

INDIA
DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAM
NINTH JOINT REVIEW MISSION
(April 9-23, 1999)

Draft Aide-Memoire

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Government of India (GOI) and the International Donor and Lending Agencies monitor the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) and Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBPEP) through a Joint Review Mission (JRM) modality organized twice a year. Nominated educational experts and specialists and other professionals are constituted into teams that visit selected districts of the states participating in DPEP. There have been eight missions to date.

1.2 The Ninth JRM of DPEP led by the World Bank took place from April 9-23, 1999. The objectives of the Mission were (i) to assess DPEP's progress towards the Program's objectives; (ii) to assess the extent to which an increase in the level of community involvement can be perceived at the school-level; (iii) to assess the extent to which states and districts, particularly in DPEP-I and UPBEP have created the conditions to sustain DPEP activities; and (iv) to assess the financial status of Program implementation. (The Mission Terms of Reference (TORs) are detailed in Annex 1)

1.3 The Mission team consisted of 24 members comprising GOI nominees and those of various funding agencies. The team, led by Ward Heneveld (Principal Education Specialist and India Education Team Leader), visited the following 10 states: John Shotton (DFID), Venita Kaul (World Bank), Theo Oltheten (EC) and P.K. Das (GOI) visited *Andhra Pradesh*; Ward Heneveld (World Bank), Elaine Unterhalter (DFID), Shyam Menon (EC) and Suman Bhatnagar (Unicef) visited *Bihar*; Ad Hordyk (Netherlands Government) and Mr. V.P. Gupta (GOI) visited *Gujarat*; Felicity Townsend (DFID) and Suman Sachdeva (GOI) visited *Himachal Pradesh*; Juan Prawda (World Bank) and Mervi Karikorpi (EC) visited *Karnataka*; Maria Madalena dos Santos (World Bank) and H. Ramachandran (GOI) visited *Maharashtra*; Susan Hirshberg (World Bank) and Roderick Evans (DFID) visited *Orissa*; Prema Clarke (World Bank) and Susan Durston (EC) visited *Tamil Nadu*; N.K. Jangira, Sabine Keinath (EC), and Sandhya Pranjpe (GOI) visited *Uttar Pradesh*; and K. Gopalan (GOI) visited *West Bengal*.

II. OVERVIEW

Summary of Major Findings

2.1 *Accomplishments*: The Mission notes that the Program has reached an important level of development and commends the considerable accomplishments that are described

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elsewhere in this Aide Memoire and in the state reports. Not only have the states and the DPEP Bureau made good progress in following up on the recommendations of the 8th JRM, but this Mission has noted in the field indications of development for the Program as a whole. The Mission particularly notes the following:

- The evidence that enrollments have increased, particularly for girls, is very convincing, and there are obvious signs that repetition and drop-out are declining;
- The focus on teaching and learning in the classroom can be seen in most states in that teachers are enriching their teaching methods, and children and teachers appear to be using more learning aids, in addition to improved textbooks;
- A new decentralized support structure for teachers, the Block and Cluster Resource Centers (BRCs and CRCs), are functioning with most of the new staff in place; buildings (at least in the older DPEP districts) are constructed; and training courses and some follow-up support to teachers have been provided;
- Village Education Committees (VECs) are functioning in all states and the beginnings of community ownership of the primary school are apparent;
- The modalities for creating the conditions above and sustaining them across states vary considerably, indicating a significant level of local adaptation to the DPEP model and Guidelines

2.2 *Key Areas for Action:* The Mission believes that these successes pose very important challenges for the next phase of DPEP's development. The first has to do with helping teachers, coordinators, VEC members, and others make what they have learned through DPEP a permanent part of their way of participating in the improvement of primary education; and the second has to do with maximizing the impact of the remaining DPEP funds to create the ownership and mastery of changes that DPEP has introduced. First, in every component of the Program, capacities have been created that now need to be consolidated and imbedded in day-to-day operations. While the enrollment, repetition, and retention data is persuasive, the data system's results can still be improved. Teachers are attempting to be more student-centered in their teaching, but their awareness and knowledge of what to do needs to develop into mastery of how to implement an improved pedagogy. The Coordinators who support the teachers have helped them to this new level through training programs, but several states report that the Coordinators are not yet fully effective in providing pedagogic leadership and on-site support to teachers. Similarly, VECs have contributed significantly to the improvement of the schools, but their help has often focussed on improving the facilities and may not always have included such active participation by women, SC/ST representatives, and parents. On all these fronts, it may be time to consider new strategies for the realities that success has produced.

2.3 The Mission's suggestions for more detailed "next steps" are presented in the last section of this Aide Memoire. They build on the following issues which the Mission encountered in most states:

- There are teacher supply pressures because of increased class sizes, and the states concerned may need to take steps to fill teacher vacancies;
- Targeting of hard-to-reach groups (including the SC/STs, children in isolated communities, the disabled, and working children) remains incomplete;
- The CRC and BRC coordinators' capacities to help teachers make better use of space, textbooks, teaching aids, local materials, pupil assessment, and community involvement need strengthening;
- There are issues related to the staffing, roles, and performance of SIEMTs, SCERTs, and DIETs and to the eventual integration of DPEP structures into the regular education management system which the sustainability studies underway in the DPEP I states should respond to;
- VECs are functioning, but some have limited active participation and members would be helped if they were oriented to the pedagogic changes that DPEP has introduced;

2.4 As can be discerned in the list of issues above, DPEP has been successful in creating awareness and improving participants' knowledge. Now, many states are engaged in the more difficult tasks of creating long-term commitment and capacity among teachers, VEC members, CRC and BRC coordinators. The Mission observed that these are the areas of greatest challenge now in the DPEP I states. Also, the Mission has noted that most DPEP-I districts have about half of their DPEP funds available, and it agrees with the DPEP Bureau's assessment that the states may not fully utilize these funds before the end of the project unless the states plan carefully now. Therefore, the Mission supports the state planning exercise that the Bureau has initiated. In the state plans, the Mission encourages states to expand the attention to human resource development, capacity building and marginalized groups that the 8th JRM stressed in its recommendations. DPEP-II and DPEP III districts may also wish to start thinking about these activities during the rest of their projects' lives since their pace of implementation seems to be similar to that of the DPEP-I districts.

2.5 *Cross-cutting Issues:*

- (a) DPEP has increased female access to and continuation in school and has drawn women into the delivery of the Program. However, the Mission observed that, on balance, there are more male teachers in rural areas, and more men than women in leadership positions in CRCs, BRCs, District Project Offices (DPO) and State Project Offices (SPO). Also, women are appointed to the VECs but the Mission did not see many of them participating actively. Where women have effectively participated in the Program it has been through women's groups such as Mahila

Samakhya or in components such as early childhood education which tend to focus more on women. Further work to strengthen the participation of women in DPEP districts would be helpful as it will provide gender-sensitive perspectives in program implementation and offer role models for girl students.

- (b) The Mission noted that DPEP's focus groups – girls, children in remote habitations, the disabled, working children, and SC and ST children are stressed in the provision of DPEP support. However, the Mission is not clear whether support translates effectively into equalization of services. They may receive less attention in regular schools, and alternative schools, which serve predominantly the focus groups, may not provide equal or better education than the regular schools. DPEP states may wish to consider whether differential treatment of such children is an issue and respond if there is a need.
- (c) In conjunction with the general area of action related to strengthening mastery and ownership among those who participate in DPEP, the Mission noted different capacities across the system for reflecting on and learning from practice. Districts have some capacity to step back from experience and information on that experience (including data), to reflect on whether DPEP educational objectives are being achieved and to discern the factors that support or hinder success; and this capacity may have started to develop at the block, cluster, and school levels. However, this capacity ought to be strengthened because DPEP has given all these levels sufficient autonomy to be able to set their own priorities and to act to improve program implementation. The states might consider creating activities that would increase the skills and attitudes among district DPEP staff that are necessary for them to be more analytic and reflective about local experiences and information when planning activities and budgets.

2.6 *Special Watch States:* There have been and continue to be two DPEP-II states whose slow implementation performance requires continued special attention: West Bengal and Orissa. The state report on West Bengal records improvements in performance since the last mission. Staffing at SPO and DPO levels is almost complete. There is significant progress in civil works. Most of the VECs have been reconstituted, and planning for teacher training has been finalized. However, many of these improvements are only preparatory to actual implementation at school and village level; the local support institutions (DIETs and CLRCs) are not yet established; and some teacher vacancies still need to be filled. The Mission recommends that a special watch continue to be maintained on West Bengal.

2.7 The Mission finds limited progress in Orissa since the last mission. DPEP leadership continues to change, and these changes affect the state's ability to make progress on most fronts. The state has only filled some positions in SIEMT and BRCs, all on deputation; and no action has been taken on staffing the CRCs. There is no sign that the last mission's recommendation to focus more on scheduled caste children has been followed up adequately. Very little has been done to construct new schools or to hire teachers for them, and none of the planned alternative schools have been established.

While disbursements have improved, the 1998-99 expenditures against the annual plan were about 33%. The state has not yet contributed all of its share of funding for the last year. While the state report does note some areas in which progress has been made, the Mission strongly recommends that Orissa remain a special watch state and that special attention be given to improving project management and implementation.

III. PROGRESS OF DPEP TOWARDS ITS OBJECTIVES

Impact on Access, Repetition & Retention

3.1 The Mission noted that DPEP is making progress in increasing access and enrolment and in reducing drop-out and repetition rates in project districts. These achievements vary among focus groups and among states; gains are more noteworthy for girls than for other socially disadvantaged groups, scheduled tribe (ST), other minority groups, children with special needs and working children, and, by and large, the gains are more significant in UPBEP and DPEP I districts.

3.2 The array of strategies for increasing access and retention seem to be working. The Mission notes that the strategies have had a different impact across states and have proven to be most effective for increasing access. The Mission learned that some states (e.g. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) have started to address the integration of children with special needs into schools through interventions such as surveys, awareness campaigns, training of teachers to provide individualized and need-based attention, and development of special teaching and learning materials. Other states are also starting to address the education of working children. In spite of these initial commendable interventions there is a need for continuing the thrust to provide good quality education for children with special needs, working children, and hard-to-reach children living in remote areas. Appropriate guidelines have been issued by the DPEP Bureau and need to be followed up and monitored.

3.3 As a consequence of the significant upsurge in enrollments in many project districts, the student-teacher ratios are starting to increase, thus pressuring the work of the teachers and limiting the effect of those interventions specifically designed to change the classroom teaching and learning processes. It is the Mission's view that state governments with districts where student-teacher ratios have increased may need to take action.

3.4 The Mission noted that the states are tackling the problem of teacher supply, but some states still need attention. For example Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka, all the teaching vacancies in project districts have been filled, while in others, for example Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, there are time-bound plans to fill teacher vacancies. Orissa does not have a plan to fill its teacher vacancies. It is also the Mission's impression that, by and large, the deployment of teachers is difficult for the

most needed areas in project districts. State Governments facing these problems may wish to monitor the implementation of their staffing plans.

3.5 The Mission did not examine explicitly the appropriateness and quality of civil works and the progress of the Alternative School strategy. However, the Mission did note that the civil works program is lagging behind schedule in some DPEP II states, for example Karnataka and Maharashtra.

3.6 To measure progress of DPEP towards its major objectives of access and retention and to monitor project implementation, two management information systems – EMIS and PMIS – have been established at the state and districts levels. Acknowledging progress made since the Eighth Joint Review Mission, it is the Mission's view that the EMIS/PMIS still remain at different levels of operational development – from fully operational in many states to not yet fully functional, as in West Bengal.

3.7 Some states have improved their own state/district-based education management information systems by using the EMIS school-age and grade-wise enrolments. Some states (e.g. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh) are now producing net enrolment rate (NER) figures at the district level, and Karnataka is ready to estimate NERs in project and non-project districts. The Mission commends this state initiative and suggests that the DPEP Bureau ask other project states to provide NERs.

3.8 The Mission noted that drop-out rates are now available for UPBEP and DPEP-I districts. Though District Information System for Education (DISE) collects under and over-aged children enrolment in primary schools, these findings are not being fully utilized by the districts. Gross and net enrolment ratios from the EMIS are probably under-estimated significantly because students in private non-recognized schools and non-formal and alternative centers are not included in the EMIS data. The SPOs may wish to report enrolments in private non-recognized, non-formal schools and alternative centers to provide a more accurate measure of DPEP's impact. Based on these observations, the Mission concludes that DISE's capacity to report on successes of the project be further improved through case studies, discussion forums at the district levels and wider dissemination.

Teaching/Learning Process in Classrooms

3.9 *Training and Support:* The Mission commends the progress made in increasing teachers' awareness and skills for improving how they teach. There is strong evidence that teachers have both received training and are able to articulate the rationale behind a new pedagogical departure; and there is evidence in classrooms that teachers are placing the child at the center of the teaching and learning process. Obviously, this progress has to be further built on by other inputs and changes in the learning environment. These include modifications to learning spaces (for example, learning corners and disabled access); the provision and use of local contextualized teaching resources which could be prepared during local training courses; the use of textbooks to initiate both interaction between teacher and student and activities that go beyond the textbook; more skillful use

of student teacher interaction and classroom organization, especially in multi-grade settings; increased teacher assessment of student learning; and additional skills for teaching specific subjects (e.g., mathematics).

3.10 The Mission observed that in Maharashtra and the Phase 1 districts of Andhra Pradesh coordinators provide regular support to teachers. For example, AP teachers receive regular support visits from Mandal Resource Personnel. The Mission believes that one reason for only partial change in teaching methods is that, except in these districts, teacher support activities beyond formal training sessions have not yet become fully effective. Many states still need well-defined visions about pedagogy which are communicated to the coordinators, teacher observation models to guide them in their interaction with teachers, and training and technical assistance to help them acquire the capacity to support teachers in classrooms. States may wish to address this situation to deepen the changes in pedagogy that are evident in some classrooms.

3.11 The Mission concluded that states and districts still face a major challenge in developing a second level of teacher training programs and support activities which will help teachers achieve mastery of how to apply an improved pedagogy to their teaching of different primary school subjects. In designing these programs, states and districts might also give consideration to developing an accreditation system for the teacher training, post-training support, and assistance to classroom-based research by teachers that the resource centers are meant to provide.

3.12 *Textbooks and Teaching and Learning Materials:* Although states are at different stages in developing new textbooks the Mission found evidence in all states of new textbooks having been developed, occasionally with primary school teacher input (e.g. Tamil Nadu) although in some states distribution has not been complete. There are also some financial problems. In Uttar Pradesh, for example, approximately 20% of children who are ineligible to receive free textbooks in the DPEP districts do not have any textbooks. Uttar Pradesh is developing a comprehensive package for pedagogical renewal which links textbook development, curriculum revision and teacher training. Other states may want to assess how well they have established such linkages.

3.13 Whilst most textbooks reflect local contexts, the Mission observed that (with the exception of Maharashtra, the Phase 1 districts in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh) the majority of additional teaching and learning materials remain standardized, usually having been purchased or made as per lists provided by the DPO. Districts might wish to encourage the greater selection and use of local contextualized resources, particularly in the school and habitation environment.

3.14 *Alternative Schooling:* The Mission noted differences in the quality of the education provided by formal and Alternative Schools. Most Alternative Schools did not have good teaching and learning materials as regular schools, though in a few cases these materials were better than in regular schools. Further, in most Alternative Schools the mixed state textbooks had not been made available to children. Given that alternative schools serve a significant number of children from DPEP's focus groups,

providing equivalent education in both settings is a major challenge. The equivalence strategies being developed by states and districts could be informed by careful consideration of how much financial support to give Alternative Schools to avoid an inferior quality of education, how to make the learning environment in these schools at least equivalent to regular schools which have improved their quality, and how to develop a capacity for these schools to deal with the multi-level and multi-grade challenges of teaching children who go on to class four and five.

3.15 *Integration of Children with Disabilities:* The Mission witnessed some progress in some states in relation to the integration of children with varying degrees of disability. Similarly, there is emerging evidence of teachers becoming aware and capable of individualizing their teaching style and developing skills accordingly to teach these children effectively. This requires up-scaling in the context of universalization.

Institutional Support of School-Level Development and Pedagogy

3.27 The Mission noted that the program has, in many states, established a regular practice of in-service training and a reasonably well-functioning system of inter active meetings and school visits for academic support involving the CRCs, BRCs and the DIETs. At all levels there seems to be realization of the importance of on-site teacher support. Some states, particularly Phase-I districts, have reached a point where a more informal kind of support to teachers has begun. Similarly, in the states where several rounds of teacher training have been organized there is a genuine desire to decentralize the design and delivery of teacher training and support using ad-hoc technical support groups made up of experienced teachers, trainers, and qualified personnel from NGOs. Some states are successfully integrating distance education in their training and support strategy.

3.28 Notwithstanding the above, the DPEP states are at various stages in developing a structure for an effective delivery of teacher training and post-training support. Since the 8th joint review mission, the staffing situation has improved in the BRCs and CRCs. The DPEP Bureau has made special efforts to persuade the states to speed up the establishment of SIEMTs and to strengthen of DIETs and SCERTs. The Mission acknowledges that some states (A.P, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal) have made progress in terms of capacity building, filling vacancies and finalizing the service and recruitment rules and structural re-organization of these institutions. The DPEP Bureau and the TSG are supporting capacity building interventions and documentation of good practices in a number of DIETs. Similarly, NIEPA is supporting organizational development of the DIETs in Kerala. By the time of the next review mission more detailed information on these innovations will hopefully be available.

3.29 It is the Mission's view that the strategic roles of DIETs, SIEMTs and SCERTs in achieving the goals of UPE and continuous quality improvement require further clarification. The Mission notes that some DPEP-I states and Uttar Pradesh have initiated studies on the sustainability of the gains and processes that DPEP has introduced. These studies are expected to provide valuable insight on the requirements for institutional

development and should contribute to the preparation of action plans for organizational transformation. The Mission requests that the concerned states complete their studies on sustainability and indicate further actions planned in time for the next JRM.

3.30 While the Mission found evidence of the emergence of partnerships among stakeholders at the school-community level in the states visited, continued efforts are required to strengthen the vision of a school and the process of UPE as collective learning enterprises. The program managers may wish to give special emphasis to facilitating interactions and exploring additional forms of collaboration between parents, teachers, headmasters, VEC and other community members.

3.31 The Mission acknowledges the DPEP Bureau's efforts to support and diversify research on primary education. A number of recent studies commissioned by the DPEP Bureau or undertaken by the TSG were shared with the Mission. The Mission also noted that in a number of states action research and case studies have been undertaken by groups of teachers and principals with on-site support by the SPOs, Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs), SCERTs and other institutions. Some states have given impact assessment and evaluation and classroom observation studies priority in their 1999-2000 AWPBs. The Mission acknowledges that item analysis and calculation of variances from the Mid-term learning assessment study, carried out in the DPEP districts in 1997, and sharing the results with the states is underway. The Mission encourages the DPEP Bureau, the states and concerned apex institutions to continue the efforts to improve the diagnostic utilization of the MLA data. Also, the DPEP Bureau may wish to publish an unnotated bibliography of the considerable research literature that has accumulated during implementation.

3.32 Despite the information available, the Mission found that the block, cluster and village/school level units are not using it very much for planning. Combining the insight and understanding emerging from micro-planning and classroom observations with the trends emerging from the management information systems, these units could contribute to a more holistic village/habitation-based approach to school improvement. SPOs and DPOs could further explore ways to improve local capacity for planning activities at block, cluster and community levels. The State Governments, SPOs and DPOs may also consider defining a capacity building program that includes the DIETs, local education officers, PRIs and others in preparing district educational plans.

V. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND PARTICIPATION

4.1 Based on the Mission's review of The DPEP Background Papers and its visits to the states and communities, it concluded that the level of mobilization and participation across the ten states visited is impressive. There has been further progress towards realizing strong community participation since the last Joint Review Mission. Village Education Committees (VEC) have been created in all states and in most villages. The VECs have had some orientation to their responsibilities. They are, in general, actively participating in aspects of school development.

4.2 Besides most VECs having been formed, most VECs in DPEP-I districts and the Bihar DPEP are meeting more than three times per year. The percentage is lower for DPEP-II districts. The mission's field visits suggest that these committees have been, for the most part, constituted as per guidelines with the various stakeholder groups represented. In Bihar, for example, the districts have enlarged and diversified the membership of education committees created earlier. Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal have established Ward Education Committees in urban areas, but it appears that the mobilization of urban communities in other states lags behind mobilization in rural areas.

4.3 The mission also noted the significant work done by the State Project Offices to mobilize communities through a variety of activities and to develop training materials and trainers to work with VECs. However, in the districts and communities it appears that there is variety across the states in how many people on each VEC receive training, in the form and content of the training (with possibly a bias towards didactic instruction to these adult groups), and in the extent to which there is follow-up to formal training. While a few states were able to share vibrant community participation examples with the mission (e.g. Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka), the Mission feels that the participation of women, socially disadvantaged groups, and parents may not be as significant as envisioned by the DPEP philosophy. However, when other groups beyond the VEC such as parents, Mahila Samakhya and religious leaders (Gujarat) are involved, the communities seem to better understand and know how to help the school.

4.4 In DPEP micro-planning is one of the processes by which communities may be helped to take ownership of decision-making about education. Some states have used it effectively for this purpose (e.g. Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra), and others have realized micro-planning's potential but are taking longer to implement it because they appreciate its complexities. A recent NIEPA workshop on micro-planning has led to the states now formulating their own strategies for implementing it, and follow-up will be necessary.

4.5 The mission noted that the DPEP Bureau has completed a study on the linkages between VECs and PRIs and shared it with the states. The Mission did not look closely at this aspect of community involvement. However, the Mission did observe that some states have created formal links between these two institutions through overlapping committee memberships (Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra). Follow-up is needed to strengthen the interface between VECs and PRIs.

4.6 The Progress Overview and the state reports by the Mission demonstrate the significant role that VECs are playing in improving school infrastructures. There is evidence in most states of having taken on construction responsibilities, of providing contributions in cash and in kind, and of obtaining convergence funds from other sources. However, there is less evidence that the VECs have moved beyond this facilities management role into a more comprehensive responsibility for participation in school of the community's children, particularly those from focus groups. In some states there are

examples of VECs providing someone from the village to teach when regular teachers are absent, and in other states the VECs monitor teacher and pupil attendance. The next stage in VEC development could include more activities to orient communities to pedagogical improvements and their rationale.

V SUSTAINABILITY

5. **Sustainability Studies:** The Education Secretaries of DPEP states met in early February 1999, and discussed issues related to management, supervision, planning, institutional development, sustainability and project implementation. All phase I states and Uttar Pradesh are expected to be conducting sustainability studies, the terms of reference of which were discussed with the states in the Secretaries' conference.

5. Uttar Pradesh has completed its sustainability study and is in the process of discussing the recommendation of the draft report. The draft report concluded that: (i) the larger impact of a project depends to a great extent on how the gains are consolidated and integrated in the system; (ii) a decentralized system of management and academic planning are required to achieve universalization of elementary education; (iii) a series of institutional reforms at the policy as well as the administrative level would be required; and (iv) a transition plan for a systematic approach to move from the project period to the post-project period is needed. In Tamil Nadu a study has been commissioned. In Karnataka and Assam the study is underway. In Madhya Pradesh the sustainability study is part of the institutional reform which is being discussed by the cabinet. In the opinion of the Mission, progress in some states has been slow and the DPEP Bureau could monitor the studies closely.

5. **Enabling Environment:** States have started to take explicit measures to consolidate the program gains by developing a policy framework or policy measures to "embed" the DPEP interventions in the education system. In Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Gujarat the state governments have developed strategies to mainstream DPEP and replicate DPEP interventions in non-DPEP districts.

5. The ability of some states to provide recurrent funds to sustain the new structure may be a concern, in case primary education is not given the highest possible priority. In other states the Mission feels that financial sustainability could be ensured by the states since the recurrent budgets required would probably be in the order of 3 % of the total primary education budget (UP sustainability study). The most important contributor to sustainability is when states have developed an enabling environment and a policy framework in which DPEP interventions can be embedded and made mutually supportive in the overall education system.

5. **Emerging Issues:** The Mission noted the emerging issues on sustainability presented by the DPEP Bureau before the state visits. They include: the need for capacity building of state level institutions such as SIEMTs/ resource centers and the need to improve processes of micro planning and school management; and the need for (i)

systematic reform of monitoring and supervision; (ii) management of teacher cadres; and (iii) forums for assessing and addressing problems at every point – community, school, cluster, block, district and state.

5.6 The Mission, based on its own observations, would like to confirm the importance of these issues, especially the idea of forums for assessing and addressing problems. The Mission would like to encourage states to include relevant NGOs in these forums.

5.7 **Potential and Constraints:** At the community level, the Mission observed a strong awareness and knowledge of the importance of primary education. In most states community participation has been realized mainly in the form of donations in cash and kind and work/repairs supervision. A sense of local ownership has been created in many localities. Accelerating the process of promoting local ownership will require strategies for advocacy and training modules to promote PRI-VEC interaction.

5.8 At the school level, it was observed that potential had been mobilized since teachers can now be innovative in teaching practice and there is an awareness of the importance of new pedagogical processes. In most states there is a strong potential for community groups/institutions to take greater responsibility for the school. Community demands on the school and its teachers are increasing, which can be seen as a clear symptom of “openness for change”. The internalization of pedagogic innovations in most cases need additional facilitation and on the job training, peer reviews and self-assessment. In this respect the new strategy for inservice training in Gujarat provides an example of how monitoring support can be provided to sustain the attitudinal and institutional changes.

5.9 The DPEP interventions are strongly felt at the cluster and block resource centers, but the pedagogical and administrative processes introduced at these points are still in a nurturing stage. Potential for further development has been mobilized since a new forum for peer reflection at the cluster has been created, and it has been reported that the clustering itself has made it possible to gain a better overview of the educational issues (enrolment, retention and performance, management) of a larger area and has created a better entrance point for the support services from the block and the district. The Mission confirms the analysis of the DPEP Bureau that the school and the cluster and block units are “the future institutions”. The Mission agrees that the development of the CRCs and BRCs is now a primary area for attention.

5.10 At the district level the major potential is with the capacity of the DIET and the planning capacity which has been developed under DPEP. In those cases where good practices of DIETs have been observed the potential of a well functioning DIET has been confirmed, and these could serve as models for others. In some cases the ambiguity about the DIETs’ role as a district-wide source for leadership to improve education may have to be addressed.

5.11 At the State level it has been observed that the main potential for sustaining DPEP interventions are the enabling environment and policy framework from state government.

The weak capacities of the state-level resource centers which are responsible for the guidance of the district and sub-district structures and processes need to be strengthened. With varying degrees across states, there is the issue of SIEMT as autonomous management resource centers for which DPEP has made a special provision and the issue of the SCERTs' capacity to contribute to pedagogical reform in cooperation with the state DPEP.

5.12 Under DPEP good ECE models are being piloted that have shown a positive impact on primary enrolment, especially for girls and possibly on retention and learning achievements. However the intention of DPEP to sustain these initiatives with the support of ICDS may require more dialogue and coordination with ICDS in some states.

5.13 *Exit Strategy:* Based on the outcomes of the Sustainability Study in Uttar Pradesh, it can be concluded that an exit strategy for the DPEP program is required, since a transition period between the project to the post-project period has been suggested. The Mission suggests that exit strategies may be developed in conjunction with the program planning for utilization of remaining DPEP funds, starting with DPEP-I states and districts.

VI. FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE PROGRAM

6.1 The issues in financing of program implementation will differ with the stage of the project. Available evidence shows that in most DPEP-I states around 50 percent of the approved funds of the project are still available. The DPEP Bureau has asked the DPEP-I states to prepare plans for utilizing the unspent funds. The Mission concurs with the recommendation of the 8th JRM that any reallocations should "support more human development and broaden the existing definition of training." Reallocations might also take into account ways to further ensure that the students from the focus groups receive additional attention, including through the pursuit of equivalency for Alternative Schools.

6.2 The available data indicate that the expenditures on civil works records that the proportion of the civil works budgets expended is higher than for other categories, and civil works are nearing completion in most of the DPEP I states (except in Maharashtra). DPEP II and III states have an overall rate of implementation at roughly the same pace as it was earlier for DPEP I states and includes some delays in civil works. The factors responsible for slow implementation probably differ from state to state. The GOI informed the Mission that it plans to undertake a detailed analysis of expenditures before the next Joint Review.

6.3 The Mission appreciates the efforts of most states, both in DPEP-I and DPEP-II, in bringing about convergence between project activities and other investments in primary education. The state reports have evidence that DPEP has led to supporting investments in primary education from other state government sources and from other Centrally Sponsored Schemes for items such as free text books, school facilities, in-service teacher training, and teacher grants. There is also evidence of significant

financial contributions from the local communities to promote quality primary education. Some states are able to summarize and monetarize the convergence of investments from other sources that DPEP has stimulated.

NEXT STEPS

- States with larger class sizes due to success in increasing enrolments and because of unfilled teaching vacancies in DPEP districts should provide sufficient primary school teachers to assure state norms on student-teacher ratios. Where plans already exist to appoint additional teachers, the appointment process should be completed as per each state's time-bound plan.
- States may consider how to strengthen the analytic and planning capacities of education staff and stakeholders at the district, block, cluster, and school/community levels. Plans for increasing this capacity could build on existing efforts to strengthen local capacities in planning for school improvement, the local adaptation and use of the EMIS information, micro-planning, and the preparation of Annual Work Plans and Budgets.
- States need to build on their success in establishing Block Resource Centers and Cluster Resource Centers by continuing to assist Center Coordinators to further develop (with teachers) local visions of effective pedagogy, teacher observation models that demonstrate these visions, training courses, and in-school help for teachers. The states may wish to prepare work plans and budgets for strengthening this important area of program development.
- States may continue their efforts to develop the role of the community in improving primary education by providing ongoing training and support to Village Education Committees. This training and support may include orientation to the principles underlying the pedagogic improvement process that DPEP is supporting and that broaden the roles and active participation in improving education of all VEC members and others in the community.
- The DPEP Bureau has asked the DPEP I states to review their experience to date and to prepare plans for utilizing unspent funds. The Mission supports this exercise and urges the states to complete it in the next three months. Also, the Mission recommends that, in line with the recommendations of the 8th JRM, these plans should focus on human resource development and capacity building and on strengthening support especially for marginalized groups. DPEP-II states and DPEP-III may also wish to consider how further to give priority to human resource development, capacity building, and support for marginalized groups.
- Education for marginalized groups including children with disabilities should continue to be a priority area of attention.

- DPEP-I states and Uttar Pradesh are conducting studies on the sustainability of DPEP interventions. The Mission urges the states to develop transition plans for sustaining the improvements in education that DPEP has stimulated.

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