



Public-Private Partnerships in Education *Trends, Forms and Policy Issues*

The last two decades witnessed the dramatic rise of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in education, along with the broadening role of the private sector in policy making, school management, financing and delivery of education services. While there had been countless partnerships between the public and private sector in the educational system, PPP in education in its current form emerged only fairly recently starting the late 1980s. The emergence and subsequent expansion of such partnership arrangement was in part an attempt to achieve a fine balance between the state and the market in delivering essential services within the context of a shifting global economic order.

The drive towards mainstreaming PPP in education gained further momentum in the aftermath of the 1990 Jomtien Conference which sparked the sustained campaign for Education for All (EFA). There was an emerging consensus among donors and the UN family that the attainment of

the EFA goals will require the mobilisation and contribution of all sectors and stakeholders in education.

It was, however, the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that championed PPP in education and became the strongest proponents in mainstreaming such partnership arrangement on a global scale. These financial institutions were particularly instrumental in facilitating the replication of what were seen as successful pilots or experiments in the partnership between the government and the private sector, including NGO initiatives in education services.

For the ten-year period 1995-2005, the World Bank documented 92 PPP programs and policies across 47 countries worldwide. This list is certainly not complete. In the Asia Pacific, PPP initiatives have been implemented in such countries as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines and Korea.



PPP programs have been aggressively promoted globally, yet, controversial questions remain on their effectiveness and desirability to promote education access, equity and quality.

A few programmes were also implemented in Thailand, China and Myanmar. Some examples of existing or newly implemented PPP programmes include the following: the financial assistance paid to private schools in Pakistan on a per-child enrolled basis; the system of grant-in-aid that provide subsidies to privately owned and managed schools in India; the subsidies to base salaries of teachers in community-managed, non-government schools in Bangladesh; and, the adopt-a-school programme implemented in the Philippines where the private sector provides funding assistance to support the operation of public schools.

While PPP programmes in education have been aggressively promoted and implemented globally, controversial

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questions remain as to its effectiveness and social desirability as a policy option to promote education access, equity and quality. It is for this reason that ASPBAE, along with national education coalitions in the Asia Pacific region, have taken up the challenge of understanding PPP and engaging governments donors, and international financial institutions on this issue.

DEFINING PPP

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) is a formal contract-based cooperation between the public and private sector where the involved parties share responsibility risks, and benefits in providing a service traditionally delivered by the state. This definition adopts the broad meaning of private sector to include non-profit/non-government organisations (NGO), faith-based groups, community associations, civic organisations, charitable institutions, parents and other individuals, for-profit business enterprises, and corporate foundations.

Other definitions of PPP are similar. The World Bank, for example, defines PPP as ‘...a contract that a government makes with a private service provider to acquire a specified service of a defined quantity and quality at an agreed price for a specific period’ (World Bank, 2009; p. 31).

Some parties, including UNESCO and the World Economic Forum, prefer the term Multi Stakeholder Partnerships in Education defined as the ‘pooling and managing of resources, as well as the mobilization of competencies and commitments by public, business and civil society partners, to contribute to the expansion and enhanced quality of education’ (Draxler, 2008; p. 16). The term may be more appropriate to differentiate the different actors in the partnership instead of simply lumping them together into just the public and the private sector.

PPP is different from privatisation as the latter implies the permanent transfer of ownership, management

control, and provisioning of a service from a public agency to one or more private parties. In contrast, PPP is a partnership arrangement between the public and private sectors where there is no intention of increasing the role of one over the other. However, PPP does promote greater participation of the private sector in delivering educational services which may eventually lead to privatisation.

THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST PPP

Proponents of PPP in education cited budgetary constraints, poor learning outcomes, and inefficiencies of the public sector as key problems faced by most developing countries in delivering Education for All. Governments can no longer bear the full cost of education and, thus, the need to share the responsibility in education financing and provisioning. Partnership with the private sector is, therefore, seen as the policy solution to mobilise new resources, introduce innovations, and correct inefficiencies in the system, provide competition and incentives, improve learning outcomes, and offer options to poor students to enrol in private schools. PPP proponents argue that studies have consistently shown that students in private schools outperform their counterpart in the public school system.

Without necessarily rejecting the concept of partnership, certain quarters, notably civil society organisations involved in various social concerns, expressed reservations on the arguments and policy options presented by PPP proponents. For one, resources can be made available to cover the financing gap if only there is the political will to substantially reduce military expenditure, fulfill donor aid commitments, implement a real debt reduction programme, and curb corruption involving equally the public and private sectors. Moreover, PPP programmes, including the voucher system and education service contracting, do not provide equitable access and may, therefore, further widen the disparities in education access affecting especially the poorest

and socially excluded groups. There is also contested evidence that private schools deliver better quality education. The assertion of ‘cost-efficiency’ may be true but much of this is derived at the expense of the private school teachers who receive much lower salaries compared to their counterpart in the public sector. The lack of participation, transparency, and accountability are issues that have been raised on PPP programmes implemented in the education sector.

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING PPP INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION

Given the contrasting evidence and ongoing debates related to PPP in education, further monitoring and research are needed to clarify issues and fine tune the policy options. At this point, endorsement or outright rejection of the PPP concept and programmes may not be the order of the day. Yet, there are serious concerns raised regarding some PPP in education programmes implemented in several countries in the Asia Pacific. ASPBAE presents an assessment guide that can be applied to appraise the PPP initiatives in education using the following key indicators:

- **Equity** – accessible, especially among the poor, marginalised, and socially excluded groups;
- **Sensitivity** – gender and cultural sensitivity of the content, methodology, materials, facilities, and school environment; appropriate and non-discriminatory to all learners;
- **Quality** – learning environment, key input, performance, and learning outcomes;
- **Efficiency** – cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and adoptability of the partnership to changing political and economic landscape;
- **Empowerment** – recognition of and respect for the rights of students, teachers, parents, and school personnel at all levels; and,
- **Governance** – transparency, accountability, and level of participation of all stakeholders.

EDITORIAL

Debating Public-Private Partnerships in Education

- By Cecilia Soriano, ASPBAE Regional Programmes and Operations Coordinator

What are the implications of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education to the right to education? When multilateral bodies and governments move towards PPP as a strategy for education governance, how do adult education providers as well as coalitions position themselves?

One way of approaching the debate is to look at who are strongly advocating the policy, what they are proposing and their arguments for pushing private sector partnerships with the government. Not to be missed is a study on government partnerships with the private sector in education, whether or not they are labeled as PPP. This is the reason why ASPBAE has embarked on a partnership with the Open Society Foundation (considered as private entity!) to help civil society scrutinize emerging PPPs in education in the Asia Pacific.

How do we engage? One argument is that to debate on whether PPPs in education are good or bad is not enough. This is not to say that civil society should not question emerging public-private partnerships but the challenge is to interrogate PPPs impact on access to quality education quality for all. It is important to question the assumptions that private education provides better quality and the proposition that school choice promotes competition and

better access to education (Roberston, Mundy, Verger, Menashy, 2012) through evidence-based research. For civil society, a key concern will be how will PPPs work not only for education outcomes but for education equity? Secondly, in the international arena as well as in many countries, civil society has claimed its right to participate in education governance. It is imperative to look at the governance of PPPs as they reflect on education planning, implementation (e.g. the education service contracting) and importantly, transparency and accountability mechanisms.

The PPP discourse has clearly been defined by global education policy actors such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. They have charted out the terrain by defining among others what PPPs arrangements are, how they could contribute to education outcomes, and the regulatory role of the government. While reacting to this discourse is important, the situation demands civil society's reflexivity on its own practices throughout history. Non-government organisations, people's organisations, women's groups, as well as teachers unions have worked closely with philanthropic organisations to reach out to the marginalised sectors denied of education. What is our attitude towards such partnerships now? While we engage in the debate with education planners and



administrators, we are confronted with the need to define for ourselves what is public; what is private; how do we view partnerships? Being non-government education providers and advocates, we are considered by the World Bank as private, how do we react to such categorisation? More importantly, what models for partnerships do we put forward that will ensure the right to education?

In the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, civil society participation was included as a key EFA strategy. Thereafter, the debates focused on how civil society works within or outside governments and what forms of engagements will enable people to claim the right to education. With the post 2015 EFA agenda being defined, civil society will share the arena with the private sector. The way civil society positions itself in the PPP debate has implications for its policy advocacy and how it pursues partnerships for EFA post 2015.

Thinking About Who Provides for Basic Education: ASPBAE's Learning Journey with Civil Society

Around five years after the turn of the century and Dakar Declaration's Education for All promises, civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Asia Pacific region started getting uneasy about how governments and multilaterals were approaching the provisioning of basic education. Governments became quite focused on setting up targets and identifying indicators for some of the goals but were much less ready to pursue them in a rights-based approach.

For CSOs, when it is said that education is a right, it means

that the state is primarily responsible for providing it for all their people. And it is from this perspective that private provisioning of basic education is looked at by ASPBAE and its CSO partners. For governments, on the other hand, it is mainly about education financing.

Many countries do not fulfil the international benchmark to invest 20% of national budgets for education. In several countries, the difficulties in raising resources for education is due to low incomes; for some it is the untenable external debt burden. Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam, for

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Governments and donors take PPP almost solely from an education financing perspective. Civil society examines it in the framework of governance and partnership.

example, need to allocate more resources for debt servicing than for health and education in their annual budgets. In order to fill the gaps in resources, countries need to find alternative ways to finance education, and the easiest to fall back on are the parents, communities, and the private sector.

The standard prescription of ‘privatisation of education’ usually includes:

- cost recovery through user fees, community financing, or cost sharing programs;
- greater private sector participation in education;
- decentralisation of education from central to local governments to lessen the burden on the state finances;
- abolition of subsidies for tertiary education.

There was dismay among civil society about what had happened in other sectors. A lot of deregulation and turning over to the private sector of public services and utilities became prescriptive, e.g., electricity, water, healthcare, among others, and there were many studies made on what it meant, especially for disadvantaged groups. But at that time, there was little exploration of the trends and impact of privatisation or commercialisation of education on the lives of ordinary citizens.

ASPBAE, through the Real World Strategies (RWS) for EFA project with the Global Campaign for Education funded by the Dutch Government, collaborated with the education coalition E-Net for Justice in Indonesia to do an exploratory study on Privatisation of Education in Indonesia in the chosen sample area of Bogor Township. The outcomes of the research -- evidence of more private than public schools at the post-elementary level; insufficient number of classrooms; dearth of libraries and laboratories -- were presented at a public dialogue in Yogyakarta City on 16 December 2004 to increase public awareness on the issue. The coalition went on to run a national campaign against privatisation of education.

The CSO concerns about these trends were not too far off, as evidenced by the work of Katarina Tomasevski, then UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1998-2004). In *The State of the Right to Education Worldwide: Free or Fee -- 2006 Global Report*, Ms. Tomasevski provoked anger globally when she unearthed evidence across countries that even public primary school was being priced out of

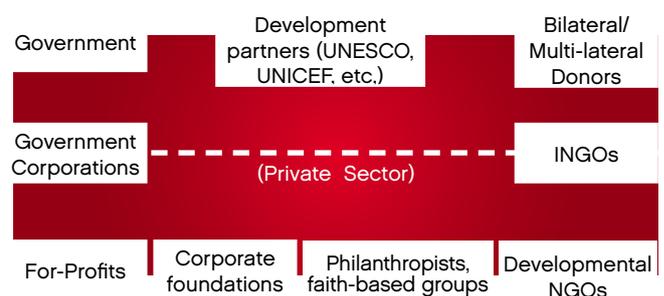
the reach of the poor because of various charges levied, whether overtly or covertly. In the summaries, she voiced out very strongly that, “*This bitter reality of economic exclusion from education is evidenced in no less than 22 different types of fees in primary school which should legally be free.*”

The World Bank, who in the 80s-90s supported similar policy stances, especially in terms of cost recovery for books and materials at the primary level of education, underwent an internal rethink on its policy regarding user fees. It was confronted with overwhelming evidence that various types of user charges imposed on public primary education like textbooks, uniforms, and transport, kept poor children, especially girls, out of school.

Household costs of primary public schooling in the form of informal fees such as transportation costs and supplementary tutoring fees were estimated to be as high as 40% in Vietnam and 80% in Cambodia. The Indonesian government also introduced ‘community financing’ for education.

To build the analytical abilities of education coalitions in understanding the phenomenon of education privatisation in their local contexts and to evolve appropriate policy advocacy initiatives, a South East Asia sub-regional Workshop was organised on 15-19 November 2005, in Manila, Philippines. With the theme, ‘Claiming your Right to Learn: Enhancing CSO Capacities to Respond to Privatisation of Education in South East Asia’, the workshop brought together participants from Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia. The participants deliberated on the eco-political context and ideological moorings of the trends towards privatisation of education within a ‘right to education’ perspective. They explored country experiences - how it plays out in different forms/contexts and how civil society in those countries have responded to the issues.

On 6 March 2009, a national round-table discussion was organised in Jakarta to further crystallise CSO perspectives on privatisation of education, and the main points raised were that 1) it is not right-based; 2) it does not promote equity; 3) it does not promote social cohesion; and, 4) the gains on efficiency are ambiguous. This conversation among CSOs is notable in that it did start to formulate a conceptual map of actors and the shades of differences in their roles and stances in supporting or providing for education, because of the recognition that they were coming from different perspectives and had different objectives and agenda as stakeholders. An NGO



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providing non-formal education in a remote community for the marginalised could not really be lumped together with a for-profit corporation setting up private schools.

The Asia Pacific Regional Conference on PPPs and Privatisation Issues in Education, that ASPBAE organised on 5-6 April 2011 in Manila with the theme 'Deepening the Civil Society Discourse on Public-Private Partnerships and Privatisation Issues in Education', marked the start of increasing clarity that various arrangements loosely termed public-private partnerships were not equivalent to privatisation of education. It provided a venue for an in-depth discussion on the concept, issues, and trends on PPP as a modality of education financing, where it impacts

on the provision of the Right to Quality Education for All, and how it relates to privatisation trends in education, for which there were many differing positions. What is clear at this point is that governments and donors take PPP almost solely from an education financing perspective. Civil society, on the other hand, examine it in the framework of governance and genuine partnership, hence, the preference to distinguish PPP from Multi-Stakeholder Partnership in Education.

The work in this area of policy advocacy goes on, and so does the learning journey to get increasing clarity on the concepts and issues for ASPBAE and its CSO partners.

Setting an Agenda on Education PPP

Since 2008, ASPBAE has been working closely with the Open Society Foundations (OSF) to help enhance the capacities of national education coalitions, initially in South Asia and expanded to the rest of Asia, in the area of education financing. Notable partnerships between ASPBAE and OSF commenced when the latter provided support to complement ASPBAE's work through its programmes Real World Strategies (RWS) and the Civil Society Fund (CSEF). National education coalitions, especially in South Asia, gained capacities in understanding the intricate issues and dynamics of education financing and had engaged more actively in policy research and advocacy work, particularly on education budget tracking, Official Development Assistance (ODA), and the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) in education.

Another issue which was jointly taken up by ASPBAE and OSF recently was education privatisation. The fears of civil society organisations (CSOs) on the expanded presence of the private sector in education increased with the strong push over the last few years for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in education. Some critics in civil society feared that this would lead to greater education privatisation where education becomes increasingly profit-oriented where the public sector enhances for-profit ends in education.

The ASPBAE Regional Conference on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in education held in Manila in 2011 provided a platform for civil society and other stakeholders, including governments and the donor community, to examine the complex issues of PPP and education privatisation and to engage in a debate that would initiate in coming up with a common understanding and agenda on these. This further galvanised the coalitions to argue the case that education should remain the governments' responsibility and that sustained and significant public financing to education should be provided to ensure public quality education and learning for all.

The current two-year ASPBAE-OSF partnership on 'Building CSO Education Advocacy Capacities on Education Privatisation', the second phase since 2008, involves the following activities:

- **Development of a Primer on PPP in Education.** The primer will offer

information, in more accessible ways, the key concepts, functioning and modalities, governance, policy frameworks and arrangements, social inclusion dimensions, and the range of issues and debates surrounding PPP in education.

- **Country-level dissemination and discussions on the outcomes of the PERI studies.** The Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI), steered by the Open Society Foundation, is leading a global research that seeks to animate an accessible and informed public debate on alternative education provision. Country researches under PERI aiming to examine the social justice implications of changes in the coordination, financing, and governance of education which can be seen in PPP. Six countries where ASPBAE works with education campaign coalitions are part of the global research initiative. Education coalitions in these six countries - India, Nepal, Pakistan, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines - have been mobilised to steer the process of disseminating and discussing the outcomes of the PERI studies with different education stakeholders through national fora and dialogues towards increased awareness, enhanced analysis, and a wider consensus on PPP.

In a much broader arena, these education campaign



ASPBAE has been working closely with the Open Society Foundations (OSF) to help enhance the capacities of national education coalitions in Asia in education financing.

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coalitions, along with a number of ASPBAE staff, participated in the PERI Regional Conference 'Globalisation, Regionalisation and Privatisation in and of Education in Asia', in Kathmandu, Nepal, in September 2012. Some of the discussions and questions that sparked further debates among participants were:

- How do we ensure that State responsibilities relating to the Right

to Education are maintained?

- Where does privatisation of education issue fit in the human rights discussion?
- How can education coalitions raise a collective 'voice' to protect the right to education of all citizens?

Civil society organisations in the Asia South Pacific are beginning to work strongly together to better understand the complex dynamics of education

PPP and privatisation so that arguments for the Right to Education and Education for All are sharpened. This supports the collective ambition of ensuring that all citizens, especially those belonging to countries where the right to education is undermined, stand a solid chance to access the quality public education that they deserve. A big question for civil society and other stakeholders to answer however is: will education PPP serve this purpose?

Public Private Partnerships in Education in India

By Rama Kant Rai and Noopur Singh, National Coalition for Education (NCE)

India is a country of various paradoxes. On the one hand, it has achieved the highest level of excellence in higher education, technology, medicine, and management sciences and on the other hand, it still has the highest number of illiterates in the world who have been deprived of a basic education for the last six decades.

With 22% of the world's population, India is home to 46% of the world's illiterate people. The incessant campaigning of civil society organisations on child rights and education paid off with the amendment of the Indian Constitution (86th constitutional amendment) making elementary education a fundamental right to all children in the 6-14 year age group. The 'right of children to free and compulsory education' also enforced the government's plans to introduce privatisation of education in the name of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to lessen the financial load on elementary education. The Indian government has now decided to promote rapid and profit-seeking privatisation at all levels of education in the country. This is despite the fact that India has vast experience of various unfair practices in private institutions which compelled it to take measures like the recent introduction of the legislative bill in Parliament for checking unfair practices in higher education.

MOVE TO EDUCATION PRIVATISATION IN INDIA

In the move to privatise education, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has issued a concept note for launching the privatisation of education, or PPP. The government believes there is an urgent need to replace bureaucratic controls in education with professional regulations along with private-public partnerships to ensure universal elementary education. The intention of the government to embrace the private sector has been placed in the election manifestos. The earlier government announced a National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), wherein it is stated that public spending on education would gradually be increased to 6% of the GDP. The government imposed a 2% cess (education tax in India) on all central taxes. The Indian government turned down all forms of Overseas Development Assistance and became even more decisive to mobilising national resources for education. With this move for independence, the people of India hoped that the government would further strengthen its earlier commitment on education but they were disappointed by the government's rhetoric.

The concept paper floated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development cited various models of PPP around the globe, including

a research conducted by the World Bank on 'Public Private Secondary Education in Developing countries: A Comparative Study'. The research compared private and public secondary cost and achievement in five developing countries – Colombia, Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Tanzania, and Thailand. The evidence showed that '*private schools, which are more autonomous and responsive to students and parents, will deliver education in a cost-effective way.*'

On the basis of this study, the Indian government was keen to model PPP in the areas of infrastructural support services and educational services. Despite some similarities, the study cannot be generalised and fully applied to the Indian context. The socio-economic conditions are different and hence cannot be compared to the countries selected for the World Bank research study.

The PPP policy document prepared by the government clearly talks of it as an economic 'for-profit' model, discussing concepts of 'internal rate of return of investment', 'revenue streams', among others. However, this negates its intention since for-profit



NCE India strongly believes that the right to education must remain the state's responsibility.

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entities are not allowed to run schools as per Indian education acts. Also, it is not possible for school education to be a profit-making activity since the returns from education tend to be of a long-term nature and more geared towards social impact than economic return. Hence, any partnership must be on a 'not-for-profit' basis. Further, exclusion of civil society, which has had a long history and tradition in India of setting up schools and equates volunteerism with individual effort, from PPP is an issue. The civil society school-building projects are similar to that of the government's public service or public welfare initiatives, while the purpose for the 'for-profit' sector will be to generate profits from their activities. Hence, while the efforts of different groups are very much required, the term PPP should not be used in school education since

it has incorrect connotations. Instead, a term like 'Government Civil Society Collaboration in School Education' should be used. This will clearly communicate that education is not being seen as a commercial activity and that PPP is not being used to privatise school education in the country.

PPP - SMOKESCREEN FOR PRIVATISATION?

The 12th five-year plan concept paper proposes far reaching structural changes in the Indian public education system and PPP is being seen as a smokescreen for privatisation and an abdication by the state of its responsibility. Many of its assumptions need evidencing and some of the terms used need greater clarity. It requires a thorough examination through intensive and widespread

consultation, keeping education perspectives and policies as well as the Indian education contexts and priorities as the prime consideration, to meet the goal of universal equitable quality education for all.

Finally, we are of strong opinion that the 'right of children to free and compulsory education' is a fundamental right and in India this should and must remain the state's responsibility. In no case should this be left to the private sector. The government must develop a common school system for promoting equity and equality for all children without any discrimination. It is also important that the role of the private sector under PPP (if at all inevitable) should be seen as supplementary to that of the government as a non-profit entity and not as a 'for-profit' substitute to government schools.

Education Service Contracting in the Philippines

Investigating Trends Towards PPP in Education

E-Net Philippines

The Philippines is a middle-income country yet it ranks among the lowest education spender in Asia and the rest of the world. The country's spending level is below the East Asian regional average of 3.6% of the GDP and South Asia's average of 3.8%. In order to address the gap, the Philippines Department of Education (DepEd) collaborated with the private sector in providing education services within the public-private partnership (PPP) thrust of the government.

In 2012, E-Net Philippines conducted a study on education service contracting in the Philippines to better understand the trends in PPP in education. The government policy on PPP in delivering basic services, such as education, prompted the discussion presented in this study, especially on how it affects access to quality education of the poor and marginalised groups. Similarly, it examined how PPP addressed the specific learning needs of learners in difficult circumstances, such as indigenous peoples, Moro learners, and non-literate adults. In tackling these concerns, the study looked at three issues in the DepEd's Education Contracting Scheme (ESC). First, it argued that the substantial allocation for ESC (PhP6.3B or USD152.7M) in the overall education budget warrants a closer look and

assessment in terms of its cost-efficiency in delivering basic education. Second, PPP's close association to privatisation requires not only establishing PPP's distinct features but also closely examining PPP's actual implementation, especially in determining whether it facilitates equitable access to education. Moreover, this will help stakeholders understand the nuances of the program which is crucial in making informed decisions and in making a stand in their specific education advocacies. Third, the extent of DepEd's ESC implementation in terms of scope (i.e. nationwide implementation) and duration (i.e. 10-15 years program span) deserve more attention as it relates to social cohesion and sensitivity to ethnic, gender, and socio-economic class.

Overall, the E-Net Philippines study sought to review and assess the implementation of ESC under the Government Assistance to Teachers and Schools in the Private Sector (GATSPE) programme. It focused on the programme's goal of increasing citizen access to education, particularly the marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable sectors of society and applied the following assessment criteria: efficiency, equity, social cohesion, and sensitivity to ethnic, gender, and socio-economic status. Given these criteria, the following research questions were formulated:



An E-Net Philippines study on public private partnerships in education sought to review the Department of Education's Education Contracting Scheme.

In terms of access to basic education of the marginalised, excluded, and vulnerable sector (MEVS), does the Education Service Contracting program:

1. promote **social cohesion** in terms of rationale, objectives, and strategies?
2. use government resources in an **efficient** manner?
3. address **equity** of access to education opportunities?
4. promote **sensitivity** to ethnic, gender, and socio-economic class?

The study methodology involved key informant interviews, student surveys, and a case study approach and implemented it in five provinces representing the three main island groups in the Philippines, particularly poor

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municipalities since the study is primarily interested on the program's impact to marginalised, excluded, and vulnerable sectors, e.g., Muslims, Christians, and indigenous peoples.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The enabling situation where school administrators of both public and private schools work on the 'decongestion' process is absent in GATSPE.
2. Some ESC grants cover only a portion of student fees and parents still pay for the balance. In this sense ESC is not able to reach out to the poorest of the poor. The DepEd should consider access-to-education in the ESC

framework and in the selection criteria of schools. The DepEd Planning Office should install a monitoring system to verify whether ESC grantees are indeed near congested public schools and whether student grantees are indeed "aisle students" from these schools.

3. DepEd argued that ESC is a cost-efficient way of providing education to a large student population but the study found that different stakeholders, e.g., teachers, parents, and school owners bear the burden for this 'efficiency'. The protection of the rights and welfare of teachers is an urgent issue that should be addressed within the GATSPE.
4. Fund Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) performs quality assurance

through: 1) certification process; 2) school monitoring; 3) training for teachers; and, 4) conducting and/or supporting research designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the ESC program.

5. Social cohesion and partnerships is weak in ESC which should be strengthened for programme transparency, accountability and to enhance collaboration.
6. GATSPE is a PPP strategy that dates back to the 1970s and needs to be evaluated on its long-term impact.
7. Education is a public good and different stakeholders must be consulted on the PPP framework and how it can better serve education for all.

Privatization of Education in Pakistan

By the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE)

Article 37 (b) of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan states that, 'the state shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period.' The 18th constitutional amendment goes a step further and the new Section A of Article 25 declares education as a fundamental right of all children from 5-16 years of age and makes it a state responsibility to provide an education to them.

However, successive Pakistani governments have failed to deliver its constitutional obligations and net literacy rate in a country of 180 million people remains at a dismal level of just over 50%. For greater engagement and investment in the education sector, the Musharraf regime, and now greatly supported by the Pakistan People's Party government, pushed for the privatisation of the education sector.

The private sector in education is a multimillion dollar industry (estimated at PKR 36 B, USD 368.7 M annually), its profitable returns enhanced by:

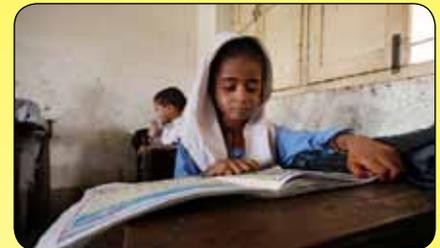
1. Provision of free land or concessional rates in rural area.
2. Free electricity on domestic tariff rates.
3. Funding through education foundations for setting up schools in rural areas.
4. Extremely high fee structure alarmingly

disproportionate to public school fees.

There are hundreds of schools operating in every city without permission of the appropriate government department. Anyone can rent a building, put up an attractive advertisement, and start luring parents for a private school that offers "English medium schooling". Public institutions have been suffering further due to this expansion in private education. Successive Pakistani governments have not increased the share of education in the national budgets and for many years education spending has stagnated at just over 2% of the GDP, which is one of the lowest, even in South Asia. Over 90% of the current education budgets are consumed by salaries and very little funds are left for running expenditures. There is no transparency in education budgets as the education and planning departments treat information about budget utilisation as classified.

Civil society organisations have presented a few recommendations that will close the private-public sector divide so that literacy can be advanced:

- Allocation of public financing should be increased to improve per-child costs. Regulatory mechanisms, with overarching quality controls on teacher training, teaching quality, curriculum, premises, fees system, and vacations etc, should be



Pakistani governments have not increased education spending over the years and the education budget stands at just over 2% of the GDP, one of the lowest, even in South Asia.

put in place for both public and private education providers.

- Participation and transparency must be central features of the government at all levels.
- The state should realise that the provision of free quality education to all is its ultimate responsibility and it should actively work to fulfill this responsibility.
- The laws for the setting up of private institutions should be strengthened.

Constitutional amendments, although offering positive steps, may not be enough to enhance the state's ability to meet its obligations to its citizens to deliver on quality public education for all. For this, the government will have to increase the annual budgetary spending on education. It is also important that the state authorities properly regulate the private sector to make it more pro-people and less profit-oriented and improve the quality of teaching and learning in both public and private institutions.

For further information, please contact:
Medha Soni, ASPBAE Information and Communications
Coordinator
Ph: + 91 (0) 9811699292 (New Delhi, India)

Email: medha.aspbae@gmail.com • Website: www.aspbae.org

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