

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION FUND
Bangladesh Strategy Paper (2003-2005) [Draft 1]

1.0 Introduction

After the CEF strategy workshop in Nairobi in June, ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB), along with Save the Children UK (SC UK) and Oxfam GB, followed the agreed route map for formulating a home-grown strategy based on wide participation for the CEF initiative. In the consultation process that ensued, CAMPE (Campaign for Popular Education), the only network of NGOs involved in education in Bangladesh and a management committee member of GCE (Global Campaign for Education), played a commendable role by organizing two workshops with different CS networks and NGOs. Three more consultative workshops with student unions, media journalists, trade unions and other representatives of different strata of civil society followed. From these consultations, pertinent issues in the primary education sector were identified and likely activities to address these issues were discussed. Based on the consultations, a working group produced a strategy paper, and submitted to CEF in September.

The concept of CEF (a fund for the sole purpose of policy advocacy) has been novel to say the least and the potential CEF players took considerable time to assimilate the idea and then respond accordingly. To orient them on CEF and facilitate their participation, the team from the lead agency and members from the partner agencies conducted several rounds of discussions and brainstorming sessions. Civil society members of diverse profiles were involved in this process. From the very beginning, the CEF team in Bangladesh has carefully and intentionally attempted to reach beyond the NGO community and widen the CEF constituency. As a result, fruitful discussions were held with research organizations, media organizations, and organizations with experience in massive social mobilization and public debate. Included in these among others are community based grassroots organizations, student and teacher's associations. These interactive dialogues have been immensely helpful in elucidating CEF's position in Bangladesh. In this ongoing process for grounding the position of CEF firmly in the map of diverse development initiatives in Bangladesh, operationalizing the initiatives was procrastinated and activities proposed for the period of October- January did not get off the ground. However, ongoing CEF activities will soon yield reader friendly versions and critiques of national education policy documents, which are expected to fuel policy literacy initiatives within the CEF framework.

In response to the proposal submitted in September, the international CEF management committee has given elaborate feedback and raised some points of concern. To address and strengthen the gender dimension of CEF work in Bangladesh, special care has been taken. Furthermore, advocacy by social excluded groups for themselves has been assigned special focus as proactive efforts have been made to engage and involve networks and forums that are mandated to speak on behalf of different marginalized groups (e.g. the disabled and ethnic minority). Furthermore, the scope of corporate sector involvement has been identified and accordingly strategized- both as a fund raising window and also as an opportunity for widening the constituency of civil society by breaking the stereotyping of identifying NGOs to be synonymous with civil society.

2.0 Policy Landscape and Primary Education scenario

Bangladesh in her Constitution pledges for an equitable access to a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education. The right to education is inscribed in the Constitution of Bangladesh in article 28¹ and in article 17² respectively. Bangladesh is also one of the signatories of all the major human rights declarations including the Dakar Declaration that outlined the mechanisms to achieve the goals of Universal Education for All. Accordingly, Bangladesh follows a series of commitments to which the nation is together with many other nations of the world. Over the last decade starting from the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand 1990), Bangladesh has taken several steps including the enactment of Compulsory Primary Education Act (1990), adoption of Decade Action Plan for the Child (1991-2000), enunciation of national Children Policy (1994), and implementation of two National Plans of Action for Children, Ratification of UNCRC by Bangladesh has reinforced her commitments by adding rights dimension in its emphasis on expanding education opportunities.

Bangladesh has witnessed quantitative expansion of the education system and substantial increase in enrolment rates in recent years, however, the inequitable access to quality primary education is omnipresent and the objective of equity of access to a largely uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of primary education in Bangladesh has remained unfulfilled. Nearly four million primary school aged-children out of the 18 million are out of school, and another four million or more drop out before completing primary education. Only 1.6% of the students completing primary education achieve competencies prescribed by the curriculum. The annual classroom contact time is only 384 hours compared to about three times that much in China and Indonesia. The girl child enrolment rate in the last two years is decreasing. It takes on an average 6.6 years to complete the five-year primary education cycle. Supposedly free primary education costs parents an average of Taka 1000 per year, which amounts to about two percent of average household income.

2.1 Disparities in Education Access and Opportunities

Notwithstanding a constitutional directive of unified people-centred secular educational system, there are diverse streams of English medium, vernacular secular education and religion centred madrasa education in Bangladesh. There are 11 types of primary level educational institutions. Around 96.6 percent of primary school aged children enrolled in 2000. The majority of the children (10.83 million, 61.31 percent) are enrolled in the government primary schools. The non-government registered primary schools have the next highest number (4.17 million, 23.60 percent).

Currently, about half of the schools are managed by the government. Primary schools established, managed and financed earlier by the communities were nationalised after independence. Since efforts to enrol

¹ “No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition regard to access to any place of public entertainment, or resort or admission to any educational institution.” - Article 28 clause 3 of the Constitution of Bangladesh

² The State shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of - (a) establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law; (b) relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to solve those needs; (c) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law. - Article 17 of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

all children in government schools fell short, local communities have continued to organise their own schools. Non-government institutions have been active in promoting education in poor villages without schools and for primary school age working children with flexibly timed non-formal programs in response to meeting unmet needs for primary education. The government planned to establish 20,000 satellite schools under Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) in 2000 of which only 19 percent were established. 33 percent of the non-government non-registered schools disappeared along with a significant number of registered and community schools. This loss of around 3,000 schools have reduced access opportunities for every successive year. The current declining trend is projecting the possibility of losing more schools, hence, immediate corrective action is required to reverse it.

The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) accorded priority to primary education and set a target of achieving enrolment rate of 110 percent, and net enrolment rate of 95 percent by the year 2002. A nation wide survey conducted by CAMPE in 1998 revealed that although high level of gross enrolment rate had already been achieved (107 percent for both sexes - 109 percent for girls and 104 percent for boys), net enrolment rate stood much behind, at 77 percent only in which 78.6% and 75.5% respectively for girls and boys. Thus, 23 percent of primary school aged children did not have access to primary children. Enrolment rates significantly varied by socio-economic groups. A sizeable number of children from very poor households were never enrolled in primary schools, and many of those enrolled dropped out before completing the full five year cycle as their families depended on child labour for survival. Although, there has been some reduction in drop out rate from 38 percent in 1995 to 35 percent in 1998, it still remains considerably high, and drop out rate is significantly higher amongst children from poorer households.³

Inequity is prominent when education system is exclusive and primary education access is also systematically denied to certain groups. For instance, children with disability or belonging to certain ethnic groups have very limited access because of inadequate opportunities. Some recent programmes/ projects have attempted to extend NFE to working children and others who are hard to reach, but coverage is still limited. Children of sex workers are stigmatised and denied access to educational opportunities. Poor children attending schools get poorer attention of the teachers in the class room because of the improper attitude of teachers in the context of the local culture. Such situation precipitates early drop out among the poor.

The diverse systems of primary education in Bangladesh and outcomes of the system are the products of unequal social order reflecting and perpetuating income, hereditary, spatial and gender based disparities. The system has been in full force in maintaining *many societies within a nation* built around unequal access to human and knowledge capital like education through systematic disparities. Such a system ensures that those privileged to receive an expensive private education will perpetuate themselves as a ruling class whilst those who depend on public education and who are deprived of it will always remain an underclass.

2.2 Compromised Education Quality

³ Masum, M (2001), Education Sector in Bangladesh: A Review, paper presented at the Dialogue on Education in Bangladesh: Commitments and Challenges, organised by the CPD and the Education Coalition, Bangladesh on April 7, 2001

The improvement in 'quantity' as indicated by increased enrolment rate is not however matched by improvement in 'quality'. The objective of primary education being development of basic competencies i.e. learning (language and numeracy) and life skills (including values and attitudes) amongst children so as to enable them effectively pursue further education/ active and productive life in society has not been achieved. In 1998 only 29 percent of children could satisfy the minimum levels in all four competency areas of reading, writing, numeracy and life skills/knowledge. Compared to 27 percent in 1993, the above finding indicates to some improvement in the quality of primary education, but it still remained at a deplorably low level (CAMPE 1999).

The quality of education in different streams of primary schools varies to a great extent. In terms of comparative efficiency compared in relation to Achievement-scores in language and Mathematics tests reveal that the NFE centres of NGOs performed best followed by the non-State schools. The Ebtedaiye madrasahs are the less-than-satisfactory performers. The instructional time was the highest in the case of NFE centres (666 hours for grade I and 1979 hours for grade IV) and the lowest in the case of mainstream State-schools (411 hours for grade I and 751 hours for grade IV). The State schools are very low endowed in terms of teaching resources, school/centre management, academic supervision and parental (community) participation. This holds true even when the resource endowment is compared to NFE centres. Again State schools are not permitted to mobilise resources from the community. The government-owned schools are fully financed by the government in terms of teachers'/staff salary, free text-books and other instructional materials, construction and maintenance of physical facilities. The non-government registered schools receive salary-subventions for the teachers and free textbooks for the pupil; these schools construct and maintain their own physical facilities.

The grade-specific dropout is estimated to be around 7 percent implying that by the end of a primary cycle only about 65 percent of the pupil can be retained. The overall average number of children per class (46) is higher than the standard (35 to 40) required in ensuring quality.

2.3 Gender scenario

Bangladesh has been making progress in achieving gender parity in the primary education. The gender parity index for net enrolment is stated to be 0.9, which is quite satisfactory compared to the past. Gender parity shows significant improvement in the upper levels of primary education. Girls attended school more frequently than boys (59.7% vs. 57.1%). The average promotion rate was marginally higher for girls than boys (87.5% vs. 86.5%). Overall retention rate was higher for girls than boys (81% vs. 78.5%). Girls were slightly ahead of boys in completing the full cycle of primary education (76.2% vs. 73.5%). However, girls of the poorer families or living in backward regions are the frequently discriminated once. The net enrolment rate of girls at primary level was about 80 percent in 2000. It implies that about 20 percent of the eligible female children aged 6-10 years did not enrol in any school.

Lower access for females means greater inequity. Equity consideration would call for special provisions for such categories. School environment, curriculum and female teacher in school etc. can influence access. In order to

enhance female education and raise the status of women, government has taken some initiatives including (a) free education for girls upto grade 10 in rural areas; (b) Food for Education Programme for boys and girls in primary schools since July 1993 to motivate poor parents to send their children to schools (recently food has been substituted by cash); (c) recruiting more female teachers to achieve the target of 60% quota of the posts in primary schools for women; (d) 100% female teachers in registered non-government primary schools and about 50% female teachers in registered non-government primary schools; and (e) the provision of separate latrines for girls in some schools to reduce drop-out rate for girls. Despite these initiatives, disparities exist and call for a gender focused approach in any efforts to ensure that the poor and marginalised children are able to enrol in and complete good quality education. On average, about 40% of primary school teachers are female. During 1998-2000, women's share in teaching profession marginally increased in all the four sub-systems of primary education (government, private, non-formal and madrassa). Nearly 93% of the NGO school teachers were female, compared to 47.8% in government, 39.3% in private and 7.6% in madrassa. Disparities in female access in School management Committee (SMC) is also visible, in 2000 SMCs had only 14.3% female members⁴.

2.4 Bureaucratic discretion in allocative decisions

Bangladesh is among the least spending countries on education in the world. On the basis of 95-98 data, she is placed at the 137th position among 149 countries. While Pakistan spends 2.7 percent of national income on education, Sri Lanka and India spend 3.4 percent and 3.2 percent respectively, Bangladesh's public education expenditure is around 2.2 percent of GDP. Among the SAARC countries, Bangladesh is placed at the bottom, although public education expenditures have increased from 0.9 percent of GDP since independence.

Bangladesh has a centralised system for financing education, the primary instruments of which are the revenue and development allocations in the national budget. In 1998-99, primary education represented 40 percent of the total revenue budget and 47 percent of development expenditures, with the government primary schools accounting for the bulk of total enrolment at the primary level. Households in Bangladesh also participate in funding education, contributing respectively 36,67 and 44 percent of the total resources to the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors. However these averages conceal considerable disparities in spending across the income distribution, with poorer households in Bangladesh accounting for a considerably lower share of total private expenditures on education than their share of total per capita expenditures. In their progression through the education system, students are screened out not just on the basis of merit but also because of their inability to bear the rising costs of education at higher levels.

The allocation rules that underlie the observed pattern of revenue and development expenditures on education in Bangladesh appear to be rather ad-hoc and there is little evidence of planning either in the revenue or development budget for education. Revenue expenditures appear to be set by precedent rather than rational planning and tend to follow the previous year's pattern as can be evinced from the allocation of shares of

⁴ Ahmed (2002)

different sub-sectors in the education revenue budget. More than 90 percent of the revenue expenditure is spent in meeting teachers' salaries and benefits leaving very little for quality enhancing activities. Under the current system, Ministry of Finance in the end is the real policy makers, particularly in times of contraction. This has given birth to system devoid of political mandate, in which members of Parliament or people's representatives remain onlookers, and the people on whose behalf they are supposed to plan are disenfranchised due to continuations of arbitrary decisions by bureaucracy. To aggravate the situation more, the education department remains on top in terms of wastage and plundering of public money. This has become a way of life and a system of governance devoid of policy-based politics has been accepted with resigned fatalism.

2.5 Disenfranchised system of policymaking

In Bangladesh, the top-down system tends to divorce the people and policy makers without extended and real consultation. Strengthening educational planning and budgeting requires a structure of planning and budgeting which involve all relevant players in the process. There has hardly been any attempt of factoring in of 'voice' of the poor in the planning and implementation process except window dressing by the donors in its new invention of 'participatory planning.' The government has deftly circumvented the target of formulating a nationally owned Plan of Action for the sector by 2002 with broader participation by a balanced and inclusive NPA committee. As a result, the possibility that the plan will encompass the expectations of the mass and address the agony of the poor who are being systematically denied their right to basic education is infinitesimal. Furthermore, the decision making and the body politic are threatened by a process of undemocratic politics emanating from unequal social structure which is now perpetuating a system where the deprived majority have little chance of entering parliament and remain largely excluded from the tiers of local government. Politics is increasingly becoming a rich man's game played with the objective of enhancing private wealth rather than to serve a public purpose. A political system, which effectively disenfranchises two-thirds of the population, remains fundamentally unstable because it denies a political stake to those very classes who remain the ultimate defenders of democratic institutions.

2.6 Erosion in national capacity

The agenda of conditional lending by multilateral donors has seriously eroded the capacity of state to assume ownership of the national development agenda. It is argued that the donor driven policy formulation has undermined the possibilities of genuine public debate and consensus on the nation's priorities for an effective and efficient education system. This PEDP (Primary Education Development Programme), the biggest education development program consisting of 27 projects has recently completed its first phase with much speculation of its less than spectacular success and the second phase has been initiated focusing on the government schools leaving aside other streams of primary education surreptitiously without the broad based consultation with the stakeholders. Furthermore, World Bank is enforcing the entrenchment of an esoteric PRSP and insular National Plan of Action (NPA) by enticing the government with apparently easy financial assistance from fast track initiative in education.

2.7 Irresolute GO-Civil Society relationship

A “statist” approach and action dominate while there is rhetoric about partnership and greater role of non-government actors. On the other side of the coin, however, there is massive overlap and wastage of valuable resources as NGOs resort to confrontational rather than collaborative methods by vying with each other (sometimes government) to develop and implement alternative sets of curricula, teaching learning method and education infrastructure. Yet, it remains a critically moot issue whether a pro-active civil society can contribute to empowering the deprived to challenge the social dominance of the elite. Those with both power and resources at their command have the capacity to deter, often by not very democratic means, any challenge to their authority, pointing that the costs of such a civic mobilisation remain high while the returns are far from assured.

Even though the civic activism in Bangladesh has increased in recent years, it is far from clear whether the sense of outrage has reached a point where issue-focused activists are willing to expose themselves to a more intensive involvement in advocacy by joining a political party and challenging the authority of its power brokers. In the confrontational political culture of Bangladesh, the developmental-centred apolitical stance is not looked upon with sympathy by significant elements of the mainstream political parties and government. The dominant political creed appears to be “one who is not with me is against me.”

These outcomes and systemic issues of the Bangladesh’s primary education system and policy landscape point to non-uniformity of offerings without core curricula properly delivered for creating a minimum level of competency, resulting in low percentage of completers and dispersed levels of competency. The non-uniform standards of resource availability, allocation and utilisation, facilities, teachers’ commitment and capacity, and community support perpetuate dysfunctional disparity. These are structural in nature and are a product of social relations, rooted in a whole array of institutions, interests, power structures, conflicts, alliances, cultures, etc. that characterise these relations.

3.0 National level CEF process

To facilitate the participation and inclusion of the widest possible range of stakeholders in the 3 year planning and subsequently implementation process, continuous consultation has been taking place. To ensure the ownership of the CEF beyond the three implementing agencies, CAMPE was involved from the onset of the initiative. CAMPE facilitated the identification of broad streams of possible strategic interventions within CEF and likely players. Then meetings with national CSOs, networks, local level organizations and media organizations were organized where they were briefed on CEF and what CAMPE and other groups of possible players were contemplating on doing as a CEF player. This constant updating served in ensuring coherence and linkage among different groups’ work and rooted out possibilities of duplication of efforts. PPRC (Power and Participation Research Centre), an organization renowned for its work on governance, will lead the CEF work under criterion 2 .It played a pivotal role in mapping eight strategically located grassroots organizations which will conduct local level budget analysis. These eight organizations have been seamlessly integrated with CEF’s

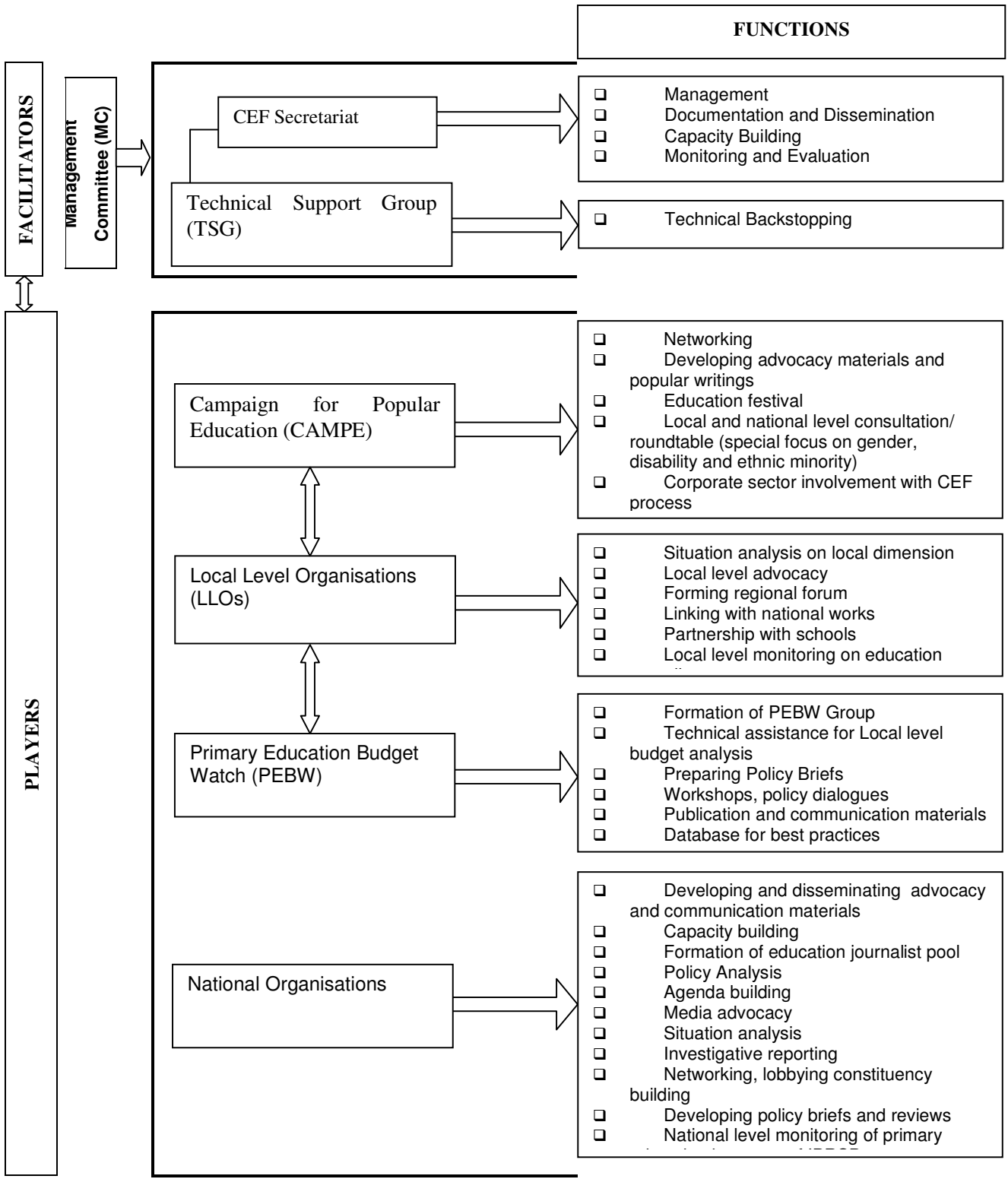
other focus areas by agreeing to form regional forums, which are expected to become vibrant and sustainable networks for local level policy advocacy. CEF has been acting as a catalyst in bridging the gap between the national and local organizations during the CEF planning process. These organizations are now working together which is expected to establish a two-way channel of communications, which will ensure that local issues with national relevance become national agenda and national initiatives do not exclude grassroots participation. The ongoing process is anticipated to yield a fully functional operational strategy by May, which will lead to kick starting CEF activities in June in full swing.

A strong linkage with the private sector is yet to be established, even though CAMPE has committed to building liaison initially with Women Chamber of Commerce and subsequently with other corporate groups. Presently, there is no opportunity for tax rebate for the private sector if they commit grants to the education sector. This is an agenda private sector representatives are willing to promote, and it can marshal them under the CEF umbrella.

3.1 Operational Framework of CEF

The operational framework has significantly changed from the initial one proposed in the interim strategy paper submitted in September 2002. The proposed earlier framework consisted of a large number of groups based on their functions in two major categories- facilitators and players. Although it was a useful exercise to clarify the profile and inter-linkages of CEF players, operational pragmatism ensuing from the incremental experience of CEF dictated that the initial framework be simplified. It was also recognized that the Management Committee of top and mid-level managers from the three agencies will have to be retained to oversee the operational strategy, which was not mentioned in the interim strategy paper. Formulating this overhauled and streamlined operational management, which is likely to expedite future activities, took considerable time and effort. But it was unanimously agreed that laying a robust foundation is critical for the long-term success and sustainability of CEF. The present operational framework of CEF can be depicted as below:

CEF OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK



A management committee comprising of three agency representatives each will provide operational guidance to the CEF secretariat hosted by ActionAid Bangladesh. This secretariat will be staffed by a Coordinator, a program officer and an accountant. The secretariat will be responsible for the overall operational management of CEF. A more detailed list of secretariat activities can be found in 'CEF activity by output' table.

4.0 CEF National Strategy

4.1 Objectives of CEF in Bangladesh

- ❑ Engagement of pro-poor civil society with a view to achieving a sustainable system of education which guarantees access to opportunity of equitable standards through advancing people's priorities, promoting alternatives and critical engagement on dominant paradigm.
- ❑ Enabling communities to monitor Bangladesh government spending on education as well as international and national directives determining the level of spending on education by promoting education as a right and making them aware of the responsibilities of and commitments made by government and to her actors to education
- ❑ Supporting civil society's innovative services linked with national policy advocacy to ensure access, relevance, and quality especially for the excluded children

A strategy of incremental mobilisation will be exercised to achieve the above objectives. Such civic mobilisation will need to be reinforced by a capacity of citizens to taking over the management of schools and to voice their needs vis-à-vis policy provisions and their implementation. Such local initiatives can also be escalated to wider mobilisations at the Union, district and national level. This will be supplemented by active policy advocacy to persuade to politically back and to institutionalise such interventions.

The strategically located eight grassroots organizations will be the most crucial cog in the CEF wheel. The regional forums hosted by them will be both upward conduits for promoting local agenda with national significance and downwards channels for disseminating policy literacy tools available nationally. They will act as vanguards for local level networking, government allocation analysis, agenda building and mobilization as responsive to situation analysis on poverty education interface. They will also be the critical linkages that will pump life-blood into national advocacy endeavours that will attempt at unearthing and presenting the gaps between policy and reality. Policy advocacy tools will be prepared with the objective of perspective building in mind. The Primary Education Budget Watch Group (PEBWG) formed and strengthened within the CEF process would prepare policy briefs delineating achievable and pragmatic policy direction including step-wise implementation devices, tools and indicators for local level budget analysis and monitoring of the government spending on primary education. Being intellectually helped by outputs of PPRC including publication and communication materials related to local level budget analysis, CAMPE would run policy advocacy at

national level on issues articulated by the local level partners of CEF while they analyse government budget in different schools at local level and express need for required/dream budget for primary education. At the local level, the CEF would promote sustainable grassroots participation in policy process by acting as a catalyst for forming and strengthening local and national coalition/ alliances. Best practices will be documented and promoted through situation analysis on local dimension and local level advocacy. The outputs would fuel the advocacy efforts and will be disseminated through print and electronic media with the involvement of media organizations. The forum of the CEF stakeholders is expected to gradually involve into a shadow EFA Forum which will be a citizens' initiative which will keep a watchful eye on the EFA situation and will focus especially on whether learning achievement is at the centre of EFA-related actions and whether excluded groups of children are being reached effectively. It will also serve as a conduit for sharing information about EFA inside the country as well as for exchanging information with regional and international bodies. As experience and the sharing of good practice accumulate, these functions will evolve, suffusing various dimensions of communication: dialogue, exchange, persuasion, promotion, observation, information, etc. It will go beyond criticizing the existing education policy formulation process and advocate for viable alternatives deeply rooted in stakeholders' priorities.

4.2 CEF Strategic Approach

To realize the objectives of CEF in Bangladesh, the operational strategy of Bangladesh will be distinct in five different streams.

- Coalition building and institutionalisation
- Child centred approach
- Gender sensitive approach
- Focus on marginalization and inequity
- Broad based constituency building including professional associations, media, corporate sector etc.
- Building CEF process and strategies on local experience and expectations
- Influencing policy and practices based on participatory approach
- Critical engagement with government - providing continuous feedback on NPA implementation/update on EFA goals attainment.

The following log frame has been prepared to facilitate the CEF initiative in Bangladesh.

Log frame for three years

Narrative Summary	Verifiable Indicators	Means of verification	Risks/Assumptions
<p>Goal</p> <p>To strengthen the capacity of civil society in Bangladesh to help the government ensure that the poor and marginalized children are able to enrol in and complete good quality primary education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% increase in enrolment and attendance in the target areas • 50% of the primary school attendants achieve the terminal competencies • Better targeting policy for primary education expenditure in line with EFA goals • Stronger policy ownership by national and local stakeholders in line with EFA goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Monitoring & Evaluation Report • Annual review and reflection report • Project completion report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial fulfilment of the activities • Opposition by vested interest groups • Lack of partners' commitment • Lack of pro-active role of the formed citizens' groups. • Responsiveness of policy makers to advocacy efforts • Lack of co-operation from local and national government bodies • Political unrest • Frequent policy changes of the government. • Polarisation in NGO politics • Co-ordination between different networks • Existing management capacity • Output delayed
<p>Purpose</p> <p>Strengthened capacity of civil society organisations to participate effectively in local and national level policies and practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater community participation in school management • Greater participation of civil society in national policy forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review and reflection report • Project completion report 	

Outputs	Verifiable Indicators	Means of verification	Risks/Assumptions
<p>Output 1</p> <p>Effective local and national coalition / alliances established and strengthened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Education Budget Watch Group, Regional Forums established, and linked strongly with existing networks • Creating pressure for changing the rules of business in favour of the disabled children • National Plan of Action and National Education Policy are more pragmatic and pro-poor • Increased participation of civil society in policy formulation and implementation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half yearly reports of the partners • Midterm review and reflection report • Annual review and reflection report of the CEF Secretariat • Review and Reflection Report of Budget Watch group and CAMPE 	
<p>Output 2</p> <p>Better tracking of government expenditure on primary education by the communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National budget process is more responsive to local priorities • Better budgetary practices at primary level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Budget and other national plans and policies • Midterm review and reflection reports • Annual review and reflection report of the CEF Secretariat • Review and Reflection Report of Budget Watch group and CAMPE 	
<p>Output 3</p> <p>Innovative approaches on primary education promoted at local level and effectively linked with national level policy advocacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved primary school attendance / enrolment rates (50% increase) for girls as well as boys at target areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half yearly reports of the partners • Annual review and reflection report of the CEF Secretariat • Final Monitoring & Evaluation Report 	

4.3 Proposed activities

The following table provides an overview of the activities identified so far along with the possible players and linkage with specific CEF output.

CEF activities by output and players

Output 1	Activity	Description	Players
Effective local and national coalition / alliances established and strengthened	a) Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Education Budget Watch Group formed • Regional forum established • Linkages CEF players, corporate sector, LLOs, and media 	All CEF players
	b) Lobby and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society participation in NPA and PEDP implementation and NEP formulation process • Increased budgetary allocation and effective spending • Tax rebate for corporate sector in education investment • Change of rules of business for education of disabled children • Local issues • Uniformity of education system • Community ownership and management of primary education • Reducing cost barrier • Targeting EFA gender goals (2005) • Flexible and innovative resource mobilisation 	CAMPE, PPRC, People's Empowerment Trust (PET), NFOWD, Innovators, LLOs, Lokoj, Voice, (Women for Women, Adivashi Forum, Campaign for Good Governance)
	c) Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy manual and budget tracking manual developed and training disseminated • Alternative perspective building • Policy literacy through best-practice data base, web-site, newsletter, reports and briefs • Capacity for education journalist • CEF secretariat initiatives 	CEF Secretariat, PPRC, Other Vision Communications, Interaction Lokoj

Output 1	Activity	Description	Players
	d) Policy analysis, unearthing ground reality and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local level situation analysis • Primary school budget analysis • Yearly education budget reports • Policy brief on financing issues • Analysis of poverty education interface (macro and micro) • Text book and curriculum review • Children perspective on classroom environment • Investigative reports by journalists on 6 pockets of exclusion • Study on community ownership educational institution • Yearly policy review on NPA • Parliamentary briefs • Policy briefs for ELCG • Documentation of best practices 	PPRC, LLOs, Proyash, PET, CIF, Voice, Innovators, Secretariat
	e) Constituency building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Festival • Developing and disseminating advocacy materials • Local and national level consultation with community and civil society • News letters • Alternative child education commission • Discussions with Parliamentarians, trade unions, political parties, academics, media and student organisations, 	CAMPE, Secretariat, PPRC, PET, Lokoj, Innovators, NFOWD, Proyash, OVC, Corporate sector

Output 2	Activity	Description	Players
Better tracking of government expenditure on primary education by the communities	a. Local level budget analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School budget analysis • Local level consultation 	PPRC, LLOs,
	b. Agenda building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local level advocacy on budget issues • National level advocacy for increased financing and equitable utilisation • Regional networking and national linking 	PPRC, LLOs
Output 3	Activity	Description	Players
Innovative approaches on primary education promoted at local level and effectively linked with national level policy advocacy	Documenting best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data base on best practices in schools • Best practices by relevant bodies (government, donor, NGOs, private schools) 	Secretariat, PPRC LLOs

5.0 National, Regional and International Linkages

CEF cannot be viewed as an effort isolated from other initiatives targeting the goals of UPE and EFA. Rather this is an additional opportunity for ensuring synergy in policy influencing initiatives. The grassroots organizations will mobilize local communities and identify their priorities, which will be channelled to the national policy makers through CSOs. Similarly, national and international education issues and agendas and their implications will be made available to local communities so that they may respond with their concerns. Thus, linkage between micro level activism and national level policy advocacy will be established.

CAMPE , one of the major players of CEF Bangladesh, will help establish regional and international linkages through GCE channels. Furthermore, informal network among the CEF recipient countries in Asia has been established which may pave the way for regional collaboration. A meeting in May has been tentatively proposed to identify scope for a regional initiative. ASPBAE, the only functional regional education network has shown interest in CEF, but the possibility of their participation may be limited, as their prime focus is on adult literacy, whereas CEF concentrates on primary education.

CEF Bangladesh has identified some issues, which can serve as the basis for regional/international CEF initiative-

- ❑ Review of National Plan of Action on Education formulation and implementation
- ❑ Regional monitoring of education financing, its policy implications and advocacy with governments, regional bodies like SAARC, and UN organizations
- ❑ Sharing of best practices/advocacy skills and experiences

6.0 Gender dimensions of CEF Bangladesh

As articulated in the contextual analysis ,education of girls requires much more than getting girls into schools- it obligates altering gender roles. CEF, in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of civil society in Bangladesh, takes a gender sensitive approach in delineating its strategy and activities combining policy analysis, encouragement of best practices at local level, policy advocacy at national level, and dissemination of best practices through print and electronic media. In order to achieve CEF goals, it would focus on 50% increase in enrolment and attendance in the target areas; 50% of the primary school attendants achieve terminal competencies, better targeting policy for primary education expenditure in line with EFA goals, and stronger policy ownership by national and local level stakeholders in line with EFA goals. In all CEF activities to achieve above targets, gender sensitivity would be incorporated, so that problem is analysed in a gender focused way and when possible the principle of affirmative action in favour of female can take precedence.

In formation of Primary Education Budget Watch Group (PEBWG) and also Regional Forums, efforts will be taken to include female members so that the gender issues and concerns are clearly

articulated. The training and workshops organised within the CEF process will sensitise different stakeholders on gender issues for improving quality primary education. At the local level, CEF would promote the case of gender equality through effective local and national coalition/ alliances. One of the such networks would be formation of Regional Forums, where gender-sensitive and at times gender-centred approach would be adopted.

7.0 Risks and Assumptions

During the consultation process, CEF stakeholder voiced their concern over the following risks that may impede the achievement of expected outcomes of CEF:

- Maintaining the commitment and willingness of implementors, (CEF partners, CSOs etc.) at a satisfactory level is crucial for the success of this project. Constant communication with the partners and motivating them will ensure that expected outcomes are achieved. Pro-active role of CEF partners and CSOs is important for achieving the purpose of this project.
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) may face opposition from vested interest groups (e.g. teacher's association, community leaders, government agencies etc.) to achieve the CEF outputs.
- Another possible risk to this project is non co-operation from government authorities at different stages of implementation. On-going dialogue with local and national government departments will be crucial to ensuring that communications channels remain productive. Working with government agencies is a new phenomenon for the CSOs and it will be challenging for both the parties. In order to overcome this risk CSOs will need to be flexible and accommodating so as to build good working relations with government authorities and agencies. After establishing good working relations with the government agencies it will be easier for CSOs to critically engage with government on different policy issues.
- There are grounds for concern about the maintaining the quality of different policy analysis, situation analysis, and other policy briefs and publications.
- Confrontational politics at both local and national level as well as discontinuation of the policies of the previous government may create problem for the smooth implementation of this project.
- Politics within NGO sector might emerge as a risk for co-ordination between different CEF partners and also between existing networks.
- Overall, the risk that CEF project will not achieve its purpose within the period is medium to low.

8.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be done at different levels and in different forms. These will include input and output monitoring (both for program and budget) which will be done by CEF secretariat overall and by the partner organisations. The CEF secretariat will develop a strong but flexible

monitoring system. To supplement routine monitoring some exercises will assist CEF secretariat in learning from experience.

- Review and reflection meetings of CEF partners will be held quarterly to share the narrative summary of programme outputs
- Yearly report with process & budget documentation will be developed
- A mid term review will be conducted at the end of one and half year of programme implementation by an external team
- A final external impact study will be carried out to measure the achievements and overall impact
- A team of experts would ensure the quality of policy analysis, reports, policy briefs and other studies done by CEF partners

A probable calendar for monitoring and evaluation is shown below:

Monitoring and Evaluation Calendar for CEF

Date	Reports	Responsibilities
July 2003	Half yearly input-output report	CEF Partners
Jan 2004	Half yearly input – output report Yearly Compilation report	CEF Partners CEF Secretariat
July 2004	Half yearly input – output report Mid Term Review	CEF Partners CEF Secretariat
Jan 2005	Yearly Compilation report Half yearly input – output report	CEF Secretariat CEF Partners
July 2005	Half yearly input – output report Impact Study	CEF Partners CEF Secretariat
Jan 2006	Half yearly input – output report Yearly Compilation report	CEF Partners CEF Secretariat
As and when necessary	Quality checking of different policy analysis and studies of partners	CEF secretariat
End of the Project	External Audit	International CEF

9.0 Budget and Cash flow

To be furnished later on.