or assistance in time. Many times they had to pay the officials of the thana education offices. These schools received books from the education offices. However, there were frequent instances when they had to pay the education officials for books, education materials, and scholarship money.

a. 1998 Household Survey – Education, Executive Summary  
<http://www.ti-bangladesh.org/docs/overview.htm>

31. 1998 and 1997 ratings obtained from web site <http://www.transparency.de/> By comparison, Pakistan is 2.53 and India is 2.75.

32. Sobhan, R. and Hashemi. 1987 "Beneficiaries of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh." Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies (BIDS).

education project and centralized procurement and implementation through project implementation units. According to some respondents, centralization in this case has greatly fueled mismanagement. Large amounts of money passed through the hands of few government staff members, while contractors could do shoddy work without being accountable to the local population.

## 6. Preparing the Strategy for 2000-2020: Lessons from Previous Lending

6.1 Changes in the economic realities of Bangladesh require a suitable redefinition of education policy. By 2020, the population of the country may stabilize at 250 million people, about 40% of whom will continue to live in extreme poverty. The agricultural share of the labor force, on a downward trend, has declined from 85% in 1970 to 65% in 1997, while the portion of the GDP devoted to trade has doubled from 15% of all workers to 31% in the same period. In the next 20 years, the industrial sector is expected to account for 40% of GDP. To increase the size of the service sector and the export-oriented production based on global integration, the country will require increasing numbers of people with analytical and decision-making skills. But 60-70% of the labor force that will be needed for it is functionally illiterate. Therefore, the government must continue to expand primary education while supporting to the extent possible the educational institutions that will produce higher-level skills.

6.2 The government of Bangladesh is in the final stages of developing a national education policy. IDA has prepared a concomitant strategy note for the period 2000–2020<sup>33</sup> and is preparing a comprehensive strategy paper. The Bank's 1999 sector strategy emphasizes taking a holistic view of country issues and then lending in areas where the institution has a comparative advantage.<sup>34</sup> These parameters, together with the policy and project implementation experiences of the past 35 years, suggest several lessons for the government and for future IDA involvement.

### Apply the Comparative Advantage of IDA in Bangladesh

6.3 *IDA has a comparative advantage in coordinating donors.* Repeatedly it has been able to create large-scale, complex projects and to bring many donors and NGOs to the table, negotiating partnerships and areas of responsibility. Therefore, it should monitor the matrix of the Comprehensive Development Framework, making sure that various partners come forward to assume responsibility for the various subsectors of education as well as related areas.

6.4 *IDA has some comparative advantage in developing systemic reforms.* Staff who work in the sector are often oriented toward economic analyses, management, and large-scale systemic reforms. Recent emphasis on governance and effective institutional development may make IDA effective in tackling systemic issues, like teacher absenteeism and the rationalization of higher education.

6.5 *IDA has some comparative advantage in the provision of "hardware."* The institution has been able to help the government of Bangladesh carry out a complex building and rehabilitation program along with furniture and equipment. It has also much experience in printing and distributing textbooks. Although the number of architects in the Bank has diminished, the finite, "concrete" nature of hardware provision fits well with the Bank's

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33. Bangladesh: Education Sector Strategy Note. Prepared for the Development Forum, Paris, April 1999.

34. Sector Strategy Paper: Education. Draft Final Report, April 28, 1999.

supervision process. And Bangladesh still needs buildings and other hardware, particularly for post-primary education in poor areas.

6.6 *IDA has NO comparative advantage in improving instructional delivery.* Despite much interest in improving quality, attention to classroom issues in the past has been scant. IDA staff often had a limited understanding of how students process information, particularly in poor schools; none of them spoke Bangla. Curricula, textbook development, and teacher training were left to consultants with limited decisionmaking power and, possibly, expertise. Supervision missions often had no time to monitor quality of education, particularly the details that help create effective schools.

6.7 Despite some efforts to hire instructional experts, Bank management continues to value generalists in the positions of education specialists. Besides a continuing lack of expertise in the institution, there is a risk that instruction may be seen as a “micro” issue, that can improve automatically as “macro” issues, like system reform and finance are tackled. This means that IDA may not become more competent in the future in safeguarding educational quality. (Even education experts who are task managers may have little time for technical work.) Unless this emphasis is changed, *IDA should team up with partners who have instructional expertise in various subsectors.* Bilaterals like USAID have often offered state-of-the art knowledge in the past. NGOs like Gono Shahaja Shangshta have developed suitable methods to reach younger poor students, which could be extended to secondary education. Bilaterals like Sweden and Germany and NGOs like MAWTS, have developed effective ways to teach vocational education to illiterate students. IDA must identify partners with a record for improving instructional delivery, who can put in the field expert professionals who understand cultural and linguistic issues. Consultants with short-term assignments and limited decisionmaking power have proved unsatisfactory in Bangladesh.

6.8 These partners must appraise and supervise the quality of instructional delivery of donor-financed projects in much greater detail than it has done in the past. Sufficient supervision time must be given to classroom effectiveness at all levels of education, aside from the administrative and managerial issues of missions.

### **Set Clear Policies and Purposes and Follow Through on Them**

6.9 Partly due to lack of clarity of policies and purposes, IDA had to abandon three of its four long-term goals for 1980–2000. It succeeded when it adopted consistent policies, as on universal primary education and girls’ education. With perseverance and clear policies, IDA may bring about significant outcomes in other subsectors, such as vocational-technical, secondary, nonformal, and higher education.

6.10 Experience shows that *merely inserting policy items in documents is not sufficient*; long-term goals may be forgotten during short-term implementation urgencies. Policy dialogue and reference to the original reasons for which lending was given must be carried out consistently during supervision missions.

### **Strengthen Institutions, Accountability, and Financial Management**

6.11 Many quality-of-education issues remain unresolved since their identification in 1978: centralization, high teacher absenteeism (despite the appointments of assistant thana education officers to supervise locally), short instructional calendar, untimely staff transfers, inability of civil servants to make decisions, and the recently voiced corruption and mismanagement

concerns. As systemic issues, these could not be resolved through project-based lending. They could benefit from:

- *Policy clarity and perseverance*; the donor community could continue to emphasize systemic issues in their country dialogue and help the government give greater priority to their resolution. Although the government has decided against a multidonor sectoral approach to the Primary Education Development Project, donors must continue close coordination among themselves.
- *Cross-sectoral research and consultation with beneficiaries* and special-interest groups (e.g., teachers' unions) to discover the real (and often micro-level) causes of problems and possible solutions. For example, it is unclear exactly how certain teachers are appointed and why they are able to underperform with impunity, unaccountable to citizens, education officers, and school management committees. It is also unclear what incentives drive the performance of civil servants. The donor community could act as mediators in finding solutions to satisfy all parties.
- *Higher education reform*; overhauling the financial and instructional conditions of various universities and colleges to generate income, share costs with students, reduce wastage, and teach relevant skills. The government needs donor help to tackle this difficult and political issue.
- *Efforts to bring about changes in antiquated rules and laws* that diminish the effectiveness of the public sector. Linked to this issue are civil service reform and combating of corruption. IDA has so far been ineffective in reforming the civil service in Bangladesh. However, there is much effort in this direction, and work is planned to assess the real institutional incentives civil servants have to do their work. Active work on civil service and governance improvement may have some costs and risks for IDA. Much of the institutional work may need to be dealt with through non-lending services, since expenses are only minor. Also, confronting the sources of corruption may be difficult or even dangerous; appraisals and effectiveness dates may slip, staff may feel uncomfortable. Management should take a long-range view and help task managers take firm stands, not be afraid to stop disbursements or demand reparations. Local staff must be protected from exposure.

### **Continue Support for Specific Institutions**

6.12 In the past, IDA has provided civil works, equipment, and training in hopes of strengthening their capacity to deliver quality education to students. These inputs were valuable but insufficient. Lessons are:

- Educational institutions need sustained budgetary and instructional support to evolve according to changing needs. IDA might consider lending or non-lending operations targeted specifically at instructional and institutional development in a number of the institutions it has financed in the past.
- Support might be particularly important for vocational-technical education, since the need for skills continues and has evolved. Through NGOs, IDA could finance demand-driven skills training to the very poor and to women, particularly non-traditionally female skills. Thus, its early investments may become more productive.

- Fellowships have been a valuable means to increase knowledge in a sector, and most local staff who received them returned to Bangladesh. Given the persisting need for trained staff in administration, testing, and instruction, fellowships should continue.
- IDA has in the past created agencies that turned out to be counterproductive or ineffective (such as the MOE Facilities Department or National Skills Development Council). Staff should consult primary beneficiaries widely and study all alternatives before reorganizing agencies or departments or creating new ones.

### **Safeguard the Post-Primary Education of the Poor**

6.13 Bangladesh may never develop the higher levels of public education, as most other countries in the world have done. Private education is expected to serve most students in secondary education and significant numbers of them in vocational and higher education. IDA strongly supports private provision of education. *However, the institution also has a poverty alleviation mission.* Access to higher levels of education by the 36% of the population that will continue to be very poor must be safeguarded.

6.14 The donor community needs to help the government create clear plans to protect the poor in a framework of private education. Loan schemes may not be sufficient in the face of unemployment uncertainties, particularly for women, and in the earlier years, scholarships did not go to the poor (Annex Table A2). An affordable, long-range safety net is needed as a follow-on to the Female Secondary Schools Project. Examples might be “cash transfers” to families to pull children out of labor and into secondary school, subsidies to local governments to ensure the provision of adequate quality services to the families of the beneficiaries in education (and in some cases, nutrition and health). Much social consultation may be needed to settle on effective interventions.

### **Improve upon Past Performance**

6.15 *Improving supervision.* Perennial delays in project implementation indicate a need for much closer monitoring and faster resolution of obstacles. Though implementation capacity has improved, projects have also become more complex. Task managers are consumed by administrative and managerial issues and can devote only limited time to technical issues. This conflict may militate against attention to policy and detail. IDA might resume the use of additional supervision resources, such as the donor-funded monitor who kept detailed track of developments in the General Education Project.

6.16 *Building in an overpopulated country.* Past projects have focused on short-term savings, building school buildings with foundations not strong enough to permit future expansion. Before more low-cost buildings are built in rural or urban areas, IDA needs to study land prices and construction costs to determine its use of land and building density is appropriate.



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## A. Supplemental Tables

**Table A1. IDA education projects in Bangladesh (US\$ million to December 1998)**

<i>Project name</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Credit no.</i>	<i>Credit amount</i>	<i>Disbursed</i>	<i>Cancelled or undisbursed</i>	<i>Amount repaid</i>
<b>Completed Projects</b>						
East Pakistan Education	1964/71	49	4.5	n.a	4.5	n.a
East Pakistan Education II	1966/71	87	13	9.26	13	n.a
Education I	1973/80	407	22.5	21.2	1.4	5.3
Rural Training	1976/83	621	12	10.2	1.8	1.6
Education- Skills Training	1979/87	912	25	16.5	8.4	1.5
Education IV (Primary Ed. I)	1980/86	1054	40	29.2	10.8	2.0
Public Administration	1983/90	1349	12	9	4	0.5
Business Management	1983/89	1318	7.8	6.3	2.1	0.4
Agricultural Training II	1984/89	1396	8.1	3.7	4.7	0.2
Technical Education	1984/92	1490	36	33.2	8.3	1.3
Primary Education II	1985/90	1574	78	94.7	6.8	2.6
General Education	1990/96	2118	159.3	131.8	36.	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>418.2</b>	<b>366.5</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>15.4</b>
<b>Projects Under Implementation</b>						
Female Secondary Schools Assistance	1993/00	2469	68	30.8	38.7	0
Non-Formal Education	1996/01	2822	10.5	0.8	9	0
Primary Education Development Project	1998/03	N038	135.7	3.55		
<b>Total for all Lending</b>			<b>632.4</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>101.9</b>	<b>15.4</b>

Note: The first two projects had a debt of US\$9.26 million that has been carried over to Bangladesh. Some additional inconsistencies are due to SDR exchange rates.

Table A2. Main problems highlighted in each sector review

	1978	1981 Note	1988 (Selective review)	1989 (Voc- technical education)	1996 (Expenditure Review)	Outcomes through lending or policy dialogue
High population growth (3+%)	X	X				Dropped to 1.8%, but population doubled
Low human capital	X			X	X	Overall education and health improved
Very limited training opportunities for women		X	X	X		Improvement in primary and secondary education
Major imbalances in the demand and supply of manpower	X			X		Little improvement
Chronic underfinancing of education	X	X	X		X	Budget share of education doubled
Disproportionate resource allocation to secondary and higher education, inability to resist pressure to reallocate		X	X		X	The share of primary education in the budget increased from 42% in 1974 to 52% in 1994
Limited cost recovery			X	X	X	Little improvement
Low efficiency (high dropout, repetition)	X	X	X		X	Primary ed. dropout reduced from 80% in 1974 to 38% in 1997
Inadequate classroom supervision, management		X				Some improvement in primary education
Lack of relevance in the curricula	X		X	X		Improvement mainly in primary education
Lack of teacher training			X	X		Training widely available, benefits uncertain
Lack of access to adult literacy training			X			Considerable access achieved
Low quality of secondary and higher education			X		X	Little improvement (and little investment)
Scholarships benefit the better-off			X			Little improvement (except for girls' secondary scholarships)
Universal primary education not achievable by 2000			X		X	Possibly achievable by 2020
Negative rates of return in vocational ed.				X		Little improvement
MOE's limited planning and implementation capacity		X			X	Significant improvement
Inability to collect educational data			X		X	Capacity significantly improved
Centralization of decisions, minor matters referred to senior officials		X				Extent of improvement unknown
High turnover of officials		X				Significant improvement after donor efforts

Note: The effectiveness of addressing issues was rated on the basis of statistics available, OED consultant opinions, and statements in ICRs, audits, and sector studies.

Table A3. Categories of project goals

Goal categories	No. of projects
Strengthen certain institutions, reform administration	3
Universalize primary education or basic skills attainment, modernize a subsector	3
Develop human resources for sectoral employment, combat unemployment	2
Reduce poverty	1
Increase learning efficiency	1

Note: Some projects did not have explicit goals

Table A4. OED ratings of education projects

<i>Project name</i>	<i>Credit no.</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>	<i>Institutional development</i>
General Education Project	2218-BD	1990/96	Satisfactory	Likely	Modest
Second Primary Education Project	1574-BD	1985/90	Satisfactory	Likely	Modest
Technical Education Project	1490-BD	1984/92	Satisfactory	Uncertain	Modest
Second Agricultural Training Project	1396-BD	1983/89	Unsatisfactory	Unlikely	Negligible
Public Administration Project	1349-BD	1983/90	Satisfactory	Likely	Modest
Business Management Project	1318-BD	1983/89	Unsatisfactory	Uncertain	Modest
First Primary Education Project [Education IV]	1054-BD	1980/86	Satisfactory	Likely	Modest
Vocational Training Project	912-BD	1979/87	Unsatisfactory	Uncertain	Modest
Agriculture and Rural Training Project	621-BD	1976/83	Satisfactory	n/a	n/a
Education Project (technical and ag.)	407-BD	1973/80	Satisfactory	n/a	n/a
Second East Pakistan Education Project	0087-BD	1966-71?	Satisfactory	n/a	n/a
First East Pakistan Education Project	0049-BD	1964/71	Unsatisfactory	n/a	n/a

Source: OED data

**Table A5. Major donors in the education sector in the 1990s**

Year	Project Name	Donor	Amount Allocated (million)	Amount Disbursed (end 1998)	Amount in US\$ million	Disbursed in US\$ million (end 1998)
<b>Grants</b>						
1996	Technical Assistance for 2nd primary education	ADB (US\$)	0.170	0	0.2	7.00
1995	Vocational training (Technical Assistance of loan#2130)	ADB (US\$)	0.40	0	0.4	0.40
1992	PROMOTE female teacher in 2ndary-school education.	EU (ECU)	36.00	0	38.2	0
1992	Primary school cum cyclone shelter	FRG (DM)	20.000	0.915	10.9	0.50
1995	Comprehensive primary education	FRG (DM)	55.000	0	30.1	0
1995	Cyclone shelter construction	FRG (DM)	15.00	0	8.2	0
1996	Technical Assistance on comp. Primary education	FRG (DM)	5.500	0	3.0	0
1997	Technical Assistance for non-formal education	FRG (DM)	15.000	0	8.2	0
1990	Reconstruction & rehab. Of school & madrasa	ISDB (US\$)	10.00	0.500	10	0.50
1992	Reconstruction of school & madrasa	ISDB (US\$)	5.000	0	5	0
1994	Construction of Islamic Univ. at Kustia	ISDB (US\$)	3.000	0	3	0
1994	Preparation of proposed 2nd general Education project GEP- 2 (Technical Assistance)	Japan (Yen)	136.00	0	1.2	0
1994	Procurement of Education equipment for fine arts, Dhaka	Japan (Yen)	45.00	0	0.4	0
1994	Technical Assistance for Japan BD joint study (BUET)	Japan (Yen)	138.373	138.373	1.2	1.20
1990	GEP	Netherlands (DFL)	26.500	8.823	12.8	4.30
1993	GEP	Netherlands (DFL)	2.700	2.700	1.3	1.30
1993	Technical Assistance for GEP	Netherlands (DFL)	0.040	0.037	0.0	0
1992	Development of primary education	Norway (NKR)	72.00	6.400	9.3	0.80
1993	Female 2ndary stipend program	Norway (NKR)	39.500	7.035	5.1	0.90
1994	Supply of textbook paper for Primary Education dev.	Norway (NKR)	3.753	3.753	0.5	0.50
1996	Development of Primary Education	Norway (NKR)	35.000	35.000	4.5	4.50
1991	Construction of school, mosques, clinics In multipurpose building	Saudi Arabia (SR)	205.500	14.198	54.8	3.80
1990	GEP	Sweden (SKR)	86.200	17.240	10.3	2.10
1996	Integrated non-formal education	Sweden (SKR)	5.000	0	0.6	0.0
1996	Non-formal education project	Switzerland (US\$)	3.769	0.769	0.5	0.10
1993	Technical Assistance for Fisheries Training & research	UK (STG)	1.434	0.120	2.3	0.20
1991	Technical Assistance for primary Education	UNDP (US\$)	2.106	0	2.1	0
1993	Technical Assistance for reform of higher secondary Edu	UNDP (US\$)	2.334	0	2.3	0
1993	Technical Assistance for national vocational trg system	UNDP (US\$)	6.869	0	6.9	0
1994	Support for monitoring sustainable human dev. In BD	UNDP (US\$)	0.960	0	1.0	0
1991	Strengthening insurance education	UNDP (US\$)	0.354	0.100	0.4	0.10
1992	Institutionalization of population education in formal School System	UNFPA (US\$)	2.293	0.186	2.3	0.19
1995	Education & services in BD Tea plantation	UNFPA (US\$)	0.250	0.020	0.3	0.02
1996	Strengthening population & environment courses & program in different Universities	UNFPA (US\$)	0.310	0	0.3	0
1983	Universal Primary Education, 1983	UNICEF (US\$)	24.487	3.360	24.5	3.36
1994	Universal Primary Education	UNICEF (US\$)	4.918	1.645	4.9	1.65
1994	Non-formal education project	UNICEF (US\$)	7.364	0	7.4	0
1996	Intensive dist. Approach to Education	UNICEF (US\$)	72.047	10.470	72.0	10.47
1996	Basic education for HR urban children	UNICEF (US\$)	20.000	1.004	20.0	1.00
	<b>Total</b>				<b>366.1</b>	<b>37.99</b>
<b>Loans other than IDA and ADB</b>						
1993	Construction of primary school & madrasas	ISDB (IDR)	3.505			
1994	Islamic Univ. at Khuina	ISDB (IDR)			3.5	
1996	Primary school cum cyclone shelter	ISDB (IDR)				
1997	IDB-BD Islamic Solidarity education wakf BD	ISDB (IDR)	1.493			
1987	Technical Education	OPEC (US\$)	4.102		1.5	
1992	Primary school construction	OPEC (US\$)	4.820		4.1	
	<b>Total</b>				<b>4.8</b>	
	<b>Total, all aid</b>				<b>380.0</b>	<b>145.67</b>

Table A6. Projects financed by the Asian Development Bank

Loan No.	Project Name	Approval Date	Actual Completion	Actual Loan Closing Date	Approved Loan (\$ million)	Disbursed (\$ million)	Performance <sup>1</sup>		% Disbursed
							PCR	PPAR	
0373	Educational Equipment Development	5/Dec/78	30/Jun/88	12/May/89	6.00	4.12		PS	0.69
0510	Community Schools	21/Apr/81	30/Jun/88	25/Jan/89	13.50	5.97		PS	0.44
0699	Secondary Science Education Sector	23/Oct/84	30/Jun/91	15/Jul/94	37.00	37.55		PS	1.01
1026	Primary Education Sector Project	21/Aug/90	31/Jan/97	17/Jun/97	68.30	54.14	GS		0.79
1066	Rural Training	13/Dec/90	not available	22/Jun/98	16.25	10.43			0.64
1123	Higher Secondary Education	21/Nov/91	96% complete <sup>2</sup>		49.20				
1173	Open University	4/Aug/92	98% complete <sup>2</sup>		34.30				
1182	Rehabilitation Of Damaged School Facilities	27/Oct/92	31/Mar/95	30/Oct/95	15.00	13.92	GS		0.93
1268	Secondary Education Development	23/Nov/93	Ongoing		72.00				
1390	Non-formal Education	29/Sep/95	Ongoing		26.70				
1521	Second Primary Education Sector	22/May/97	Ongoing		100.00				
Totals					438.25	126.13		Average	0.75

Notes: Completed and nearly projects totaled UD\$239.55 million, disbursements about US\$188.75 million

1 PCR - Project Completion Report, PPAR - Project Performance Audit Report

GS - Generally Successful, PS - Partly Successful

2. As of 28 February 1999

Source: Asian Development IDA, Operations Evaluation Office, April 1999

Table A7. Activities and donors in areas linked to education within the Comprehensive Development Framework

Who/ Area	Multilaterals	Bilaterals	UN System	Civil Society (including NGOs)	Private sector	Government
Early childhood education				Save the Children-USA, Gono Shahaja Shangstha		
School nutrition			UNICEF (iron and deworming tablets)			Food for Education
School health			UNICEF	Save the Children-USA		
Care for disabled children				Helen Keller foundation, Interlife-Bangladesh, Center for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed		Schools for the blind
Citizen rights (including women's)		USAID		Grameen Bank, BRAC, Proshika		
Microcredit with school links	IDA			Grameen Bank, BRAC		
School-related sewage-water	IDA, ADB	UK	UNICEF			
School energy-telecommunications						
Governance of the education system				Transparency International Surveys	Newspapers	



## B. Detailed Methodology

As with most earlier Bank projects, none of the 12 completed projects had benchmarks or monitoring indicators, and almost no data were generated or gathered. To gauge the effects of IDA lending and policy advice on the sector and its supported institutions, it was necessary to rely on the views of managers and beneficiaries. Hence, the evaluation did the following:

- *Interview government decisionmakers.* Individual interviews and focus groups were held with the top level at the end of January 1999 with administrators and various officials involved in the projects. Most were retired. Initial discussions highlighted the most important issues. On the basis of these issues, interview guidelines were developed. In addition to identifying issues, participants were asked to rate their importance on a five-point scale (1-low to 5-high). Through interviews, past government officials in the ministries which received education sector investments since 1964 were queried about IDA's role in policy formation, the wisdom of policy advice, effectiveness of dissemination advice. Efforts were made to assess the accuracy, comprehensiveness, timeliness, responsiveness, clarity, practicality, appropriateness, fairness, cost-effectiveness of the advice, the amount of consultation with interested parties, the extent to which advice was disseminated, was received, and what obstacles prevent its implementation, if any. Where possible, officials were asked to compare advice with that of other donors.
- *Conduct Institution visits, beneficiary and administrator assessments.* The country was divided in four areas. In December 1998 and January 1999, two Bangladeshi researchers visited about 50 post-secondary establishments: polytechnics, vocational, agricultural and teacher training colleges, as well as a convenience sample of district education offices, primary and secondary schools. The researchers interviewed the heads, administrators, instructors and graduates or beneficiaries of the respective institutions under IDA projects and discussed in detail the status of the institutions and their educational supports.

The researchers also visited and interviewed the administrators of the apex bodies (NCSDT, National Curricula and Textbooks Board, BTEB, Department of Primary Education, Ministry of Education, CBIT etc.) and coordinating offices of relevant educational institutions in Dhaka.

### Numbers of officials, administrators, and teachers consulted in each subsector

<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Nonformal</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Tech. &amp; Voc.</i>	<i>Business Management</i>	<i>Public Admin.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Top-level officials	12	8	12	16	12	15	12	87
Mid-level officials	31	64	22	51	29	11	11	219
Base-level Implementers	64	47	33	33	35	9	10	231
Beneficiaries	48	17	7	18	11	14	9	124
Others	---	---	20	---	---	---	---	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>681</b>

### Issues discussed in school interviews and focus groups were:

- Bidding process: selection, events, suppliers
- Building and equipment maintenance

- Curriculum, research, and development
- Distribution of inputs
- Ability to carry out work
- Institutional capacity to administer the programs
- Raw materials needed
- Communication with authorities
- Utilization rate of institutions
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Institutional finance
- Sustainability of the investments.

**The consultant team visited the following institutions:**

**Tangail**

- Primary Training Institute (Primary Teacher Training Institute) (Cr. 1054)
- Government Primary Schools (IMPACT Schools) (Cr. 1054)

**Faridpur**

- Agricultural Technical Institute (Cr. 621)
- Primary Training Institute (Primary Teacher Training Institute) (Cr. 1054)
- Polytechnic Institute (Cr. 1490)
- In Madhukhali Thana: Komorpur Secondary School/Uzandia Secondary School/Karaniar Char

**Barisal**

- Polytechnic Institute (Cr. 1490)
- Rahmatpur - Agriculture Technical Institute (Cr. 621)
- Vocational Training Institute
- Technical Training Center (Cr.912)
- District Education Office & Department of Primary Education Office
- Thana Education Office
- Facilities Dept. and Local Government Engineering Department Office

**Patuakhali**

- Thana: Kalapara: Baliadangi Secondary School/Khalilpur Secondary School/Hazipur Secondary School
- Thana Education Office
- Primary Teacher Training Institute (Cr. 1054)
- Agriculture College, Dhumki.

**Khulna**

- Technical Training Centre, Boyra, Daulatpur (Cr. 912)
- Polytechnic Institute-Daulatpur (Cr. 1490)
- District Education Office
- Bangladesh Institute of Technology, Fulbari Gate (Cr.1490)

- Khulna University, Gallamari
- Teachers Training Center (Technical Training Center), Fulbari Gate
- Primary Training Institute (Primary Teacher Training Institute) (Cr. 1054, Cr. 2118)
- Regional Public Administration Training Center, Nurnagar (Cr. 1349)

#### **Kushtia**

- Daulatpur, Harishankara - Vocational Training Institute (Cr.407)
- Thana Education Office, Daulatpur
- Satellite Schools In Sadar Thana: Ballavpur Secondary School/Khayerpur Secondary School/
- Pashchim Abdulpur Secondary School
- Kumarkhali Thana: Uttar Bhabanipur Secondary School
- Daulotpur Thana: Angdia Secondary School/Shalma Secondary School/Madapur Secondary School/Tazpur Thana Secondary School

#### **Jessore**

- Polytechnic Institute (Cr. 1490)
- Teachers Training College

#### **Bogra**

- Polytechnic Institute(Cr. 1490)
- Technical Training Centre (Cr. 407, Cr. 912)
- Primary schools
- District Education Office/Thana Education Office
- Bangladesh Rural Development Academy (Cr. 407)

#### **Rangpur**

- Higher Agricultural Institute for Training I, Tajpur, (Cr. 1396)
- Polytechnic Institute (Cr. 1490)
- Primary schools
- District Education Office/Thana Education Office

#### **Mymensingh**

- Bangladesh Agriculture University (Cr. 407, Cr. 49, Cr. 87)
- Graduate Training Institute (Cr. 621)
- National Academy for Primary Education (Cr. 1054)

#### **Gaibandha**

- Agricultural Training Institute (Cr. 621)
- Primary Teacher Training Institute (Cr. 1054)
- Thana Education Office
- District Education Office
- Sadullahpur Thana Education Office
- Government primary schools
- Satellite schools



## C. Survey Results

**Table C1. Most common implementation obstacles**

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Agricultural</i>	<i>Technical-vocational</i>	<i>Primary</i>
Corruption and wastage in construction, procurement of equipment and supplies	4.0	4.4	4.2
Limited attention to relevance of educational inputs	4.0	2.8	1.9
Exclusion of PIUs from the revenue budget and official structure; temporary PIUs	2.8	3.1	4.0
Lengthy government decisionmaking procedures	2.8	3.5	4.0
IDA supervisions that were inefficient or lacked educators	2.6	2.7	1.3
No involvement of sectoral planners	2.5	3.7	4.6
Short stay of high officials in various planning cells	–	2.8	4.1
Lack of commitment or indifferent service by consultants	2.2		
Wrong personnel in wrong position	2.0	2.0	2.2
Lack of trained personnel for project implementation	2.0	1.1	1.0
Work involvement beyond project need	1.5		1.9
Low level of commitment at various government agencies	1.3	1.3	2.0

Note: Ratings 1-low importance, 5-high importance; respondents: agriculture N=80, technical-vocational N=40, primary education N=80

**Table C2. Relative importance of components emphasized in agricultural projects**

<i>Components</i>	<i>Importance</i>
Physical facilities (construction, equipment, vehicle )	5
Training and fellowships, consultant services for capacity development	4.2
Manpower and administration	3
Operational support	2.7
Curriculum and learning materials	1.3
Support system improvement for farmer training	0.8

Source: Responses indicating importance of component (1-low, 5-high) N=16 (secretaries, directors, assistant directors, directors general, chiefs of training institutes, other former officials)

**Table C3. Most significant achievements in agricultural education**

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
Greater access to educational institutes	4.6
Physical facilities development	3.6
Stronger management and administration	3.3
Institutional development	2.3
Proper dissemination of appropriate technology among farmers through trained extension personnel	1.0

Source: Focus group responses indicating importance (1-low, 5-high) N=60

**Table C4. IDA failures in agricultural education**

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
Non-integration of the training institutes into the general structure of agricultural education	5.0
No significant improvement in the quality of training	3.0
Inability to establish an effective coordinating agency	3.6
No institutional development	1.6
Graduates were white collar workers	1.6

Source: Focus group responses indicating importance or agreement (1-low, 5-high) N=60

**Table C5. Major policies promoted by IDA in agricultural education**

<i>Policies</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
Meeting the short run need for the field agents of extension department	5
Allowing mid-level personnel access to higher studies	3.6
Reorganizing the existing structure with better efficiency	3
Emphasizing higher level education specially	2.3
Emphasizing farmer training	1

Source: Focus group responses indicating importance or agreement (1-low, 5-high); N=16

**Table C6. Most significant achievements in technical and vocational education**

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
Physical facilities development	4.3
Management and administration strengthened	3.33
Increased access to technical education	3.6
Institutional development	2.3
Dissemination of technology to local enterprises	1.6

Source: Focus group responses indicating importance or agreement (1-low, 5-high); N=40

**Table C7. IDA failures in technical and vocational education**

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
Non-integration of the training institutes into the market (public and private)	5
Inability to establish an effective coordinating agency	3.33
Low quality of education and training	2.67
Limited institutional development	2
Failure to train hands-on productive workers	2

Source: Focus group responses indicating importance or agreement (1-low, 5-high); N=40

**Table C8. Why vocational and technical institutes did not establish industry linkages**

<i>Resources</i>	<i>Technical training colleges</i>	<i>Polytechnics</i>	<i>Bangladesh Institute of Technology</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
Selecting wrong target group	5	5	–	5
Inappropriateness of skills learned vis-à-vis market needs	4	4	2	3.33
Low quality training program	2	3	2	2.5
Due to lack of GoB's policy/commitment	2	1	–	1.5
Higher expected salaries & wages of skilled workers	3	2	–	2.5

Source: Focus group responses indicating importance or agreement (1-low, 5-high); N=12

**Table C9. Most significant achievements in primary education**

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
Increasing equitable access for primary age group	5
Supported government policy decisions, emphasizing basic education strategy	3
Overall development of sub-sectoral administration and management	2.7
Mass awareness increased	2.7
Improved quality of primary education	2

Source: Focus group responses indicating importance or agreement (1-low, 5-high); N=80

**Table C10. Areas of IDA failure in primary education**

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Average rating</i>
IDA did not understand the need to balance quantity and quality issues	3.22
Students' learning achievement has not significantly improved	2.75
Could not motivate the government to mobilize resources efficiently	2.22
Could not coordinate the government's agencies, NGOs, other donors and community under a single umbrella	1.5

*Source.* Focus group responses indicating importance or agreement (1-low, 5-high); N=80



## D. Activities Financed by Primary Education Projects

According to respondents and OED consultant observations, the three primary education projects took a more systemic approach and emphasized many important activities in tandem. As expected for this large effort, problems also arose:

- School buildings *(They are not designed to optimize instructional outcomes; blackboards are small, the noise from one class carries through transoms disrupting others, and ventilation is poor.)*
- Curriculum development for primary and lower secondary schools *(Effectiveness of its dissemination to teachers and subsequent utilization is questionable.)*
- Free provision of large numbers of textbooks to students *(53 million in the GEP; distribution is often delayed by 2 – 3 months, and quantities may be insufficient.)*
- Support to the 53 primary teacher training colleges for civil works and instructional development *(quality of student preparation has not been assessed.)*
- In-service teacher training in clusters *(teachers report benefits, but OED observations suggest that teachers' use of classroom time is still inefficient; nearly 90 percent of community and religious school teachers remain untrained)*
- Recruitment of local female teachers *(surveys by Transparency International uncovered bias in obtaining appointments towards those with connections of money)*
- A supervisory network of thana and district education offices *(school visits suggest that only assistant thana officers visit schools more or less regularly, and supervision is administrative rather than academic)*
- Support to NGOs that run schools for poor children *(experiences were very positive)*
- Innovative methods to attract students and improve quality such as uniforms for girls, stipends, schools with larger classrooms and peer tutoring, items to make schools attractive, satellite and low-cost schools *(some methods succeeded more than others; stipends evolved into the Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP))*
- Management information system to collect school-level data *(largely functional)*
- Establishment of school management committees for each school *(often ineffective because officials pay little attention to them)*
- Periodic student assessment *(efforts to create a system of relatively standardized tests failed, as other priorities loomed larger)*
- Low-cost primary schools *(several respondents said that ultimately they will cost more and pose problems for the communities. When built with four rooms, there is no space for a fifth grade or for a teachers' room. As population grows in this country of great land scarcity, a second floor is needed, but foundations cannot support it).<sup>35</sup>*

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35. As with the Public Administration Project, IDA saved money in the short term that will cost more in the long term.



## E. Did the Educational Opportunities Extend to Women?

Women's problems were highlighted early on (Annex Table 2). Although no specific lending objective was enunciated in the 1970s, five projects included some efforts to offer them benefits. (Management projects did not mention gender, but trainees were and are mostly men.) Four carried them out to some extent. Dormitories for girls were built in some engineering and agricultural colleges; however, little was accomplished in the 1970s and 1980s because authorities consistently failed to recruit many women to the staff or student bodies of agricultural, technical, and vocational institutions. Female participation in publicly funded vocational education was poor and is only about 2 percent.<sup>36</sup> So, *IDA lending had very limited effects on women's participation in income-oriented or professional education.*

On the other hand, *all basic education projects substantially supported women.* The first primary project gave women school uniforms (until corruption put an end to this practice), and hired assistant female teachers. The second primary project and GEP addressed many obstacles to girls' education. For example, textbooks were scrutinized for stereotyping and negative messages about women and changed. Although detailed information to establish causality is lacking, the projects probably helped close the participation gender gap in public primary schools.<sup>37</sup>

To address the severely limited opportunities of poor girls' attendance in secondary schools, IDA and ADB are financing the Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP), which offers small scholarships to eligible girls who enroll at secondary schools in 118 targeted thanas. FSSAP has not yet closed and its outcomes are unknown. Preliminary evidence by OED researcher who interviewed beneficiaries suggests that providing monetary incentives directly to girls can be an effective way of increasing their participation in secondary education.<sup>38</sup> The administrators interviewed consider FSSAP the best implemented IDA-financed project. Because of careful project design, the scholarship funds reach their beneficiaries with minimal loss. The funds have enabled girls from low-income families to continue on to secondary school, thus acquiring more income-generation options in their lives. Outreach work with their families and the school management committees has increased awareness of the importance of literacy for girls, postponement of marriage, and ultimately may lead to further population reduction.

From 1994, when the project started, until 1998, a total of 805,607 annual scholarships were given, exceeding SAR targets by 74 percent. Girls' enrollment in the targeted areas increased by 18.4 percent, while boys' enrollment increased only by 4 percent. Dropout has decreased for girls in grades 6–7 but not in grades 8–10; according to the persons interviewed, the main reasons are marriages and the parents' financial constraints. The promising enrollment picture is marred by the low quality of education delivered in secondary schools. Teachers are scarce in rural areas and underqualified; the large enrollment increases of girls have crowded classrooms in a subsector that has received little donor investment. Therefore, the quality of education probably suffers due to these negative factors. The ADB's Secondary Education Development Project (of US\$72 million) is still in progress, and instructional benefits are not yet apparent.

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36. BANBEIS unpublished statistics, 1998.

37. *Leveling the Playing Field: Giving Girls an Equal Chance for Basic Education – Three Countries' Efforts.* 1996. Washington, DC: World Bank, EDI Learning Resources Series, Report no. 15662.

38. Liang, Xiaoyan. 1997. *Bangladesh – Female Secondary School Assistance Project.* World Bank.

The project has received international attention, and several studies of its effects are in progress. *If its current performance continues, the outcome is expected to be highly satisfactory and to have substantially influenced the lives of some of the poorest women in the world.*