



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Educational Planning

Donors and capacity development in Guyana and Bangladesh

Abby Riddell



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List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ATP	Advanced Training Programme (IIEP-UNESCO)
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BEAMS	Basic Education, Access and Management Support Programme
BIAM	Bangladesh Institute of Administrative Management
BPATC	Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CD	Capacity development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPCE	Cyril Potter College of Education
CSO	Civil society organization
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
EC	European Commission
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EFA	Education for All
EFA-FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
EU	European Union
GBET	Guyana Basic Education Teacher Training Project
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEAP	Guyana Education Access Programme
GEMP	Guyana Economic Management Programme
GOB	Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
GOG	Government of Guyana
HRDM	Human resources development and management
HRDMP	Human Resources Development/Management Plan
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IGS	Institute for Governance Studies
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning

IIPM	India Institute of Planning and Management
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Establishment (Bangladesh)
MOE	Ministry of Education (Guyana)
MOF	Ministry of Finance (Guyana)
MOPME	Ministry of Mass and Primary Education (Bangladesh)
MTBF	Medium-Term Budget Framework
NAEM	National Academy for Educational Management
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NCERD	National Centre for Educational Resource Development
NCERT	National Council for Educational Research and Training (India)
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OED	Operations Evaluation Department (World Bank)
OICR	Organizational and Institutional Capacity Review
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
OPR	Output to Purpose Review
PBA	Programme-Based Approach
PCR	Project Completion Report
PD	Paris Declaration
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PEDPII	Second Primary Education Development Programme
PEIP	Primary Education Improvement Project
PIU	Project implementation unit
PP	Project Proforma
PPTA	Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (Bangladesh)
PSC	Public Service Commission
PTA	Parent–teacher associations
RDC	Regional Development Council
SIAC	School Improvement Action Committee
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIMS	School Information Management System
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SIS	School Information System
SLIP	School Level Improvement Plan
SSRP	Secondary School Reform Project

List of abbreviations

SWAp	Sector-wide approach
TA	Technical assistance
TAP	Technical assistance personnel
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
UK ODA	UK Overseas Development Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPEP	<i>Upazilla</i> Primary Education Plan
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WB	World Bank

Foreword

Capacity development is a fundamental part of the mandates of many international organizations. Much of their work aims to strengthen national capacities through training, technical advice, exchange of experiences, research, and policy advice. Yet there is considerable dissatisfaction within the international community regarding the impact of many such interventions. The activities have usually strengthened the skills of individuals, but have not always succeeded in improving the effectiveness of the ministries and other organizations where those individuals are working. These shortcomings demand investigation in order to strengthen capacity development policies and strategies.

In this context, UNESCO received funds from the Norwegian Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs to focus on 'capacity development for achieving the Education for All goals'. The objective was to identify appropriate strategies for UNESCO and others. Within UNESCO, IIEP has coordinated this work. A wide range of activities was undertaken, including detailed case studies on three countries (Benin, Ethiopia and Vietnam), a series of thematic studies and literature reviews, and consultations with experts. The focus has been on educational planning and management as stronger capacities in these areas should lead to important improvements in the education system as a whole.

IIEP's work has led to the identification of some main principles:

- The type of capacity development being considered here only works in a sustainable manner when there is national leadership and ownership, and when international efforts match national priorities and strategies.
- Strategies need attention at several levels: the capacities of the individual, the effectiveness of the organization (for example the ministry of education), the norms and practices which rule public management as a whole, and the political, social and economic contexts.
- Any intervention must recognize the intrinsic values of ownership and participation. When it aims only to identify partners' weaknesses or to strengthen the positions of those already powerful, the deepest sense of capacity development is lost.

The series *Rethinking Capacity Development* has been prepared within this framework.

Khalil Mahshi
Director, IIEP

1 Introduction and synthesis

Introduction

UNESCO's Education Sector has been providing support to ministries of education since its inception. What have become 'new' aid modalities, such as Sector-Wide Approaches, or SWAps, have also been part of UNESCO's approach to educational planning from the beginning. UNESCO's support of ministries of education has always been conceived as support to the spectrum of educational planning, from early childhood education through to life-long learning. Ministries of education do not have the luxury of dealing with small sub-sectors of their total remit. Primary school students eventually look to secondary and tertiary-level education, so the decision-making that is required – and thus the resource allocation priorities – must be based on sound educational plans and strategies which embrace the gamut of education.

In recent years, UNESCO's role has been superseded by the multiplicity of development agencies contributing to educational reform, notably in developing countries, and such agencies have relied on budgets far greater than the \$100-odd million that UNESCO has had available in recent years for its support to the education of its member states. In addition, unlike UNESCO, a number of development agencies have over the years selected favourite sub-sectoral priorities, such as basic education, literacy, technical and vocational education or higher education, funding these sub-sectors and any necessary capacity development, without necessarily bolstering the sector as a whole.

Mass education – namely, universal primary education (UPE), one of the Millennium Development Goals, or Education for All (EFA), the commitment made at Dakar in 2000 – has been prioritized. This is in contrast to the education of relatively small elites emerging from narrow pyramids of ascent through the education system as students are selected *out* of formal schooling. And so the challenges and tasks of educational planners in developing countries have moved to centre stage as they have tried to encompass the financial requirements of ever-expanding access to what has generally been a short-changed, poorer quality education. At the same time, the development agencies contributing to the education sectors of such countries have become increasingly concerned with the apparent lack of effectiveness of their aid allocations.

The development agencies' concerns about aid effectiveness have been linked to aid recipient countries' concerns about development effectiveness: it is not just a matter of aid monies being well spent, but whether the development trajectories of such countries have been successful. Thus, the twin focal points of development and aid effectiveness have led to new ways of conceptualising the role that capacity development plays. Ideally, this role is in leading ministries of education out of sub-sectoral education 'projects' towards enhanced aggregate budgets – and the attendant capacities – to expand adequately quality education for all and ultimately, to make inroads into poverty reduction. The latter lies at the heart of their national development plans.

Synthesis

The three sections of this publication cover a literature review of development agencies' approaches to capacity development and country case studies of capacity development in educational planning and management in Guyana and Bangladesh, respectively.

These two countries were chosen by IIEP in consultation with UNESCO field offices. Guyana was chosen as a case study country after consultation with the UNESCO Regional Office in Kingston, Jamaica, to ensure the inclusion of a Caribbean country in the overall capacity development research, to complement other case studies being conducted in Benin, Ethiopia and Vietnam. Approval for the study was given by Guyana's Minister of Education, Sheik Baksh, who is also head of the UNESCO National Commission. In making preparations to visit Guyana, as much documentation as possible was gathered on donor contributions to the education sector, following which contact was made with staff in the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the various development agencies in Guyana. The list of those interviewed in Guyana in November 2007 is given in *Annex 1*. Approval for the study of Bangladesh was given by the Bangladesh Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. In-country interviews were conducted in Dhaka between 22 June and 2 July 2008 by Yasmin Haq, Programme Specialist at IIEP and Abby Riddell, Senior Consultant. This study was carried out in the period in which a caretaker government was in place in Bangladesh, following the handover on 29 October 2006. The list of those interviewed can be found in *Annex 2*.

The literature review illustrates how development agencies have analysed and approached the challenge of capacity development over the past few decades, moving on a trajectory from gap analyses and gap filling to – at least a theoretical understanding of – more holistic capacity development involving individuals, organizations and institutional frameworks. The challenge, for development agencies in particular, is in how to support capacity development when, as the OECD's guidelines clearly state, there is the prevalent danger of ineffective capacity building when it is not endogenous and is therefore lacking an impulse from within (OECD, 2006: 13). This challenge is further exemplified by the abundance of supply-led rather than demand-led capacity development, the infrequent *management and coordination* of capacity development by recipient country stakeholders, and a dissection of some of the factors related to successful capacity development which, while understood, at times are noted for their absence in the support given by development agencies to capacity development (see *Table 2.1* at the end of *Section II*).

Guyana

The Guyana case study illustrates the different approaches taken to capacity development in past and current education projects and notes the movement away from Project Implementation Units (PIUs) to the embeddedness of education development programmes supported by donors working closely with the Ministry of Education. Where capacity development is ineffective, some of the reasons may relate to the absence of a holistic approach. Thus, unless the salary differentials related to project versus permanent staff are tackled through public sector reform, for instance, training and other forms of capacity development may provide insufficient incentives to sustain the capacities where they are needed. Particularly in the case of Guyana, the higher salary levels outside the country tend to promote an outflow of those trained into the diaspora. Other factors that emerge from the case study include an inadequate contextualisation of imported approaches, inadequate leadership and an over-reliance on project teams, creating a vacuum when the projects end. The key factors that help to explain why some of the anticipated long-term outcomes of past education projects were not realized are drawn together in the following list:

- the lack of a means of retaining trained staff;
- weaknesses in terms of embedding management and objectives for increased institutional capacity, ownership and accountability;
- the lack of an effective training strategy;
- the lack of clear, overall direction;

- weak commitment to and support of the MOE and Ministry of Finance (MOF);
- ineffective follow-through on required policy decisions;
- the absence of independent quality assurance;
- the lack of clearly defined roles at the central level and between schools, regions and centres;
- having a series of parallel planning processes rather than an all-embracing plan towards sector-wide objectives.

The Guyana case study illustrates that aid monies can be used either as a crutch, to support and hold back institutions and processes that need to change, or as a bionic leg, to assist the owner to walk upright unaided and to move far faster. Achieving such synergy, however, requires a more analytical approach to capacity development than has been apparent among either development agencies or national stakeholders.

Bangladesh

Three areas are investigated in the case study of capacity development in educational planning and management in Bangladesh: the capacity development itself, the effect of wider public sector reforms on the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME), and the implications of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness for the support given to the primary education sub-sector. Despite the reification of the educational plan following Dakar – with donors stating that no country with its own plan to reach the EFA targets would be denied funding – there appears to be insufficient educational planning carried out by staff within the MOPME, which is responsible for primary education. Like its sister ministry, the Ministry of Education, it is an implementing ministry following strategic plans constructed by others, including teams of national and international consultants, and in alignment with the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

Educational planning is not part of the foundational training of those either in the administrative or current education cadre, and the majority of those trained in educational planning are apparently not asked to use their professional skills in the positions they have been assigned.

Unlike Guyana, in which the assumption is that ministry staff will acquire the skills needed to plan and manage the education system, a different pattern of working with consultants is in evidence in Bangladesh. Here, consultants carry out what are viewed as ‘technical jobs’ for the Directorate of Primary Education and so capacity development in educational planning seems a moot area. This is evident not only in past donor-funded programmes, but also in the follow-on, multi-donor Primary Education Development Programme II in which consultants (TA) assume the educational planning tasks required of programme preparation. The Directorate then implements the planned programme.

The potential of public sector reform to bring about more holistic, government-managed capacity development is thwarted by “the failure of successive governments to pursue the reform agenda of the public sector” (Hua Du, 2007). Indeed, a recent synopsis by the Asian Development Bank (2007b) outlines the following contributing factors, which our study has confirmed:

- a top-down culture that allows insufficient space for mid-level officials to exercise independent authority;
- insufficient compensation of public officials;
- the absence of a system of rewards and penalties;
- the lack of professional development training and other incentives to improve performance and accountability;

- the lack of systematic and merit-based policies for recruitment;
- inadequate safeguards for actions taken in good faith;
- frequent reassignments, which may be driven by political and other considerations;
- pressures faced by reform-minded officials in creating space for change in government agencies;
- a lack of uniform public demand for reforms.

Against this backdrop, one can see the challenges facing the MOPME within its proper wider perspective: it is the public service as a whole and not merely this particular ministry that appears to be constrained. This makes more understandable the accepted *modus vivendi* even by those would-be reformers, because, as already discussed, it is the system as a whole that should be reformed.

Progress has been made in consolidating individual education projects, in carrying out joint reviews, and in increasing the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh's (GOB) use of reformed procurement mechanisms, but there is much that can be done in putting coordination, management and planning in the hands of the GOB, rather than the donors.

While the case studies of Guyana and Bangladesh are very different, what is underlined is the importance of the role of cross-sectoral public sector reform. The constraints on such reforms are different in both cases, but the importance of such reforms underpinning any particular capacity development in educational planning and management is evident. Similarly, the perspectives of the donor community in the two countries are also a significant factor. The lack of incentive for donors to accede to the Paris Declaration in their practices, as illustrated in the case of Bangladesh, is underlined. However, across both case studies, what is apparent is that policy dialogue on aid effectiveness needs to be targeted crucially on development effectiveness that embraces quality-assured, holistic capacity development, not only supported by donor agencies, but increasingly managed by recipient countries.

2 Literature review: analyses of and perspectives on capacity development

It is somewhat ironic that the development wheel has come full circle to focus again on capacity development, for in the earliest days of official aid giving after World War II, capacity ‘building’ was one of the first buzz words on donors’ lips, filling what were seen as critical gaps through technical assistance (TA), primarily, to ensure that development would take place.

Capacity development is understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. The phrase ‘capacity development’ is used advisedly in preference to the traditional ‘capacity building’. The ‘building’ metaphor suggests a process starting with a plain surface and involving the step-by-step erection of a new structure, based on a preconceived design. Experience suggests that capacity is not successfully enhanced in this way (OECD, 2006: 12).

The early emphasis given to capacity development held as strongly for assistance to education as it did for other sectors, whether agriculture, roads or health, for instance. More specifically, a gap analysis would be carried out which identified those posts that needed filling, competencies that needed to be developed and institutions that needed to be built, and aid was funnelled in to help bridge these gaps.

‘Gap’ analyses resulted in *gap filling*, with technical advisors put into posts, ostensibly with counterparts who were meant to learn the ropes from the expatriate ‘experts’, or by means of scholarships for degree programmes which would be provided for those individuals selected to become qualified and then return to help build up the capacity of the ministry.

In previous decades, other priorities captured the attention of donors. In the past decade, a sharper focus on aid effectiveness has resulted in the return of capacity development as an aid donor priority, but in a reconfigured form. In part, this has been in response to the increased awareness and acknowledgement of the failure of many ring-fenced projects to bring about the sustained institutional development that is required for a ministry to function effectively. Thus, in many cases, ‘project implementation units’ (PIUs) were set up, typically parallel with, but also embedded within, the ministries they were designed to ‘develop’. While the projects may as such have been judged ‘successful’ on completion, without further funding and with the loss of so many ‘experts’, after two, three, five or ten years, most had little to show in terms of sustainable achievements. A re-examination of such ‘islands of excellence’ resulted in calls for new and different approaches to aid, many of the tenets of which are embodied in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the aims of which included trying to address some of the clear systemic obstacles to development that resulted from the old modalities of official development assistance (ODA) usually implemented independently and separately by different donors. The Paris Declaration was the culmination of the growing realization, contained in a formal commitment made by more than 100 countries – developing and industrialized alike – that three pillars of development cooperation would be respected increasingly in development partners’ behaviour: harmonization (of practices among development agencies), alignment (of aid with national strategies and institutions) and ownership – and leadership – (by aid recipient governments) of their operational development strategies.

The Paris Declaration draws particular attention to “weaknesses in partner countries’ institutional capacities to develop and implement results-driven national development strategies” (2005),

highlighted as one of the “remaining challenges”. The commitment by donors to enhanced alignment is to “base their overall support ... on partners’ national development strategies”. By looking solely at the indicators used for monitoring adherence to the commitments made in 2005, one is able readily to understand the essence of what is to be different in terms of the interface of aid with recipient governments with respect to capacity development. Thus, Indicator 4 – “strengthen capacity by co-ordinated support” – has as its target that “50 per cent of technical cooperation flows are implemented through coordinated programmes consistent with national development strategies”. Likewise, Indicator 6 – “strengthen capacity by avoiding parallel implementation structures” – has as its target a reduction “by two-thirds of the stock of parallel project implementation units (PIUs)”.

These two indicators are helpful in our case studies of capacity development in educational planning and management in Guyana and Bangladesh. We can question and examine the extent to which they are observed and understood, no less adhered to in these particular countries.

However, in order to better set the stage for a more detailed description and analysis of our findings, we provide below a more detailed summary and commentary on how in recent years the main development agencies have analysed and approached the challenge of capacity development within the framework of the new ‘aid effectiveness’ agenda.

Graham Teskey (2005: 9-10) has encapsulated well, for the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), key phases of and lessons that can be derived from the history of capacity development:

In the 1960s and 1970s early attempts at capacity development focused on the *individual*; providing training and skills, tools and equipment for individuals in key positions ... Officers [were provided] to fill ‘capacity’ gaps, awarded scholarships, undertook ‘manpower’ audits and provided ‘on-the-job’ training. By the late 1970s it was recognized that this had had little impact on organizational capacity.

In the 1980s the focus shifted to the role of the *organization*. Understanding of capacity development moved from a focus on individual skills and competences to a focus on getting organizations restructured and sometimes redesigned. Changes were made to systems for policy-making, systems for human resources and financial management, and changes to the way in which services were delivered. ODA [the UK Overseas Development Agency] undertook organizational audits, job evaluation and grading studies and provided advisors rather than officers in line positions. Such organizational change involved the redesign of structures, changing job responsibilities and management spans.

A decade later it was realized that while a focus on the individual and the organization remained necessary, by themselves they were not sufficient. Developing capacity requires more than staff training; it requires more than the organization being reasonably well structured with the systems to implement policy priorities and with good management. It requires *institutional change* and reform as well. In the early 1990s the importance of ideas underpinning the role of institutions began to be acknowledged. It was accepted that even directed organizational change may not succeed if the wider ‘institutional framework’ is not supportive. These institutions are both formal and informal. Formal institutions include the legal system, property rights, the relationship of the executive to the legislature, etc. Informal institutions are the norms and values that influence individual and collective behaviour. (Emphasis mine).

The unpacking of ‘capacity development’ into the three constituent parts of the individual, the organization and the institutional framework (others’ analyses refer to this as the ‘enabling environment’ (OECD, 2006: 13)) effectively undermines the view that donor agencies could merely provide technical, gap-filling solutions to recipient countries’ capacity development requirements. As the OECD guidelines put it: “Successful efforts to promote capacity development therefore

require attention not only to skills and organizational procedures, but also to issues of incentives and governance” (OECD, 2006: 13).

Further lessons flow from such analyses, making support to capacity development even more challenging for the donor community. For instance, as stated in the OECD guidelines, “Capacity building would be ineffective so long as it was not part of an endogenous process of change, getting its main impulse from within” (OECD, 2006: 15). Yet it is challenging and by no means easy for donors, firstly to understand these internal processes, and then to know precisely how best they can help. But if the new aid modalities are to be an earnest attempt to recognize the mantle of policy ownership on the recipient countries’ shoulders, moving forward quickly on what is typically a large capacity development agenda calls for great sensitivity on the part of the donor community. In particular, there is likely to be some tension between donor representatives anxious to disburse funds and enable an endogenous process to be supported, but not driven, by the donor community. Ironically, from the perspective of the aid recipient country, the development of the new aid modalities with their emphasis on donor harmonization risks producing perverse results. This can happen if and when group-think of like-minded donor harmonization results in a more unwieldy and less responsive ‘donor position’ which is less sensitive to the nuances required to embed donor support more deeply within the recipient country context and ensure recipient country ownership of and commitment to these new modalities.

Pooled finance for technical assistance has been one means of harmonizing donor support for capacity development. Despite its obvious attraction in terms of overcoming the fragmentation of donor support, the jury is still out on whether the apparent advantages outweigh the considerable investments of time necessary to establish compatible systems and arrangements across the donor partners, while effective donor control of such arrangements appears to remain persistent (Hauck and Baser, 2005; Williams, Jones, Imber and Cox, 2003).

The Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of the World Bank recently carried out an evaluation of World Bank support to capacity building in Africa (World Bank, 2005a) which, although focusing on a specific continent and context, contains analyses, conclusions and comments of relevance to donor approaches tried elsewhere. In particular, it draws attention to some key generic weaknesses in donor approaches, of which the following are perhaps the most important:

- The report states that “The international development community, including the World Bank, has traditionally treated public sector capacity building as a collateral objective – that is, as a by-product or instrumental measure to advance near-term project outcomes – rather than as a core goal in its own right ...” (World Bank, 2005a: xiii).
- Further, despite capacity building being a priority, “most activities lack quality assurance processes at the design stage, and they are not routinely tracked, monitored, and evaluated” (World Bank, 2005a: xiv).
- The report concludes that most of the capacity building carried out has been “fragmented, on a project basis” and that “the health and education sectors face greater challenges (than others) because they are labour intensive and decentralized, relying on thousands of dispersed frontline service providers” (World Bank, 2005a: xv).
- A key judgement made is that “where technical assistance (TA) has been used to fill the gaps in skills needed to manage Bank-funded projects, it has had little impact on strengthening client capacity” (World Bank, 2005a: x).
- The OED believes that “TA has been effective when used for a discrete and well-defined technical task and in the context of a clear TA strategy that includes a phase-out plan ...” However, “regional operations ... have focused on the supply of individual skills in the public

sector without ensuring that the skill-building is appropriately synchronized with organizational and institutional changes needed to improve public sector performance” (World Bank, 2005: xv-xvi).

In an early report for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) the question is asked, “When shall Swedish/international expertise be engaged in contributions for capacity development?” (Bergström, 2002: 10). Although many development agencies have untied the procurement of their nationals from capacity development contracts, few would likely be able to answer as unequivocally as the report authors do:

The basic rule is that Swedish-financed development projects shall be implemented by local, national expertise and that Swedish/international consultants/advisors shall only be engaged when there are not sufficient experts in the country. Therefore, most of the projects are organized in such a way that an organization in the partner country has the responsibility to implement the development work in accordance with agreed objectives – with the aid of its own personnel and/or expertise that is available in the country.

While untying aid will have increased the efficiency of ODA, enabling, at least ideally, the choice of best value resources, the reticence necessary on the part of the donor community to enable nationals not only to contribute to capacity development but moreover, to manage it, is akin to the reluctant father letting his teenage son get behind the wheel of his car.

Adding to the list of ‘lessons’ that emerge from the various reports on capacity development is another that sits uncomfortably within existing and decades-long donor practice, namely, that one should *not* search for the ‘best practices’ but instead, search for the ‘best fit’. This lesson has everything to do with the contextualization of capacity development within the institutional framework or enabling environment of the country, by explicitly incorporating the political and socio-economic context into the analysis, and not relying solely on a more technical/functional approach to capacity development. While this perspective is recognized across much of the theoretical guidance drafted by major development agencies, it is the actual practices of in-country development agency staff that need to be examined closely to see to what extent a political analysis underlies the otherwise ‘best practice’ technical solutions to capacity development challenges.

Some donors have begun to take this approach on board. For instance, the European Commission (EC) has recognized the need to support ‘good enough’ policies, rather than the ‘best’ policies that might otherwise constrain endogenous development (European Commission, 2005). This is played out even at the level of the individual. Thus, the OECD’s guidance notes state that it is

standard procedure in training to obtain feedback from individuals on its effectiveness as a learning experience. However, a principal limitation of traditional TA and training approaches has been that even when learning has been very effective, capacity has not been enhanced, because the individuals do not have the opportunity or incentive to apply these skills in their jobs (OECD, 2006).

In short, even when a training course that has been used all over the world is given in a particular country, it must not be assumed that it will work in that particular country, especially if it is envisaged as a technical ‘fix’. Curiously, even though the lessons being drawn from assessments (and the weaknesses) of recent approaches to capacity development overlap closely with the lessons that have emerged from comparative education analyses, the ‘experts’ used to help train staff are not necessarily encouraged to bring such lessons to bear in their training courses. In such cases, not only are the incentives of those to be trained left unanalysed, but those providing the training may themselves have little incentive to adapt their courses to fit more closely to the practical consequences of insights drawn from recent analyses of impact.

Other lessons that emerge from the various guidance notes offered by development agencies, or the research into capacity development that has been carried out on their behalf, include a number of important features that in effect all relate to the tailoring of capacity development initiatives to the recipient countries.

A history of supply-led capacity development has proved problematic. How many management information systems have some countries introduced that have not been successful, for lack of 'fit' and inadequate interrogation of the users? As Morgan and Baser (2007: 22) argue in their case study of Tanzanian capacity building:

Much of the current thinking about reform is based on the effectiveness of 'demand-driven' approaches. From this perspective, only the pressure for performance from citizens and end users will keep public suppliers from either capturing most of the benefits of a programme or letting it drift into irrelevance and inefficiency ... Issues to do with customer service, citizen charters, competition, incentives, transparency, and greater accountability are emphasized throughout the programme focus on demand-led capacity development.

On the recipient government's side, the success of some capacity development programmes has been attributed to the commitment and leadership of the government as well as its public service having a professional development plan in place. If one focuses on some of the major areas of public service reform, if the efforts are seen to be centred on someone else's accountability (that is to say, the donor agency) or the capacity development in such areas is a tick-box procedure required for the flow of further funds – in other words, if there isn't genuine commitment on the part of government to the programme of reform – it is easy to see how individuals working in the system are not provided with any new or different motivation, or the incentive, to change earlier practices. Similarly, if individuals are allowed to drift towards promotions, with no training or qualifications necessary for the posts they assume, the likelihood of successful performance evaluation, no less the achievement of organizational and institutional change, will be reduced. One of the problems of in-service teacher education is the same as that for the public service more generally: if the training is not conceived as part of a professional plan for staff development, it is likely to flounder, especially with the additional absence of effective leadership.

Any sectoral public sector capacity development needs to be integrated appropriately with any overarching reform of the public sector, as does the provision of technical assistance. Yet, "The provision of technical assistance personnel (TAP) is simply not viewed in the context of the overall human resources management in the public sector. It is seen as a programming modality designed to address a particular bottleneck. This way of looking at TAP has a negative consequence for long-term sustainability" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2007: 2). Typically, the size of ministry of education payrolls, with the increase in the number of teachers required for universal education, has tended to result in teachers' salaries not having kept pace with comparable jobs or even with changes in the cost of living, eroding still more the traditionally high status of teachers in society.

As suggested in some of the recommendations surrounding research into capacity development (Oxford Policy Management, 2006: 8), the role of the diaspora should be considered in comprehensive public sector capacity development, the emigration of skilled professionals often being an obstacle to the sustainability of any otherwise 'successful' reforms.

Other lessons from the literature are also relevant to the present discussion. For instance, in the Oxford Policy Management (OPM) study, analysis of the most successful cases of technical cooperation found not only that the 'high technical calibre' of the consultants was important, but also their responsiveness to and being under the direct management control of the recipient.

Conversely, the least successful technical cooperation exhibited “technical weaknesses or lack of appropriate (particularly interpersonal) skills” or the “perception from the organization supported that it had insufficient effective control over the providers” (Oxford Policy Management, 2006: 40-41). In addition, “lack of effective government commitment to the reforms supported” was seen as a characteristic of the less successful technical cooperation. The study suggested that “the quality of certain types of projects is likely to be enhanced by the provision of an independent, properly qualified Quality Assurance overseer, who can advise both Government and DFID as an honest broker” (Oxford Policy Management, 2006: 59). This raises a much larger issue than those discussed so far: it is the appropriateness of ‘fixing’ what is so clearly a network of individual bilateral or multilateral ODA contributions to any one country, rather than overhauling such a network with a *system* that would commit donor countries to support aid recipients on the basis of their needs, including support for capacity development, which would no longer be managed by the donors. The idea of an ‘honest broker’, or at least an arms-length relationship between individual donors and the recipient governments, is explored by Roger C. Riddell (2007).

Regardless of which document is referenced, which donor’s experience or recipient country is canvassed, the overriding conclusion of clusters of evaluations of capacity development is, as put in the above OPM study, that “only in a minority of cases has a sustained impact been achieved” (Oxford Policy Management, 2006: 44). Some of the factors that have contributed to such sustainability, cited in the above discussion, are summarized in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Factors related to successful capacity development

- Coordinated programmes aligned (Paris Declaration Indicator 4 and Target: 50 per cent in coordinated programmes)
- Reduction in PIUs (Paris Declaration Indicator 6 and Target: reduction by two thirds)
- Three-pronged approach: individual, organization and institutional framework (enabling conditions)
- Endogenous – donor supported, not donor driven
- CD as core goal, not collateral objective
- TA strategy – reduce fragmentation, synchronize individual, organizational and institutional changes
- Untied aid
- International TA, when no national TA, managed nationally, including phase-out
- Best fit, not best practice – contextualise
- Political/socio-economic and technical/functional analyses
- Incentives of recipients and providers
- Demand-led, transparency, accountability
- Commitment and leadership of recipient country
- Professional development plan/strategy
- Integrate sectoral with overall public service reform
- Include diaspora in CD planning
- High technical calibre of TA
- Responsiveness to, and under direct management control of, recipient
- Inter-personal skills
- Quality assurance overseer/honest broker

3 Guyana

Introduction and background

This case study of donor influence on capacity development in educational planning and management in Guyana should help international agencies, including UNESCO, better understand the context and requirements of the assistance they are able to provide in such settings. Although today UNESCO engages in a variety of capacity development activities, it is a relatively small player in comparison with the bilateral and multilateral development agencies. Reference can be made to UNESCO's Executive Board documents on the UNESCO website (www.unesco.org) under Executive Board, the most recent being <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001501/150144e.pdf>. In addition to HQ and its field offices, UNESCO's six education institutes contribute to its capacity development activities, raising extra-budgetary funds for much of their work. The larger research, of which this case study is but one part, also includes a survey of UNESCO's capacity development activities, *Review of UNESCO's capacity development programmes and networks*. Nonetheless, its role in support of ministries of education – the ministers of which, very often, are heads of UNESCO National Commissions – is an important one which, because of its mandate, places it in a unique position to assist ministries often faced by a sea of different donors.

The study has as its focus those forms of capacity development upon which whole education systems are dependent, namely, the planning and management of education reform and development. Thus, its focus is not on the particular capacity development for curricular reform or teacher training, nor any of the other important professional areas of concern to a ministry of education. It is rather on those capacities that are at the heart of integrating, prioritizing and managing the multiple inputs and their contextualization in national educational development.

The case study comprises three parts. The first and second parts focus on the findings of the Guyanese case (past and current education projects and further issues raised in interviews) and are written up against a backdrop of the theoretical concerns of the agencies involved, thus comparing the practice on the ground with what is put forward as development agency policy. The third and final part of this study draws the conclusions out of this comparison and puts forward some recommendations of 'good practice' for UNESCO and other agencies.

Guyana gained independence from Great Britain in 1966. Its educational system was characteristic of a former British colony, offering an academic curriculum with external examinations, catering predominantly to the elite, with competition for post-primary places and schools both run by the Government and non-governmental organizations (mainly religious). In 1976, the Government took over all the non-government schools, having offered free education the previous year (Tsang, Fryer and Arvalo, 2002). Primary education has been compulsory since 1976, and is currently through to the age of 14-and-a-half years. Plans are under way for the universalization of secondary education, through to age 16.

The population of Guyana is about three-quarters of a million, made up predominantly of Afro-Guyanese and East Indians (dating from the recruitment of indentured labour primarily from India – and continuing until 1917 – following the abolition of slavery in 1834). Amerindians comprise less than 10 per cent of the population and live mainly in the interior regions; the bulk of the population lives in the coastal areas.

Whereas at independence Guyana had one of the best education systems in the Caribbean, today it is amongst the lowest performers, suffering from insufficient human resources and capital investment, and the continuous emigration of teachers and other trained or skilled staff from the country. Since the early 1990s, development agencies have invested heavily in the education system and following the recent debt relief agreement, considerable additional resources have been available for investment in social services, including education. The percentage of GDP going to education in the early to mid-1990s was about 3.5 per cent, whereas a decade later it was 8.5 per cent.

The Primary Education Investment Project (PEIP) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the largest development partner, ran from 1989 to 2002. This was followed by the Secondary School Reform Project (SSRP) of the World Bank and subsequently the Guyana Education Access Project (GEAP) of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). Current projects include the Guyana Basic Education and Teacher Training Project (GBET) of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which runs until 2009; the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) project (Guyana was one of the first countries to be approved for EFA-FTI funds in 2003), and the IDB's Basic Education, Access and Management Support Programme (BEAMS).

As already noted, the focus of this study is on capacity development in educational planning and management, and not on the whole range of different capacities and skills required for an efficient and effective educational system. Thus, in the synopsis of past projects which follows, this same focus will be applied. Hence the discussion will not venture into areas such as school infrastructure, curriculum or teacher development.

Guyana – Past education projects, 1989-2007

The Primary Education Improvement Programme (PEIP), 1989-2002 – IDB

The original project design of PEIP comprised three major components: (1) human resources development; (2) curriculum development and education technology; and (3) physical infrastructure and equipment. A loan of \$46.4 million plus just over another half a million dollars in technical cooperation financed the project. In 1998, due to the low disbursement rate (merely 33 per cent nine years into the programme), PEIP was redesigned and extended a further two years, until 2002. This encompassed a component for strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry, another for the human resources development of teachers and administrators, and finally the strengthening of the PIU and monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

The PEIP is a good starting point for examining the use of aid funds for capacity development in education, as it comprises a rather traditional project design, with a PIU housed outside the Ministry of Education. As we shall see, some of the trajectory from PIU to embedded project management within the Ministry is traversed in the recent history of support to education by the donor community in Guyana. Furthermore, the older, completed projects, such as PEIP, provided the early groundwork upon which a new generation of education capacity development projects was built.

Under the redesigned PEIP, a consultancy firm carried out an organizational capacity assessment of the Ministry of Education. However, the document produced does not appear to have been fully utilized. Indeed, in spite of numerous enquiries, I could not get hold of a copy, not even from the proverbial office shelf. When enquiring about this capacity assessment, many were unaware of its existence and those who knew of it were clearly dismissive.

This capacity assessment was followed up with work on strategic planning, management information systems, human resources development and financial management and budgeting. Some of the project monies were spent on training: a total of 34 people were sent on advanced courses between 1991 and 1996, mainly overseas, for between three and eighteen months. Details of these courses were not available. However, we do know that the idea was to further develop the capacities of the Ministry of Education, the National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD) and the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) (the teacher training college). A telling comment in the project completion report (PCR) was that “The major loss ... of six of the 11 trained to MA – suggests the need to improve capacity in personnel management to afford opportunities for well-qualified nationals to make a contribution” (Inter-American Development Bank, 2003: 12). The same comment could well be made today, as the discussion below suggests.

The claim made for PEIP’s contribution to institutional strengthening is the achievement of the capacity assessment, recognizing that “the Ministry of Education needed more support to be able to change its organizational culture and significantly improve management”. Indeed, the current IDB project, BEAMS, had its origins in part in “the lessons learned from PEIP implementation”.

A significant achievement of the Ministry of Education was the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for 2003-2007, which benefited from PEIP consultancies. However, this plan was not costed and the significant overall gap in the finance required to achieve the different objectives was not subjected to the kind of scrutiny normally required of a strategic plan. Thus, there was no prioritization of resource allocation. Nonetheless, the astute Planning Unit was able to anticipate the nature and size of contributions each member of the donor community would make, and so picked up the tab for various items within the strategic plan. This Plan, however, also adopted a rather traditional approach to planning, albeit with wide consultation to ensure that the wishes of different parties were included. Yet, without any comprehensive costing and overall budget requirements, this plan resembled a wish-list more than a strategic plan, as there was no indication of which choices needed to be made against the backdrop of resource constraints. When this does not occur, choices tend to be made by default rather than by design.

The PCR also reckoned that “changes in the Ministry’s own internal management and decision-making framework” were required beyond the human resources development (HRD) programmes, as “the system itself became a limiting factor”. In analysing the achievements of the PEIP, the report drew attention to a number of weaknesses, “particularly in the area of institutional strengthening”. An example was an incorrect assessment of the managerial capability of the MOE and the lack of embeddedness of the PEIP’s objectives within “a general plan that could better guide the actions of the MOE and the Education sector as a whole” (Inter-American Development Bank, 2003: 19).

Ironically, the PCR noted how the PEIP experience, with a PIU with responsibility for implementation and monitoring, “strengthened the managerial capacity of the Ministry to work on a larger number of reform issues simultaneously. The Ministry went from only implementing the PEIP to execute three other large programmes financed by the World Bank, the Canadian and British international cooperation Agencies” (Inter-American Development Bank, 2003: 23). From the perspective of the new aid modalities, this appears a curious statement. Should managing donor projects be the key preoccupation rather than managing the sector as a whole?

In examining the lessons of PEIP, the PCR points to the consultancies which “should lead to a change in the organizational culture” and the “managerial capability” of the Ministry (Inter-American Development Bank, 2003: 29). At the same time, the PCR stresses “the need of a clear direction and purpose in the sector”: “The Ministry must know what it wants and needs and be able to think

strategically in a way as to be able to be really committed with the actions to take” (Inter-American Development Bank, 2003: 30).

The two other large education projects funded prior to the current period were the Secondary School Reform Project (SSRP) and the Guyana Education Access Programme (GEAP), which will now be discussed briefly.

Secondary School Reform Project (SSRP), 1996-2004 – World Bank

The World Bank’s Secondary School Reform Project (SSRP) ran from 1996 until 2004, overlapping with the second half of the IDB’s PEIP. It had three components: educational programme quality, school environment, and national and regional institutional strengthening. The loan totalled \$17.3 million, the bulk going to secondary school repair and pilot school development in Component II. For our purposes, the third component is the most relevant, though it should be noted that the first component included “training and support of principals” ...“in effective school management, including educational leadership and community mobilization” (World Bank, 2005). In fact, this element not only built on the training of administrators under PEIP, but was also the precursor of much that was carried out under the CIDA-financed programme, GBET, to be discussed in the next section.

Component three, then, was designed to “enhance the ability of national and regional institutions to design, plan for, and implement sustainable education reforms”, working through an ‘SSRP Secretariat’ – the PIU that was created for this purpose. The school was the basic planning unit and formula-based resource allocation criteria were introduced which, it was hoped, would reduce some of the anomalies prevalent in budget planning that didn’t sufficiently differentiate between schools with very different resource endowments and needs. In addition, a nationwide survey of the physical facilities of secondary schools was successfully carried out to aid the identification of capital investment priorities. Further, a school information system (SIS) was developed, on which was to be based an education management system that would provide detailed information on many items and issues including individual students, teachers and staff, schools and their equipment, instructional material, and communities and catchment areas. Finally, a social awareness campaign was financed to assess as well as inform the public of the reform process.

In the interviews conducted in Guyana in November 2007, it was possible to unravel a little the ‘partially satisfactory’ evaluations which the PCR gave to the budget planning and school information system outcomes. The PCR points to the lack of “precise and timely information on unit and per capita costs in the ten regions” (World Bank, 2005: 11). The impression gleaned from the interviews was that a) a significant number of staff had not actively cooperated, and that b) there were constraints in being able to provide the costing data required. Three field visits were made by the Australian consultant who developed the formulae and the guidance for their implementation, but “the piloting of the financing formula was not fully realized” (World Bank, 2005: 11). The PCR added that the limited implementation of the pilot was also due to “the lack of organized and systematic support from the MOE and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) ...” There was inaction at the MOE central level on areas where policy decisions were needed especially in relation to data gathering and validation for the formula. Other contributing factors noted were the lack of a team to support the growth of the school boards (those to be empowered with the formula); “the reluctance of some head teachers to work with the school board for fear of losing power”; and the fact that “community members were not used to the idea of contribution without remuneration or stipend” (World Bank, 2005: 18).

Various factors seem to have been responsible for the failure to implement the School Information Management System. The PCR notes the provision of “excellent software”, but that it was “too sophisticated for the context and not customized enough for the end user”. It also comments critically on a high cost maintenance contract with insufficient support from the developer, the lack of a culture of computer use, the need for more intensive training at the regional and school levels, insufficient incentives for using electronic data, and the loss of key management information staff. Sadly, some of these problems resonate with findings from the wider literature. For instance, “excellent software” that is decontextualized is the sorry story of too many EMISs promoted and funded by donors across a number of the poorest countries. Interviews suggest that this comment probably understates the severity of this particular problem – the superimposition of a technical solution grafted on to a base that simply didn’t fit it. This view is confirmed in part by the follow-on IDB BEAMS project which has picked up the pieces of SIMS, simplified the school level modules and is attempting to integrate SIMS with a regional and central EMIS. Another layer of problems relating to the demise of the SSRP MIS component was uncovered during interviews. Thus, it was suggested that the problems of contextualizing the software arose because MOE staff would not cooperate with the more highly paid project PIU staff: senior management meetings would be organized on a quarterly basis, but attendance was sparse. Similarly, with respect to the regional offices, it was almost impossible to get regional officials to accompany the SSRP supervision teams at the schools. As reported in interviews, though supervision was meant to take place, the relevant skills were often missing.

Some of the lessons drawn out in the SSRP’s PCR have particular relevance for our discussion of the modalities of donor influence on capacity development. Like the PEIP, the SSRP had an external PIU, the experience of which, the PCR notes, is that:

It would be necessary to better integrate project management functions in the MOE, in order to strengthen the capacity of the institution ... Integrating project administration into the existing organizational structure of the Ministry would help build institutional capacity, local ownership and accountability. There should also be a director assigned to the project who is fully dedicated to the task of coordinating implementation without other responsibilities and with appropriate remuneration so that the proper attention can be paid to implementation issues (World Bank, 2005: 28).

Importantly, these sorts of lessons have been learned in ongoing projects, as will be discussed. The PCR also points directly to “the separation of the SSRP team from normal MOE operations” which “may have led to difficulties in sustainability” (World Bank, 2005: 46).

Further lessons that have emerged concern the need to clearly define roles between the Ministry and the SSRP Secretariat. The example was given of a lack of clarity as to who would be responsible for ensuring the piloting of the finance formula at selected schools, for instance. Despite referring to the ‘excellence’ of the SIMS software earlier in the report, the PCR concludes in the lessons drawn that:

- (i) software should be adapted to meet the needs of end users;
- (ii) adequate and regular technical support needs to be provided;
- (iii) the system needs to be used as a school tool for management, rather than just a database where knowledge and data entry rests with only one person;
- (iv) a policy supporting the use of the software and reporting electronically would encourage the transition from manual data collection to electronic, systematic reporting (World Bank, 2005: 28).

Broader lessons are also raised in the PCR. These include the “lack of incentives, inadequate leadership, continuation of attitudes of actors and stakeholders at all levels which are not supportive of accountability, and salaries, which...are far lower than in countries to which many Guyanese can emigrate appear to be far greater constraints to effective management than training and/or equipment” (World Bank, 2005: x).

One final recommendation in the PCR is also of interest, namely a reference to the need “to identify independent experts in the field who advise MOE on the appropriateness of external agencies’ proposals” (World Bank, 2005: 47).

Guyana Education Access Programme (GEAP), 1998-2007 – Department for International Development (UK)

The UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) funded the Guyana Education Access Programme (GEAP) from 1998 until early 2007, when the programme closed. Grant monies of about £11.5 million were given for two of the ten regions of the country, in order to develop replicable models covering school infrastructure and the reduction of constraints to access to secondary education; improved community participation; education management at the school, regional and central levels; and improved teaching and learning.

The Project Completion Report (Government of Guyana and DFID, 2006), produced at the end of 2006, provides an overview of what was seen as a successful project, but one beleaguered by questions of sustainability. Indeed, less than a year on from the completion of the project, concerned stakeholders commented in interviews that even some of the newly constructed or rehabilitated schools were becoming dilapidated through lack of maintenance.

The string of projects completed before the time of this case study (end 2007) all looked to subsequent projects for the continuation or further elaboration and embedding of practices instilled through their various contributions. PEIP looked to SSRP, and SSRP and GEAP together looked to BEAMS, the current IDB-financed education project. The GEAP PCR compared its findings at the end of 2006 with the mid-term review carried out in 2003 where the biggest issue of concern was sustainability, across a number of facets of the project. Although it is stated that “The lessons of the GEAP project have been absorbed into the Education Strategic Plan and made use of in other current programmes such as the BEAMS project,” it was added that “more use could be made of them” (Government of Guyana, 2006: 3).

Despite the increase in the quality of secondary education (the number of secondary school passes increased by 80 per cent since 2000), other areas of the project continued to provide cause for concern. The review team recorded what to an outsider seem to be serious systemic problems, namely that “an attitude that delay is inevitable and ‘only to be expected’ pervaded the sector” (Government of Guyana, 2006: 2). It also pointed to a number of recommendations made to the MOE in its report of 2003 which, clearly, had not been acted upon. For instance, notwithstanding the development of School Improvement Plans in all the schools, “the Education Access Fund which had a role in supporting access, as well as promoting community involvement, has not been sustained ... Comparison with the 2003 Output to Purpose Review (OPR) indicates how the level of community participation in general has declined” (Government of Guyana, 2006: 21). Similarly, “capacity at Regional Education Offices has been built up through the project, but staff changes and departures without replacement have weakened the regional capacity” (Government of Guyana, 2006: 3).

Project management was given to a UK-based educational trust, CfBT, and:

the programmes ran well ...while the GEAP team were in place, but ended once the team and its funding (with incentives such as snacks, travel provision etc) were no longer there. The training programmes that targeted senior staff e.g. R Ed Officers were not passed on to new holders of the posts, and initial benefits of this training were lost when the post-holders moved on. This highlights the need to be less reliant on the project implementation team and for MOE to develop and retain experienced staff (Government of Guyana, 2006: 8).

The PCR looked both to the new Education Strategic Plan being drafted with BEAMS support and the planned new Education Act to strengthen and formalize the programme of decentralization. Broader concerns over the planning process were noted, however, even as early as 2003, when the prior Education Strategic Plan was finalized. The 2003 OPR commented on ongoing parallel processes of planning at the regional level not being integrated with the national ESP. Looking ahead to the use of School Improvement Plans (SIPs), given the “omission of linkages between the planning tools”, the 2003 OPR commented that as a result, “the use of SIPs in target schools might be fairly valueless in the long term” (Government of Guyana, 2006: 23). On a more optimistic note, it was suggested that CfBT offer advice to the subsequent CIDA-backed project, GBET, in tailoring its Education Management Package, which was to include a module and monitoring instrument for school management.

Given that the purpose of GEAP was to pilot models capable of being replicated across the other regions, the PCR was fairly pessimistic. It commented thus:

in general, the scope for replicating lessons and good practice was reduced from the lack of commitment demonstrated by regional offices to network and build partnerships with other regions to replicate lessons and share evidence for wider benefits (Government of Guyana, 2006: 27).

The 2003 report had commented:

GOG/MOE must take action to ensure that the successful elements of GEAP are sustained over the long term. This applies to all the capacity building features addressed by the project. CfBT has done a good job in documenting and putting information on CDs and these resources are published and available, but unless they are used by MOE/DOE/other projects, e.g. BEAMS, they will be of little value (Government of Guyana, 2006: 28).

The lesson from GEAP, for present purposes here, was that:

over-reliance on a project team can lead to a capacity vacuum and unsustainable standards once that team leaves. GEAP went out of its way to establish an ‘identity’ but this was at the expense of capacity building across the MOE. Communication weaknesses may develop between the unit and MOE. This situation is being repeated at BEAMS where a completely separate unit is in place, leading to undue reliance on the project staff (DFID, 2006: 21).

Current situation and current education projects

The previous pages have taken close to a 20-year sweep, looking at the different hoped-for and realized contributions to capacity development in the education sector in Guyana. Here, we attempt to draw together some of the main threads to summarize some key factors that help, in particular, to explain why some of the anticipated long-term outcomes were not realized:

- the lack of a means of retaining trained staff;
- weaknesses in terms of embedding management and objectives for increased institutional capacity, ownership and accountability;
- the lack of an effective training strategy;
- the insufficiency of clear, overall direction;

- weak commitment and support of MOE and MOF;
- weak follow-through on required policy decisions;
- the absence of independent quality assurance;
- the lack of clearly defined roles at the centre and between schools, regions and centres;
- having a series of parallel planning processes rather than an all-embracing plan towards sector-wide objectives.

Each one of these factors would require a detailed contextual analysis in order to work out a strategy of overcoming the constraints to capacity development. Not one is amenable merely to a technical 'fix'. Yet, many an international 'expert' flown in to design a project utilizing the lessons of past education projects would be tempted to draw on 'best practices' and design just such a 'fix', especially if she or he had no in-depth knowledge of Guyana.

The next section briefly reviews the three main ongoing current projects. Once this discussion is completed, we shall return to this list to examine the extent to which some of these issues remain outstanding and/or continue to be addressed, as well as to draw attention to additional issues raised as constraints in the three projects themselves. The final section will evaluate how Guyana matches the aspirations for capacity development especially under the new modalities for aid and development effectiveness and come to some conclusions on the impact of donors on capacity development in educational planning in Guyana.

Guyana Basic Education Teacher Training Project (GBET), 1998-2009 – Canadian International Development Agency (\$8.1 million)

The Guyana Basic Education Teacher Training Project (GBET) focuses primarily on distance teacher education in the hinterland regions and has been managed by a Canadian executing agency. However, for our purposes, it should be noted that the project includes a distance Education Management Programme run by the National Centre for Education Resource Development (NCERD). As of November 2007, 469 education managers had successfully completed the programme, which attracted further funding from the IDB BEAMS project. The project was to have been completed by March 2007, but an extension until September 2009 was granted in order to produce a secondary teacher certificate programme, building on the success of the primary teacher certificate programme.

The absence of any central MOE policy to deal with distance education in general, and certification in particular (including the accreditation of hinterland tutors), challenges the sustainability of the programme. Institutional anomalies, such as the non-affiliation of the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) with the University of Guyana, similarly disadvantages CPCE graduates while bolstering an unreasonably long (nine years) teacher training programme.

Basic Education, Access, Management Support (BEAMS) Phase I (2002-2007) – Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (\$30 million) (Phase II \$20 million)

The Inter-American Development Bank's Basic Education, Access, Management Support (BEAMS) Project – Phase I – comprises the largest current aid initiative to the education sector in Guyana today. It includes three components: (1) improved school performance; (2) organizational and human resources capacity; and (3) infrastructure. The second component, having some \$3.5 million funding, is intended to

finance actions that improve the management capability of MOE to deliver quality educational services including: (i) strengthening core decision-making through the establishment of an integrated education management information system (EMIS) that supports asset management,

human resources, and sector performance; (ii) a robust management and professional development programme, encompassing succession planning and formal and on-the-job training opportunities; (iii) institutional strengthening, through the review of national education system policies, a modern Education Act, implementation of institutional changes, and development of an integrated financial management system (Inter-American Development Bank, 2002).

This list is intended to be comprehensive, even to cover all the outstanding, prior, incomplete attempts at capacity development by the MOE that have been described in the previous 20 years of education projects.

No doubt because of its comprehensive ambitions as well as its prime position, other development agencies have had high expectations of BEAMS, seeing through the implementation and further funding of some of their already completed though not necessarily fully sustainable programmes. Like its predecessor, PEIP, and unlike the SSRP, BEAMS focuses on basic education and not secondary education. Just the same, the technical assistance component of the project has covered more than this sub-sector, such as the 2003-2007 Education Strategic Plan (ESP), training in strategic planning and current assistance provided for a subsequent ESP.

The BEAMS project document outlines three critical risks to the achievement of BEAMS' objectives: (1) retaining qualified teachers; (2) MOE execution capacity, which, it notes, "is limited by its complex organizational structure and a shortfall of qualified staff at the managerial level" (Inter-American Development Bank, 2002: 3); and (3) the lack of clear role definitions between regional and central level for day-to-day education administration. To address and reduce these risks, BEAMS has introduced a variety of incentives including teacher upgrading, compensation, accommodation, cluster-level teacher training, workplace improvements and school improvement grants. In addition, former PEIP staff were assigned to facilitate BEAMS start-up and execution, as well as having five long-term international staff assigned to MOE technical units responsible for implementing BEAMS. Finally, the Government agreed to set up a high-level task force to review the organizational structure of the education sector and make recommendations for drafting a new Education Act.

Some of the benchmarks (of interest for our purposes) for beginning negotiation of Phase II of the project include "enhanced community and parental involvement as demonstrated by the number of functioning School Improvement Action Committees (SIACs) and parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and school improvement plans funded" (Inter-American Development Bank, 2002: 19). (A number of people interviewed felt that the Government would continue School Improvement Plan (SIP) funding beyond that provided currently through the EFA-FTI monies.) Other fund release triggers include the production of a modern Education Act (an early draft of which was available just prior to my visit in November 2007, following country-wide consultation), operational regional education committees (with MOE making "every effort to have hiring authority for temporary teachers devolved to the regions"); an operational EMIS in central MOE – begun to be rolled out to regions and schools; an operational programme of professional development for middle and senior education managers; and the introduction of teachers' incentives. Some of the benchmarks of the civil works component include various planning tasks; a transition plan for universal secondary education (USE), based on resource rationalization and national school mapping exercises; progressive annual increases in recurrent budgetary allocation for schools maintenance; and staffing of all secondary schools per agreed national norms (Annex II-1) (Negotiations on Phase II had not begun by November 2007, despite a notional Phase II beginning in 2008).

The BEAMS project document specifies "the organizational and institutional constraints (affecting) MOE's ability to define policies and execute programmes that support sector modernization". These are:

- (i) centralized decision-making and fragmented implementation at the regional level;
- (ii) cumbersome bureaucracy and obsolete regulations that impede the deployment of financial, human and material resources;
- (iii) unclear delineation of responsibilities between central MOE and local authorities;
- (iv) insufficient numbers of qualified managerial staff at the MOE and in schools;
- (v) weak horizontal and vertical communication channels (Inter-American Development Bank, 2002: 8).

BEAMS was designed to overcome these constraints through the implementation of a variety of measures, including technical assistance directed at the drafting of a new Education Act, an Education Strategic Plan, an organizational and capacity assessment, management training, an EMIS, resolving the inefficiencies of parallel Teachers' and Public Service Commissions, and further support to the modernization of financial management through the extension of CIDA's Guyana Economic Management Programme (GEMP) to the regions. Part of the problem at the regional level has been identified as the fact that the Regional Development Councils (RDCs) "are not accountable to MOE for education outcomes; nevertheless they execute three-quarters of the sector budget, through an Executive Officer who is appointed by the Ministry of Local Government" (Inter-American Development Bank, 2002: 8).

A range of views and comments about the BEAMS initiative was provided during the interviews conducted. One respondent expressed concern about the poor implementation record thus far for the institutional strengthening component of the project. This was not attributed to BEAMS, however, but to weaknesses within the MOE caused *inter alia* by the high turnover of staff and the different styles of the ministers in post, with some Ministry staff not being fully aware of the nature and ambitions of this particular component.

Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) (2003-2008) (\$18.3 million)

Guyana was one of the first countries to be accepted for funding for the EFA-FTI, applying for US\$45 million covering the period 2003 to 2015, and following the completion of its 2003-2007 Education Strategic Plan. US\$8 million had been disbursed by May 2007, with another US\$4 million in the pipeline for the current year, averaging just under this amount per year. The grant monies target three components, especially focusing on the least advantaged hinterland regions populated by Amerindians: (1) upgrading hinterland teachers; (2) enhancing the teaching and learning environment of primary schools, beginning with the hinterlands; and (3) strengthening school-community partnerships. EFA-FTI monies have complemented GBET funds for distance education teacher certification. Component three has involved the accelerated implementation of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) in all schools and upgraded the school feeding programme in the hinterlands. Of particular interest to the present study are the linkages with regional and central planning intended to cover the SIPs as well as to maintain the school feeding programme in the long run.

The Ministry of Education has been responsible for the execution of the EFA-FTI Programme, with coordination placed under the Planning Unit. However, at the time of my visit, the project coordinator had recently left the MOE and had not been replaced.

Further issues raised in the interviews

The interviews conducted with current and former MOE and project staff and development agency representatives helped clarify and provide the context to some of the key issues already raised in the project documents themselves and in the PCRs. Yet they also entered other terrains of importance

to the wider study, such as the status of educational planning – and the MOE Planning Unit in particular; how aid projects are managed, how this has changed over the years and the difference this has made to the MOE; the capacity development or training that has taken place and the MOE's perspective on it, which raises the issue of managing technical assistance; decentralization; donor coordination and government leadership.

Status of planning

In November 2007, staffing levels in the Planning Unit were down to three people – the head of the unit, who is a retired MOE staff member brought back under contract for the second time, an officer responsible for monitoring and evaluation, and a junior staff member. Seven established posts exist, so the unit was working with less than 50 per cent staffing. A fourth, senior planner had resigned from the unit just prior to my visit.

Also under the line management of the Chief Planning Officer is the Management Information Systems section. Like the Planning Unit, this section was down in numbers, surviving with the director of the unit and two others, again at 50 per cent staffing. The post descriptions for this section, as well as for the regional offices, were under negotiation at the time of my visit, the initial, approved posts seemingly being contradicted by a newer establishment with post descriptions reminiscent of jobs decades ago – ‘word-processing operatives’ and the like. Of greater significance was the still pending negotiation of salary scales for the additional staff, given that three staff members who had been trained specifically for the work required in the Ministry had recently left to take up posts within the Ministry of Health. Although it became clear that virtually all MOE staff with donor project management responsibilities had been given some sort of ‘top-ups’ or financial incentives, in the case of the MIS staff, several respondents informed me that the project funding for the health posts likely afforded higher ‘incentives’ and thus, a greater attraction than staying with the MOE. For these trained personnel, such a move across the public sector, rather than to the private sector or outside the country, was unusual.

It was understood that a new Education Strategic Plan was being drafted by an external consultant, paid for with BEAMS funds. In addition, as Universal Secondary Education (USE) was to be the centrepiece of the ESP, the Minister of Education requested that this be costed. As has been noted, the previous ESP had been produced without costing. The EFA-Fast Track Initiative responded to the Minister's request with the designation of EPDF monies for such a costed simulation model to be constructed. It was explained that the (World Bank) consultant would look at all the documentation and the Ministry's policies and then make recommendations based on financial feasibility. The Ministry, in turn, would decide on policy and hold consultations, and the consultant would help display the cost of the different options.

In touching on issues that went beyond the Ministry of Education to the public sector reform and specifically, the upgrading of financial management within different ministries, I had learned that the MOE – as is commonly the case – was to be the first ministry piloted in such reforms financed by CIDA and joined by IDB. However, what was clear was that the Planning Unit was not drawn into and included in any pilot, nor was there any awareness of such upgrading beyond certain training, which the unit was being offered – for example, in the construction of Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks – by the Ministry of Finance (an afternoon's workshop was scheduled during my visit; the first, as I understood it). As was explained, while Guyana now has more control of its revenues, it is still a long way off from a roll-over or a results-based budget. Indeed, within the Ministry of Education, while some ongoing work at the regions was being undertaken to help them so that the action plans would be costed, for example, this was still a long way from the resource allocation

prioritization discussed earlier. Indeed, it was acknowledged within the MOE that the shortcoming of the prior plan was that costing was not as well done as it should have been – they tried to do it from the centre, but because of the regional disparities of Guyana, this simply was not possible. Now they are going to the regions and working with them, helping them to break down issues and working through the costing for the region. In such a way it should be possible to have action plans for the major issues – for example, universal secondary education (USE), teacher education and ICT development.

While this is clearly a step forward, it doesn't get around the prioritization issue. As explained to me, two factors are relevant here. One is the past experience of taking whatever is offered by the donors, with insufficient consideration of attendant requirements, such as building schools without an investigation of sources of water or ongoing maintenance costs. The other factor is the all-too-common rush to spend in the last few weeks of the financial year, monies distributed that are not spent otherwise being returned to the consolidated fund. So the notion of 'planning' outside of more costed 'wish lists' has been quite remote from reality.

Up to this point, we have assumed certain fundamental planning capabilities on the part of the Planning Unit, especially one in which the staff had completed the Advanced Training Programme (ATP) of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). (The Chief Planning Officer, the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and the former EFA-FTI Project Manager, who had recently left the Ministry, had all completed the ATP in Paris – as well as many former MOE staff whom I did not have the opportunity to meet – or were no longer residing in Guyana.) This includes the variety of tasks basic to a Planning Unit, namely, policy analysis and review, monitoring and evaluation of the education sector, including education projects, costing activities, and preparing budget estimates for prioritized programmes and, together with the Finance Unit, estimating the recurrent and capital costs of the education sector. The situation, albeit with only half the required staffing is, however, one in which planning is too often done by others, though information may be collected. Neither the prior ESP nor the current one being drafted comprise the total costing required in order to go beyond lists of what needs tackling to the prioritization of resource allocation.

It would appear that the availability of technical assistance funds to undertake critical priority tasks reduces the pressure on Ministry staff to undertake key planning activities and, importantly, to learn from these hands-on experiences. The Planning Unit has understood well how to avail itself of the assistance that can be made available by the different donors to the education sector in Guyana today. I was told that the major difference between prior plans and the 2003-2007 plan was that, whereas projects in the past came from donors, in this instance BEAMS and the EFA-FTI projects came from the 2003-2007 plan. However, the way that approaches to implementation challenges were addressed has remained very much the same.

Speaking to some of the former MOE staff, I was told that it hadn't always been the case that those trained were not made use of in the units to which they returned. In particular, those sent to IIEP for further training returned to the Planning Unit and their skills were used. A further interesting comment about the IIEP ATP was the reflection that in the old days, one worked in groups on the course. The former MOE staff member pondered whether individual competitiveness may not have overtaken such an approach today. Interestingly, going back nearly 20 years, I was told by another respondent that in 1990/2001 the Planning Unit did have a costed plan. However, it was explained that just as now, it is the Ministry of Finance and not the Ministry of Education that has control. Policy is made at the MOE, but resources are divvied out by the MOF. Notwithstanding Guyana having been one of the first countries to receive EFA-FTI funds, given the current hurdles

of detailed, costed sector plans, one wonders whether today, Guyana would have been accepted so easily into the 'club'.

It also seems that, in some key respects, the Planning Unit is marginalized within the Ministry. While regular fortnightly meetings of the 'Education System Committee' are held, chaired by the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Planning Officer does not attend these meetings, not being a member of the committee. Rather, they are reserved for the 'professional' as opposed to the 'administrative' officers, and thus include the heads of teacher education, curriculum development, and so on, while planning falls under the administrative rubric. Indeed, it was to this committee that I was asked to present my research plan for this case study (despite its focus on planning). One consequence is that it would seem that the resource allocation decision-making does not enter the 'professional' discussions, mirroring the uncoded ESP. Perhaps because of the fairly recent agreement on Guyanese debt relief (\$686 million in net present values), a proportion of which has funded additional government education expenditure, the prioritization of and trade-off between different strategies is not taking place as it must have done in the past.

Project management and embeddedness

In contrast, as we have already seen in the case of EFA-FTI and some of the BEAMS components, project management has moved from being a solely parallel, extra-Ministry of Education affair, to becoming more embedded within the day-to-day functions of the Ministry. However, this does not mean that the phenomenon of having PIUs has now ended, or that the embeddedness of project management within the Ministry has overcome the salary differentials inherent in the former system. Indeed, there would seem to be little harmonization of donors' policies in this regard, or of the public sector – the transfer of the MIS staff from education to health is but one example. Relatedly, the comment made in the interviews – "if you don't pay, the job doesn't get done" – is telling in illustrating how far the aid project mentality is still alive and well in Guyana, even if it is not as dire as in some other countries.

Dominant in many interviews was the reference to 'top-ups' and incentives, now re-born in some instances as performance-related bonuses, ensuring that jobs were done but effectively still paying for them to be carried out by erstwhile civil servants. Former MOE staff were quite outspoken about the 'incentives' provided for embedded project managers and the attraction of such posts outside the civil service, even though they themselves had benefited from such incentives. However, in a more positive light such incentives could be seen as a cost-effective way of retaining needed skills at least temporarily, through delaying (though not by any means always preventing) the emigration of skilled people from the country. This is a hugely challenging problem for education, as for other parts of the civil service and other sectors of the economy.

Beyond the issue of such 'embedded' project management, in reality PIUs still exist, even if not always in name. For instance, GBET is in essence run like a PIU at CPCE but with the former head of CPCE as the GBET project manager. Likewise, in the case of BEAMS, while project management is within the MOE, the BEAMS project office has a manager and facilitators, who are contracted separately and who oversee the project, providing the paperwork for procurement and the like. In addition, there is a project management council chaired by the Permanent Secretary, which meets monthly and includes all sub-component heads. Thus, though BEAMS is not the outside construct which SSRP was, there is still clearly fragmentation of the responsibilities of the component managers – for their 'routine' work and for that of BEAMS. Indeed, with respect to this particular issue, one respondent noted that BEAMS requires much closer monitoring than earlier projects precisely because it comprises one of several responsibilities of any component manager.

Another very interesting comment was made concerning the nature of current project management, which relates to the donor agencies themselves – that the completion of GEAP and the SSRP marked an end to the donors’ technical interface on education projects. This is because the international trend of major donors turning to the new aid modalities has resulted in more postings to aid recipient countries of generalists rather than technical sector specialists than before (Riddell, 2007). However, against this evident trend, the IDB’s policy on this has recently changed and IDB technical staff will no longer be concentrated at HQs but rather, deployed more in-country. In interviews, I was told that this would not happen soon in the case of Guyana, however.

Further skills problems are also evident. For example, reflecting on the poor integration of the SSRP within the MOE, one person interviewed said that in their view, “the system defeats plans for progress”. This comment arose from the fact that the SSRP was told by the MOE that it could not recruit project staff from the school system, thus making it dependent on retirees. Or, as another respondent put it, “embedding donor project management in ministries isn’t solving the problem. It’s how the MOE takes ownership”.

In general, it would seem that set against the aspirations for capacity development under the new aid modalities, Guyana occupies a mid-way position between donor-led projects and Government-led coordination of donors aligned with Government’s own plans. Embedded project management is seen as a step forward from donor-run projects. Yet, as one respondent put it in commenting upon the similar ‘embeddedness’ of top-ups and other incentives, “How else can you change accountability?”

Capacity development and management of TA

It became increasingly evident from the interviews that, notwithstanding the capacity assessment carried out under the PEIP, no explicit holistic plan for capacity development within the MOE has been put in place. As already noted, there have been many piecemeal approaches, often introduced as parts of different projects, in which training has taken place using a variety of different modalities. Yet none of those interviewed said that they’d ever been asked what courses they would like to receive training in.

If the approach taken for the introduction of management information systems under the SSRP was a fiasco, lessons were learned, as the PCR noted. Indeed, as explained in interviews, BEAMS paid for a Trinidad-based consultant, chosen by the MOE, to develop the necessary software for a primary school information system. The MIS unit, rather than BEAMS itself, managed the consultancy firm’s work and, having asked parents and teachers what they wanted from an information source, had the software tailored to their needs. The software was then further refined through stakeholder involvement – a very different picture from the approach taken under the SSRP. MIS staff have been working with the firm and the plan is that in one to two years, the MIS unit will release its own version of the software, modifying the source codes made available to it, and then bring it up to scale and make it generic for secondary schools as well. In addition to getting the software right, the IDB has been concerned with its use and not merely the technical side. Local consultants are being hired at the regional level to provide technical support to assist the integration of the use of the computers given to schools within their work. All in all, it was a most successful initiative.

In relation to other BEAMS components, I was told that the rehiring of the PEIP planners under BEAMS – which some said was a mistake – was not an IDB decision, but rather that of the MOE, with the IDB merely raising no objection. This is interesting because in other cases in which the donor agencies viewed the work of the consultants employed not to have been very effective, it has also been the MOE, and not BEAMS, which made the hiring decisions. However, the issues

may not have been so clear cut. For instance, I was told that from the ministry's perspective, the consultant who worked with the MOE on strategic planning under PEIP was extremely effective. For example, he would introduce a theoretical issue and then set tasks for the participants to work through in their own units to better embed it in its proper setting. He also consulted the regions about the issues raised. This happened at the same time as there were consultations surrounding the PRSP, so they were inter-linked and piggy-backing on each other, with the participants learning by doing. Such 'training' set the pace for the consultations surrounding the subsequent ESP. The view of at least one of the development agencies of this same person, however, was that it seemed as though familiarity bred comfort – not products, and certainly not capacity development. Whose judgement counts?

Other training that has taken place within the Planning Unit has entailed project monitoring and evaluation, which I was told had been very effective in terms of the skills gained by the person tasked with this. What was stressed was that the consultant worked alongside the planner, within the real-life setting, rather than outside it. As the respondent noted, "Capacity development is better if the consultants work alongside you and deliver a product".

In addition to such 'products', however, it was also mentioned that what is needed is 'logical thinking'. A comparison was made between the IIEP course (of some years ago) and the learning that was done on the job with a more senior mentor, which the respondent said was more effective because it was not removed from actual practice. Various other comments were made about the IIEP course, such as its needing greater focus on 'in-depth' planning, as well as more on project management. However, the comment was also made that the course had made many participants more motivated and confident.

A number of development agencies have also offered courses in project planning, which was generic to the particular agencies' ways of doing things. IDB, for instance, has offered many such courses on logical frameworks, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, project development and appraisal. Consultants have been brought in for such courses which, according to the interviews, the participants found helpful even if specific to the agency. The Ministry of Finance, I was told, also gave courses in project planning which was tailor-made for Guyana but cross-sectoral, using international consultants. However, the view of at least one knowledgeable interviewee was that the IDB courses had been more helpful.

The question that was raised concerning capacity development – including the development of the tools being provided under the current projects, such as MIS or the MA programme for head teachers – was whether such programmes will be sustained. For instance, the Planning Unit had just undergone training in appraising School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and a community specialist had been hired to work with school communities. This particular training began in 2006 and was completed in 2007. However, it didn't encompass all active school boards, so it was uncertain whether the whole process might have to be repeated to engage those who had not been included the first time round.

In the case of the management training being offered to school heads, NCERD had been made responsible for the education management certificate course, taking it over from GBET, so it is a good example of a project being turned into an institutionalized Ministry programme. The integration of point increments on the salary scale for programme graduates is probably even more important for sustainability, as it establishes the programme within Ministry promotion channels. Although the modules taught started out as adapted Commonwealth of Learning material, they have been tailored more to Guyana, with the addition of a ninth module. Additionally, although the modality

is distance education, regional tutors have now been trained and hired (with MOE funding) to reinforce the training.

Discussions about the management and supervision of consultants hired with donor funds to provide technical assistance suggest that there has been some movement away from donors determining the choice of consultants. Yet this still seems to be more the exception than the rule, the final decision often depending on how forthright, involved and persistent the MOE staff are in expressing their views. In several cases, terms of reference have been drawn up by MOE staff, and in others by donor agencies. As explained in interviews, recipients must know what they want, and the end result is dependent on how the manager operates.

Decentralization

Looked at from the perspective of its ten regional education offices, Guyana has a decentralized education system. However, the system still retains many of the hallmarks of an overly-centralized system. Indeed, capacity development which would provide decentralization with teeth has been long in coming. As one respondent put it, “We have had regionalization for a long time. If you have a region without capacities, however, they do as they’re told”. The respondent went on to describe the enduring influence of the ‘top-down’ British colonial inheritance, which, itself, has impeded progress.

Reference has already been made to the SIPs, which have been an attempt to instil decentralization at the lowest level, that of the schools and their surrounding communities. As had been anticipated, an early draft of the Education Act, which I was able to see during my visit, deals with the school boards. However, at the next level up, the precise lines of authority and the delegated powers remain unclear. A new Education Act – bringing up-to-date legislation first introduced as far back as 1958 – is one of the benchmarks for negotiation of the second phase of BEAMS, but it would seem that its enactment still remains some way off. Besides the problems of weak capacities and the emigration of too many of those who are trained, there remains the anomaly of the Regional Directors of Education who in practice have two bosses: in addition to being ‘regional’ directors within the Ministry of Education’s administrative structure, they also come under the Regional Executive Officer. The formula funding attempted under the SSRP tried to base the central funding of regions on their needs, as opposed to imposing a one-size-fits-all model across the board. Although Regional Development Councils have budgets which are reviewed by the MOE, there is still a long way to go before genuine bottom-up budgeting becomes a reality.

Putting the training at the regional level into practice has been constrained by the blurred lines of authority, which have yet to be addressed. Yet, according to several respondents, there is a further problem that needs to be fixed, best described as the necessary change in the ‘psyche’ of regional officers, inculcating the notion of their making decisions for which they take responsibility rather than merely carrying out orders from on high. Even at the school or community level, following school board training, volunteering without payment, such as to cover transportation costs when board members need to travel to the schools, has been a challenge. As one respondent put it, in many ways SIPs have been merely ‘wish lists’. There has been little prioritization in planning or in follow through from the MOE. One example was given to illustrate this point: if a school was to actively save electricity, the benefits would be at the level of the central exchequer and not the school responsible for making the saving. In other words, the incentives are not there for school-based planning to be meaningful in financial terms, except in terms of their being granted SIP project monies.

Donor coordination and government leadership

Under the leadership of the Minister of Education, an education thematic group, bringing together the different development agencies contributing to the education sector, is meant to meet on a quarterly basis. In practice, when this group has met its activities have been dominated by information sharing, without an agenda of issues requiring discussion. As one respondent put it, if donors could work together outside of the Ministry of Education, then perhaps it would be possible to get more coordination of them by the Ministry. However, in practice it would appear that each donor continues to be driven particularly by its own agenda, which largely influences how it wishes to intervene, reducing the effectiveness of joint work. And the dominance of the donors provides little room for government education sector leadership in shaping future directions. In practice, what exists is more akin to the sector investment programmes of old, in which a menu is presented to the donors for their respective contributions. Perhaps one indicator of current limitations is that while the Ministry of Finance has regularly been invited to the Education Thematic Group meetings, it has never sent a representative, despite the fact that it is the MOF which coordinates and negotiates with the various development agencies and their contributions. Indeed, when I asked one respondent whether it would be possible to put together one resource envelope for the ESP, the answer was that the MOE cannot coordinate the financial contributions, that being the preserve of the MOF.

I was told that an attempt to bring together the various donors in education was made by the EFA-FTI, which tried to get them to agree on a common set of educational indicators for programme monitoring. However, this did not lead to any permanent change in prevailing practices – such as the dovetailing of different donor projects and their focal points, against the backdrop of an expectation among the donor agencies that subsequent projects will follow on from and address the particular concerns arising from completed programmes, such as BEAMS taking on some of the focus of SSRP and GEAP. The result is de facto, post-hoc coordination, with the MOE designating the regional focus, where an agency is not dealing with a national programme but one targeted on specific regions, as has been the case with several projects.

Nowhere in any of the interviews was there any talk of moving towards a sector-wide approach (SWAp) despite the fact that this has already been tried successfully in the health sector. Perhaps a key reason for this lies in the challenge of leadership. With an understaffed and highly precarious Planning Unit under the direction of a twice rehired, contracted former staff member, and with the current succession and promotion problems as well as a high turnover of staff across the donor community, there was no clear lead from either the MOE or the main donors for past ways of working to change. Little enthusiasm was galvanized for new and fresh approaches to be discussed and tried.

It was clear from the interviews conducted that there was dissatisfaction with the prevailing status quo from both sides – the donors and the Government. The backdrop is far from conducive to change. The problems, repeated over decades, all seem to contribute to a vicious cycle of capacity development with little sustained impact – such as the lack of institutional development and the same or very similar constraints to capacity development coming from existing institutions themselves (namely, the contradictory PSC and TSC appointments, the conservative traditions of the central MOE, mirrored at the regional level, and the difficulty of engendering voluntarism at the school or community level).

However, there are people who would like to see donors doing more work alongside the MOE, becoming more involved, being more accountable and moving on from the largely ‘hands-off’ approach that is so characteristic of the present interaction. Just the same, there was some talk in

the interviews of bringing back more conditionalities. Overall, what was clearly evident was a sense of frustration in the donor community, notwithstanding the different projects, with the repeated challenges to sustainable institutional change. Perhaps the leavening, in practice, is with a final drafting of the Education Act. If clear delegation of authority to the regions can be married to the already developing and detailed powers of school boards, the necessary changes may come from below rather than from the centre, as has been expected to date,.

Conclusion

This case study of donor impact on capacity development in educational planning and management in Guyana has deliberately been set alongside an overview of the latest literature on aid effectiveness and capacity development and the key Paris Declaration indicators on capacity development. It has drawn attention to a range of factors specific to the Guyanese situation and seen to be important in helping to determine the sustainability of any contributions to capacity development. These encompass the role of individuals as well as the organizations in which they work, and the institutional context or enabling environment in which attempts to undertake capacity development and ensure its sustainability are to be placed. It has also examined the three main and now completed education projects (PEIP, GEAP and SSRP) of the main development agencies contributing to the Guyanese education sector in the past – the IDB, DFID and World Bank (WB) – as well as the key current projects of the IDB (BEAMS), CIDA (GBET) and the EFA-FTI, which represents a consortium of donors. Finally, the case study has presented some of the key ideas and views of those interviewed in the week-long visit to the country.

What overall conclusions can we draw?

The first is far from good news. Despite years of capacity development and millions of dollars of investment in the education sector, a significant proportion of which has been directed specifically at capacity development in educational planning and management, there is clearly a dearth of capacity within the Ministry of Education, even if skilled capacity still exists within the country. Both the Planning Unit as a whole and the MIS section specifically have neither the number of staff required, nor all the requisite capacities for ensuring sector-wide planning and management of education in Guyana. Neither have the anomalies of planning and management at either the regional or school levels been sorted out, whether in terms of lines of authority, delegation of responsibility, or capacities to plan strategically and account for monies spent in terms of the outcomes to be achieved. Much is still being done to the Ministry, even if at its request, such as the post 2007 ESP or the costing for the simulation of universal secondary education. On the other hand, a lot that needs to be done at the Ministry is not taking place, such as the necessary professional development of its staff according to a system-wide capacity development plan, or appropriate succession planning and promotion. Much of the institutional environment goes against such systemic changes, or the conflict – in practice – between the appointments made by the TSC and the PSC, whether it is the insufficient unity of purpose and commitment of the MOF and the MOE, or whether it is the blurred lines of responsibility and accountability of the regional directors of education.

However, it is possible to point to some progress being made by looking at two of the Paris Declaration indicators, as discussed in *Section 1* on capacity development. Firstly, I don't think it could be said that the capacity development that is being offered is at odds with the national development strategy, even if it is not well coordinated as it is offered in too piecemeal a fashion, which risks not producing the desired results. Equally, in relation to the second indicator, the number of PIUs has fallen although it is still too early to tell whether this has made the difference

expected (that is, leading to greater ownership, commitment and accountability). At this point, my own judgement is that it has probably not done so. Yet there are several problems, which, if addressed, could well lead to the outcomes intended. For example, we know of the problem of the ways in which project management staff have been embedded within the Ministry with top-ups, separate project managers' salaries and even separate (from day-to-day business) project steering committee meetings – even if held within the MOE. What is also clear is that there has not been sufficient synchronized work on individuals, organizations and institutional development. Individuals have acquired skills or competencies which have not been put to full use in their jobs, or the organizations or institutions have not welcomed them back. New and relevant skills have not been used; or the institutions have been out of synch with their promotions and acceptance as organizational members. It is possible for all these problems identified to be worked upon and to begin to be addressed.

One key problem revolves around the project cycle, or project succession. We have seen the way that one project leads on to another, where the unfinished jobs of the former are assumed to be covered and adopted by the next project in line. Clearly, there must be inherent tension between the timeline of the projects and the time it takes to realize the institutional changes. The delay in even negotiating Phase II of BEAMS is a case in point. The very belated draft Education Act does not cover the lines of authority required for effectively implementing the decentralization that is otherwise assumed as a framework for capacity development. Further, stark gaps remain in relation to integrating capacity development in the Ministry of Education with the wider public service reforms, while the utilization of the Guyanese diaspora in planning capacity development remains largely an untapped resource.

There has been some donor harmonization, but this often seems to have occurred more by default than by design, as managed by the Planning Unit, more in a piecemeal fashion and not holistically. So there has been no knowing whether some educational sub-sectors will be included or not.

Another gap exists in relation to the quality assurance of the capacity development that has taken place. There have been project completion reports, and there have been numbers trained, but no substantive investigations or evaluations of whether the modalities chosen or the trainers utilized resulted in good value for money. No external body was put in a position of offering advice to the Government regarding the different options placed before them by the donors.

In terms of the use made of consultants, the evidence has been mixed. Use has been made of local as well as external consultants. While the Ministry has rehired local, skilled retirees, a lot of 'capacity development *per se*' has been given to international, albeit regional, consultants at times but with the MOE choosing them and the donor agencies not raising objections. Current practices still seem to be a long way away from MOE *management* of consultancies, especially as it is reactive and fits loosely, if at all, into a long-term capacity development plan for the Ministry.

Supply-led versus demand-led capacity development was certainly a large part of the MIS difficulties under the SSRP. However, it would seem that under BEAMS there has been some tangible adaptation of the system to the needs of the users. Indeed, the users have been asked what they would require. This, of course, has not been the case with capacity development more generally; quite the opposite in fact, with no one interviewed ever having been asked what professional development they might have liked, though it is not known how representative was the sample interviewed.

A very good example of promotions being in line with capacity development has been the integration of additional points on the scale credited to those completing the educational management

certificate begun under GBET. This is in contrast to the experience of the ATP graduate being denied the post in the Planning Unit on her return.

Overall, the good news and the advances that have been made need to be seen in the light of considerable persistent problems, many of which remain unresolved. And this leads us to ask to what extent any of the current problems of capacity development are attributable to donor influence, action or inaction.

Earlier parts of this case study have attempted to highlight the various positive benefits which successive projects attempted to bring and the different ways in which many of the goals were not achieved. The reasons cannot readily be attributed to either side – both the donors *and* the institutional context in which their education projects are placed need to be understood. Guyana has seen a progression of projects since PEIP, run with a traditional project design using a PIU parallel to the Ministry of Education. The SSRP was not very different, but BEAMS, like GBET, has moved further along the spectrum of giving management responsibility and accountability to the MOE or in the case of GBET, to national stakeholders, such as the NCERD. While looking at the institutional interfaces of such projects leads one to believe that there has been significant progress in capacity development utilizing some of the offshoots of the new aid modalities, in practice there has also been evident resistance to change including from within the Ministry of Education. For instance, there has been no effective take up of the challenge of integrating capacity development across the three planes described as necessary in the literature: the individual, the organization and the institutional environment.

Certainly, all the blame cannot be attributed to the donor agencies, even as frustrated as they may feel being caught in what some describe as a time-warped Guyana, when compared to many other aid-recipient countries which have travelled much further along the spectrum from donor-driven projects to harmonized and aligned support of nationally owned and led education strategic plans. Yet neither can all the blame be cast on the Ministry of Education, though it didn't appear that the donors were seriously challenging the Ministry, perhaps through their own fragmentation and lack of harmonization. As experience elsewhere confirms, aid monies can be used either as a crutch, to support and hold back institutions and processes that need to change, or as a bionic leg, to assist the owner to walk upright unaided and to move far faster.

Against this backdrop, there are a number of lessons to learn:

1. Even if governments are astute at assigning different roles to different aid agencies according to the agencies' predilections, aid agencies should not necessarily allow themselves to be so pigeon-holed. Instead, particular agencies should have it within their remit to challenge the government, often by working with the spectrum of dominant development agencies to ensure that any specific contribution to capacity development they make is consonant with a government-led strategy and therefore is not merely playing the part. Embedding project management within the MOE while not addressing public sector reform, nor the 'fit' of different contributions within a wider framework, is the simple short-term solution, but the Guyana case study confirms that when viewed over the longer term, it is in fact no solution and so should not continue to be tried.
2. To establish such a 'fit', shared contextual analysis is necessary, between both development agencies and key national stakeholders – that is, not only the government. As one respondent put it, "Decentralization is on a 'go-slow'". Understanding why this is so is as important as crafting how to move forward, but the projectization of aid has probably led to a quick start of the latter without sufficient analysis of the context, and the triangulation and policy dialogue

required for working together – with nationals and the international donor community. While we haven't focused on the areas of capacity development not related to educational planning and management, the lessons of the to-date successful teacher upgrading programmes in the hinterlands that emerged from consultation, appropriate contextualization, and individual and institutional approaches, provide a balanced model for the way in which capacity development ought to be considered in any further investments. If a fix-it solution of bringing in a consultant, for instance, to provide a costed model or MIS software hasn't gone through such prior steps, the 'solution' is likely to be as short lived and unsustainable as those attempted in previous projects.

3. Capacity development needs to be a central, not collateral, goal – especially in countries with as much skill leakage as Guyana. Innovative approaches, for instance including trying to tap into the extensive Guyanese diaspora, should certainly be discussed.
4. Consultation is essential, but it is insufficient if it leads only to the creation of wish list plans, only parts of which will be funded as this will inevitably lead the Government to focus on the easy and quick wins, reducing the necessary pressures often required to confront the more intractable problems. Planning and capacity development for planning must be strategic and costed, and involve transparent policy choices, the implications of which can be discussed by all because they can be properly interrogated. Continuing to outsource the 'solutions', even if the basic information is provided by the MOE, is not adequate for planning a national and nationally-owned education system.
5. Finally, whether for choices made by donor agencies or by the Government, there is a need for independent quality assurance to provide some support for and accompaniment of the approaches taken in capacity development. For instance, has sufficient contextual analysis been carried out? Does the programme fit into an overall capacity development plan? Is the modality likely to succeed? Does the approach combine individual capacity development and the necessary organizational and institutional changes required for sustainability? Who is managing and supervising the process? Are those hired for technical assistance of a high calibre and with the appropriate inter-personal skills necessary to be effective? Is the approach good value for money? There are many other considerations which could be raised by an independent quality assurance 'broker', not all of which would seem to have gone into many of the decisions taken – by the MOE or the development agencies alike – with respect to the spectrum of donor contributions to capacity development in educational planning and management in Guyana over the past two decades.

4 Bangladesh

Introduction: background and context

This case study of donor influence on capacity development in educational planning and management in Bangladesh, with a focus on the primary level, encompasses three areas of investigation. First of all, building on an analysis of what capacity development has taken place and what is carried out in educational planning and by whom, we inquired into what capacity analysis as well as evaluations of capacity development have been done. Secondly, we looked into the extent to which public sector reform, and specifically civil service administrative reforms, have impacted upon and influenced the education sector. Finally, we investigated the implications of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness for donor support to capacity development in the education sector.

In Bangladesh today there are two ministries of education – the Ministry of Mass and Primary Education (MOPME) and the Ministry of Education (MOE), the latter dealing with secondary and tertiary education. Given the time available and the focus on Education for All (EFA), it was decided that the case study would concentrate on the MOPME. The extensive involvement of NGOs in Bangladesh is well known, especially the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee's (BRAC) work in education and other areas. BRAC's education programme is supported by multiple development partners separately from the major, 11-donor consortium contributing to the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDPII). Given the complexity of donor involvement in education in Bangladesh, the case study focuses on PEDPII. Thus, because of the separate ministries and the separate funding programmes for formal and non-formal primary education, this case study focuses primarily on donor influence on capacity development in educational planning and management for formal primary education. It is recognized that this narrower focus will nonetheless provide lessons for sector-wide planning, UNESCO's traditional and expected focus.

Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in affording increased access to primary school. The latest figures show a net enrolment rate of 94 per cent (end 2004), up from the figure of 89 per cent in 1999 (UNESCO, 2008). The number of out-of-school children totalled 1.121 million in 1999, 48 per cent of whom were girls. The latest figures show that the number of out-of-school children has been reduced to 399,000 (end 2004 data), only 15 per cent of whom were girls. Despite this progress, however, at the end of 2003 only 55 per cent of pupils were completing primary school (UNESCO, 2008). Improving the quality of education, reducing repetition and drop-out and continuing to improve access to education thus remain key priorities for the reform agenda of the sub-sector.

PEDPII is a curious hybrid programme that arose initially from a donor push towards a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) in the context of the Government of Bangladesh's (GOB) reluctance to move in this direction. It took place at the time when the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was planning its follow-on primary education investment to its Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP). The initial PEDP comprised 27 discrete projects each with its own Project Director and most with parallel implementation units (Jennings, 2007: 1-2). In contrast, PEDPII attempted to coordinate within the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) what had previously been separately managed activities. For our purposes, the objectives of interest in the PEDPII included the following:

- to fully integrate the PEDP activities within the organizational and operational systems of the MOPME and the DPE;
- to undertake institutional reforms in education management, and its effective decentralization and the devolution of decision-making;
- to strengthen and build the capacity of the school management system at all levels;
- to ensure accountability and transparency at all levels.

The PEDPII became operational in July 2004, following three years of planning and discussion. It was intended to run until 2009, though recent discussion focused on its extension to 2010, given its late commencement. As noted above, when the international development agencies initially raised the idea of an education SWAp, the GOB was not keen. The view was expressed that a SWAp would yield too much influence to donors, a common perspective in less aid-dependent countries. In the event, PEDPII brought together 11 development partners, eight of which contribute to a pooled fund managed by the Asian Development Bank, the lead donor. In addition, AusAID and the Government of Japan channel their support via UNICEF, and with JICA, utilize parallel funding (Jennings, 2007: 4) The GOB provides 64 per cent of the \$1.815 billion budget using its own funds.

A mid-term review of PEDPII was carried out in late 2007, having been postponed for six months from the original start date, and at the time the interviews for this study were being conducted the ADB had fielded an evaluation mission, followed by an identification mission for post-PEDPII investment. Thus, the timing of the mission was fortuitously a period of reflection. Indeed, several interviewees commented on the importance of post-PEDPII activities being based on the lessons learned from PEDPII.

Capacity development, analysis, and evaluations

As acknowledged by all, PEDPII is neither a full SWAp, nor even a sub-sector SWAp, though some of the conventional building blocks for moving towards a SWAp are present, such as an organizational and institutional capacity review (Government of Bangladesh, 2005a). However, progress has been slow in seeing through some of the envisaged reforms, especially in relation to the capacity development of the DPE. Some of the organizational reforms have taken place, such as the development of additional divisions in the DPE – for example, the Management Information System (MIS) Division and the Finance and Procurement Division – and some 2000 former project posts have been transferred from the development to the revenue budget, thus allowing the post holders to be employed in the line ministry responsible for PEDPII. Nonetheless, much remains to be done to develop the professional skills required for managing and implementing PEDPII, the capacity of the MOPME having been questioned by all the development partners from before the start of PEDPII.

Perhaps it was telling that in all the interviews conducted – of GOB and development partner officials alike – no one drew our attention to the fact that an organizational and institutional capacity review (OICR) had been conducted in 2005. Was this because the institutional memory was so short and that those in senior management roles had not been party to it? Or was it because the review did not specify and identify how the reforms laid out in the document would be championed? Notwithstanding the progress made on some fronts, such as the recruitment and deployment of primary school teachers, other key areas of reform highlighted in the report would seem to have been lost. Furthermore, despite the focus of this study on capacity development in educational planning and management, when we raised questions of capacity development, the responses consistently related to the in-service training of teachers. Of course, the professional development of the teaching force is a major concern and initiative. However, the absence of any

serious discussion of capacity development to plan and prioritize strategies for primary education was puzzling, especially as the OICR had been very clear about the importance of this area:

This Organizational and Institutional Capacity Review Report is part of the implementation plan for PEDPII. It has been undertaken to determine the capacity of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) and the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) to effectively undertake their future roles and functions in primary education policy-making, planning, management, system support and monitoring (Government of Bangladesh, 2005b: 7).

The reference to educational planning needs to be unpacked. In reality, the DPE in practice and the MOPME more generally, do not engage in *strategic* educational planning, notwithstanding the existence (in name) of a Planning and Development Division with a Director of Planning. In reality, the MOPME is predominantly an implementing body, as is the Ministry of Education for secondary and tertiary education. Some of the constituent tasks are carried out, such as in the development of the MIS unit. However, the use of statistics for strategic planning would seem to be carried out outside of the MOPME, much as the Planning and Development Division has not assumed other key planning roles outlined for it in the OICR, which would have given it an integrative role across the DPE, such as “DPE-wide policy research ... and the coordination of research and planning for decentralization” (Government of Bangladesh, 2005b: 72).

The lack of effective planning within the Ministry itself would seem to be due to a number of factors. First of all, there is the tradition in the country of the Planning Commission undertaking the planning tasks, though the approach to planning is more economic than educational, focusing on the macro fit rather than on the detailed strategies and choices of priorities for the primary education sector. Secondly, there would seem to have been a long tradition of using consultants to undertake key planning functions, with many such tasks carried out extending beyond the management of a sector to more ‘technical’ concerns. This is despite the intended reduction in the use of consultants outlined in the OICR: “The DPE Line Divisions will execute the PEDPII with advice from consultants, who will be gradually phased out as the capacity and confidence of the Government officers develops” (Government of Bangladesh, 2005a: 66). For instance, the development of an EFA plan was carried out by a consultant, the choice of which consultant to contract being made outside the DPE despite being offered to select the consultant themselves. More importantly for our purposes, the planning framework which underpins PEDPII was drawn up and written by consultants and was not an in-house product, despite the consultations that took place. Finally, what most likely engenders an implementation-only rather than a planning-and-implementation perspective within the MOPME is the GOB’s own Project Proforma (PP) which, as its name would suggest, suits project implementation more than planning the constituent elements of a sector-wide or even a sub-sectoral plan. Indeed, as we shall see, the PP has been the subject of much discussion in PEDPII precisely because of its rigidity and the linked difficulty of applying it to a programme-based approach (PBA) which, typically, is more flexible and better able to manage the inter-relationships of constituent elements as the plan is rolled out.

This lack of planning within the sectoral ministries is compounded by the senior management roles within DPE being taken by the administrative rather than the educational cadre of the civil service. Though this is understandable as such postings are relatively short-term (typically three years), and the roles undertaken are based on generalist management training skills rather than specialist educational planning and management skills, the result is that the planning gaps within the Ministry remain. Indeed, though there is a Planning Division within the DPE, it was clear from our discussions that this acts predominantly as an implementation arm for the Ministry’s projects, its job being to construct work plans drawn from the strategic plans that are agreed by GOB and the donor consortium, such as the PEDPII. This makes the lack of capacity development in educational

planning more understandable: in reality, there is little for such capacity development given the current functions of the Division.

The education cadre of the civil service has traditionally provided secondary school, college lecturers and district and other education officers, some of whom have been assigned to central headquarters and thus have staffed the Ministry of Education. However, the separation of education responsibilities between the two main ministries has meant that an education cadre based on secondary and tertiary education has nonetheless staffed the MOPME. A proposal advocating the creation of a 'primary education cadre' has been tabled and awaits Cabinet decision. However, it needs to be acknowledged that even with the existing education cadre, capacity development in educational planning hardly exists. There is only one module out of 24 that is taught at the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), for instance, and the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) focuses predominantly on the development of a primary education teaching force. Yet, the establishment of a primary education cadre would not necessarily address the skills gap in educational planning unless such training became a fundamental part of the overall training curriculum. Indeed, in many other countries in which an education cadre of the appropriate level staffs the ministry, the capacity development requirements to become an education planner remain absent. Such primary education cadres comprise primary school teachers, not necessarily afforded the specialist training required for educational planning and management roles. It did not appear that this issue was understood to be fundamental to MOPME's institutional development.

As has been mentioned, the timing of our mission was propitious. It coincided with a Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (PPTA) mission of the ADB in which the technical assistance (TA) requirements were laid out for preparing the follow-on to PEDPII. In the first phase of such preparatory work, the following reviews would be carried out:

- a rapid assessment and stock taking;
- financial and economic analysis;
- a comprehensive national framework for all school education;
- an integrated national education policy framework;
- EMIS and research capacity for policy development;
- early childhood education;
- assessment and monitoring;
- innovation and improvement grants.

The terms of reference for the consultants carrying out these reviews are quite specific regarding the expected outputs. For instance, the specialist in Educational Planning, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation/Team Leader is required to "develop a simple and coherent policy framework encompassing key priorities for the sub sector". This work is to be carried out by an international consultant and a national consultant over a six-month period. The undertaking on the part of the GOB for the preparatory work is to provide a "qualified counterpart team of at least three specialists (one each for management and financing, pedagogical quality improvement and infrastructure and access)". While there is nothing extraordinary in these terms of reference drawn up for the various consultants, the absence of any reference to the specific capacity development of MOPME staff during this intensive period of preparatory work is noteworthy. ADB's Guidelines for the Use of Consultants and "other arrangements satisfactory to ADB for the selection of domestic consultants" are to be followed. "A TA Steering Committee will be established under the chairmanship of Secretary, MOPME" ... "to provide overall guidance to the TA team" and "a development partner task force will also be formed with a coordinator" among other things to "ensure government leadership and ownership in line with Government's priorities under EFA".

An embedded pattern of working would seem to underlie such preparatory activities in which the main objectives comprise the output documents, despite the significant opportunity for capacity development that this work would clearly present, and in just those areas in which capacity would appear to be lacking within the MOPME. That this is the case would seem to be accepted by the development partners and GOB alike. Of the three specialists on the counterpart team, for instance, an education planner is not indicated, and it would appear that the national consultants rather than the MOPME would be the ones to gain primarily from working with the international consultants. The responsibility of the development partner task force to “ensure government leadership and ownership” notwithstanding, the earnestness and integrity of such a commitment would thus appear to be challenging, especially if the main planning and policy documents, in practice, are the work of consultants, without skilled GOB counterparts. There is a long history, in many different countries, of policy simulation models for instance being put before government policy-making bodies without the capabilities to interpret the prospective scenarios, no less propose alternative ones. Lack of educational planning capacity is not merely a ‘technical’ problem. Its substitution by external ‘experts’ can also colour the nature of the possible dialogue – both in central institutions but also, importantly, in decentralized bodies which will be affected by the policies and plans selected.

If the introduction of a primary education cadre included provision for the senior management posts becoming promotion posts within the cadre, rather than, as at present, secondment posts from the administrative cadre, then the institutional development problems that have been strained by such short-term positions could begin to be addressed and capacity development in educational planning and management would have a clear and important role. Most capacity development that DPE staff have undergone has been either general and not sector-specific, such as that provided by the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) foundation course, or not tailored to their particular needs, such as that provided by the Bangladesh Institute of Administrative Management (BIAM) course, on which some DPE staff have been sent, and is thus difficult to apply (meeting with MOPME Secretary). According to the Secretary of MOPME, there are two current challenges: (1) to identifying their training needs correctly; (2) applying the knowledge, with the DPE ‘guessing’ at present, with respect to the first challenge, and a mismatch with respect to the second (meeting with MOPME Secretary). The OICR had pointed out: “As part of a future HRD strategy it will be necessary for the MOPME and the DPE to regularly assess the training needs for their officers and employees and to commission training programmes, with the assistance of the training institutions that meet the developing needs and changing requirements for managing a modern primary education sector” (Government of Bangladesh, 2005b: 11).

Other examples of capacity development were raised in our discussions with the Director General and senior management of the DPE. These included the 21-day study tours on decentralization, which the different directors within the DPE were being sent on, in batches, to Australia and Malaysia. It was explained that these study tours were among the first capacity development initiatives within PEDPII to have started for MOPME staff, despite the programme having run for some four years. In addition, staff in the new Finance and Procurement section within the MOPME had undergone in-house orientation or training by the Ministry of Finance, which included the preparation of the Medium-Term Budget Framework (MTBF). Clearly, MTBFs are important, as was emphasized, for playing out the budgetary implications of the macro plan. However, our interviews suggested that professional educational concerns were not brought into such preparation, which focused on spelling out the financial implications of the ‘given’ macro plan for formal primary education and its implementation. As noted in the OICR,

There is a need within the DPE for regular structured discussions across the Line Divisions on a range of PEDPII issues to develop a common vision. If a Line Division designs and undertakes interventions in isolation, even if those interventions seem to be clearly within its area of work, there is a risk that the approach taken may have implications elsewhere in the system” (Government of Bangladesh, 2005b: 60).

Repeatedly, when different interviewees were questioned about who had prepared the macro plan, it was clear that it had been written by consultants at the behest of the donor consortium, and while given GOB blessing, it was not a GOB construct.

Interestingly, the bottom-up planning which is occurring at the *upazilla* and school levels in the form of the *Upazilla* Primary Education Plans (UPEPs) and the School Level Improvement Plans (SLIPs) doesn't seem to have much of a link with the macro plan, nor, indeed, with discussion of how these initiatives might contribute to a renewed post-PEDPII macro plan. This is notwithstanding the OICR having indicated that the Planning and Development Division would be responsible for the coordination of UPEPs and SLIPs (Government of Bangladesh, 2005b: 72). Unfortunately, we were unable in the time available to visit any *upazillas* to investigate these issues further, from their perspective.

Other areas of capacity development related to educational planning that have been undertaken include the design and skills development of a monitoring and evaluation unit in the MOPME, an initiative assisted by two Sida consultants training the staff that had been contracted. Compared to the Ministry of Education, the consolidation of monitoring and evaluation work within a single unit is a promising development, as in discussions with the Secretary of the Ministry of Education, it emerged that two monitoring and evaluation units existed side by side within that ministry, one for the ADB project, and the other for the World Bank project. Thus, PEDPII has witnessed some important advances in shifting the approach to skills development away from its exclusive link to individual projects.

The view expressed by DPE was that they wanted to take increasing responsibility for capacity development. To illustrate this, the example was given of the progression of responsibility from the first stage, when certain work would be done by an international consultant, to the second stage, carried out by GOB staff with the help of local consultants if necessary, and finally to the third stage, where work would be done by GOB staff and possibly a local consultant, requiring only an overview by an international consultant. For instance, procurement training had been carried out by the World Bank; master trainers were then produced to carry on with the work.

The MOPME Advisor commented on the lack of coordination and management of whatever training was given; others emphasized that despite the requirement of officers being bonded to serve a length of time following overseas studies, in practice this did not happen. Indeed, the cadre system in operation whereby the top posts are reserved for secondments by the administrative cadre, and the education cadre being for post-primary education positions, has meant that there has been little systemic incentive to marry sectoral qualifications with posts. This is in spite of the recommendation of the HRDM Strategy that “the HRD Plan should address the post training utilization of the trained manpower. Proper career plans should be developed to make best use of the specialized and technical knowledge of the trained officers. The MOPME as well as the DPE should monitor post-training utilization of the officers to ensure that the officers are posted to appropriate positions” (Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDPII), 2005: 13). Add to this the lack of any substantive training in educational planning, and the continuing gaps in relation to capacity development in this area are more easily understood. Indeed, this was illustrated by tracing the career paths of the IIEP Advanced Training Programme (ATP) alumnae.

Of the ten people we met from ATP programmes from 1985/1986 through 2002/2003, although only one was working outside the education sector (having come from the administrative cadre rather than the education cadre and promoted into a post in another ministry), none of the others could be said to have been deployed as educational planners *per se* despite their involvement in a variety of different capacities within the sector. Relatedly, the Mid-Term Review had not evaluated the effectiveness or quality of any training that had been carried out, nor had a training needs analysis been conducted.

The tradition of outsourcing professionals to undertake some of the technical jobs that need to be done by the MOPME continues for the reason that, as already noted, this is ‘the way the system works’. The problem is systemic: several of our respondents noted how difficult it would be for any one Director-General, Secretary or indeed Advisor to change the way things were done in any directorate, section or ministry, specifically because of the interconnectedness of the cadre, professional development and the different ministries, including the Ministry of Establishment, the Ministry of Law, the Ministry of Finance, the Planning Commission and, of course, the Public Service Commission. We will return to these issues in *Section 3*, which discusses the wider public service reform efforts and their impact on the MOPME.

Similarly, the reliance on TA as the modality of capacity development, notwithstanding the MOPME’s interest in taking more control, continues to be the norm and is accepted with little reflection on its long-term and systemic impact. What is more, the reason for this extends beyond the pressures of donor-recipient relations. Thus, in our discussions, examples were given of the continued reliance on particular domestic institutions, the interaction of which was criticized for its limited consultation with the ministries being assisted in much the same way as plans are merely ‘implemented’. For instance, the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) was involved in producing projections for the MOPME without consultation. More fundamentally, we learned that the BPATC foundation course used for the administrative cadre is the same as that used in the sectoral cadres, such as the education cadre, notwithstanding its generalist nature: the one-month planning and development course offered at NAEM, consisting more of an orientation to economic planning and what a national plan is, than on creating awareness of and imparting skills on how to construct an educational plan. Even the practical assignments cater more to the needs of teachers or lecturers than education administrators, for example, in preparing a SLIP. Indeed, we were told that the ADB had funded some 30 people on a strategic planning course at AIT, Bangkok, as part of an earlier project, as well as having created 25 posts at NAEM. However, even in such instances, when promotions are due several of those trained have subsequently gone elsewhere.

It is important to place these comments in context. A number of people we spoke to appreciated the knowledge sharing that resulted from working with foreign consultants. However, comments such as “the system frustrates capacity development” or that “TA doesn’t get you capacity development” highlight the long-term and systemic problems which the short-term and individual benefits eclipse. On the development partner side, there was plenty of discussion of plans, but little about the transfer of skills, partly due to there not being government staff in place or the wrong people in place or the wrong modalities used. Indeed, it was said that while the need for educational planning capacity was recognized at the *upazilla* level, such a need at the MOPME has yet to be recognized. If, for instance, the role of the Planning Director was to do more than merely implement plans, the *modus vivendi* surrounding the lack of institutional capacity development in educational planning at the MOPME would, perhaps, be better understood.

The manner in which development agencies contract technical assistance was cited as a further, specific constraint to capacity development. The procedures of many are cumbersome and lengthy,

as well as being removed from influence by recipient ministries. Of course, this is a double-edged sword as on the one hand, procedures designed for transparency and accountability (to the development agency) may not best serve the needs of the recipient ministry. And on the other hand, leaving them open to influence by the recipient ministry might unduly colour the selection process. While we did not review individual agencies' procedures, the fact that this point was raised would lead one to believe that especially in light of the Paris Declaration commitments to recipient ownership and coordination, it might be salutary to review both individual agencies' procedures as well as their harmonisation in-country. Relatedly, we were told that, typically, when TA is brought in by an agency the terms of reference for the consultants are not reviewed by the donor consortium, which many observers would view as contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of Paris.

In 2007, a consultancy was funded by PEDPII for a Human Resources Development/Management Plan (HRDMP). This drew on the OICR as well as the Human Resources Development and Management Strategy, which was written at the same time. Whereas the OICR was a comprehensive, professional document, the HRDMP was essentially an action plan, its main drawback being it not having been linked to the main public sector reforms under discussion in Bangladesh. A further weakness was the lack of any clear and identified national leadership to champion the proposals contained in the document – which could probably also be applied to the OICR. Equally, it lacked some understanding and integration not only with plans for the Ministry of Education, but with civil service administrative reforms in general. Although the HRDMP specifies certain professional development needs of different levels of education officers in the system, no capacity development in educational planning is foreseen. As the proposal of a primary education cadre does not have Cabinet acceptance or approval, or the serious involvement of senior management, it is unclear how the HRDMP could be used effectively.

Perhaps the root cause of the problem was that the production of the HRDMP had been a rushed job, prepared by a consultant over a very short period, the rationale being its necessary completion in order to access funding for courses abroad. PEDPII includes 21 days' training for 100 officers "on various topics, including monitoring and evaluation, organizational development, decentralization, and school management and administration". Many will have seen these 21 days of training as a 'perk', and only loosely linked to an assessment of the training needs of the officers, as set out in the OICR (Government of Bangladesh, 2005b: 11). Interestingly, in discussions concerning the Japanese experience with capacity development in Bangladesh, and specifically with NAPE, it was reported that initially NAPE faculty members had expected that consultants would do the jobs identified – and that faculty members would not have to work with JICA. We were told that the faculty members had viewed such an approach adversely, because they had expected training abroad and not in situ.

The PEDPII Mid-term Review Aide-Memoire highlights four issues of relevance to our discussion:

- developing the capacity of DPE to manage and implement the programme effectively;
- strengthening the utilization and management of TA;
- expediting the provision of data to demonstrate outcomes according to KPIs;
- strengthening the capacity of EMIS and M&E to monitor and systematically measure progress against the targets.

All four issues relate to forms of institutional development of the MOPME and the DPE specifically – the third and fourth areas relating to the necessary data required for planning, though falling short of any indication that redesign work and thus, follow-on work might embrace educational planning tasks per se.

As can be seen from the earlier discussion, a pattern of working which involves consultants carrying out technical jobs for the DPE then to manage would seem to be the modus vivendi of the MOPME. Thus, capacity development in educational planning could be seen as a moot area. Indeed, the terms of reference already drawn up for the TA to be used for preparing the follow-on to PEDPII take on the necessary tasks.

Public sector reform and its impact on the primary education sector

Wider issues of public sector reform are clearly related to the effectiveness of the MOPME in implementing PEDPII. A key strength of the consultant's efforts in relation to developing a Human Resources Development/Management Plan was the way in which attention was drawn to some of the major systemic issues. Indeed, the perspective presented has been influential in the earlier discussion in this paper of why so little attention has been paid to capacity development in educational planning and management. There is clearly a lack of fit in the perspectives of development agencies and the GOB on the main focus of capacity development, with management and lack of planning being emphasized by the GOB. Yet, much of the commitment to address the EFA challenges rests on the ability of the plan to meet the identified targets, despite the fact that the plan seems to be a donor construct given the GOB's blessing. This raises crucial questions of alignment.

Several public sector reform attempts supported by multiple development agencies in Bangladesh have been embarked upon. However, as was pointed out in a recent speech by the ADB country director at the BPATC, they have all fallen short of expectations:

The lack of progress in administrative governance is made more acute by the failure of successive governments to pursue the reform agenda of the public sector (Hua Du, 2007).

Likewise, while the World Bank has pointed to some of the reforms that have been implemented, it, too, remains critical of the overall progress made:

They include improvement of a promotion policy for Class I officers, with emphasis on merit; an improved training policy for Government employees; and creation of a Career Planning and Training Wing in the Ministry of Establishment. Nonetheless, the civil service remains relatively ineffective and unaccountable, and lacks proper motivation due to a weak incentive system. The highly centralized political and administrative system weakens the government's capacity to deliver and monitor services (World Bank, n.d.).

The constraints in the public sector in Bangladesh are not new. They have been outlined in documents dating back several decades, a recent synopsis by the ADB (2007a) outlining the following factors:

- a top-down culture that leaves little space for mid-level officials to exercise independent authority;
- inadequate compensation of public officials;
- the absence of a system of rewards and penalties;
- the lack of professional development training and other incentives to improve performance and accountability;
- the lack of systematic and merit-based policies for recruitment;
- inadequate safeguards for actions taken in good faith;
- frequent reassignments often driven by political and other considerations;
- pressures faced by reform-minded officials in creating space for change in government agencies;
- a lack of uniform public demand for reforms.

Against this backdrop, one can see the challenges facing the MOPME within its proper wider perspective: it is the public service as a whole, and not merely this particular ministry, which is constrained. This makes more understandable the accepted *modus vivendi* even by those would-be reformers, because, as already discussed, it is the system as a whole that requires reform.

Moving to education in particular, one of the main reasons the idea of a primary education cadre has found favour is that it would enable promotions within the cadre to the managerial posts from the sub-district upwards. These have been the preserve of the administrative and education cadre, which employs mainly staff with secondary education experience. It would also create career paths for teachers. Under PEDPII, one of the great accomplishments has been changing and making transparent teacher recruitment and deployment. The establishment of a primary education cadre is seen as essential for greater professionalism, staff morale and commitment. Of course, an alternative to establishing a primary education cadre would be to bifurcate the existing education cadre to better accommodate the primary sub-sector. Adapting the existing education cadre might make more sense, especially in the context of the proposed changes to the foundation and other training courses for the administrative and other cadres.

A 2003 report by the World Bank made further criticism of development partners' approaches to the problems.

The efforts made by the donors to support institutional reform, principally through technical assistance both as self-standing projects and as components of other projects, have had limited success in strengthening individual institutions. But, in the absence of a strong drive for reform from the government leadership, progress has been slow (World Bank, 2003: vi).

While PEDPII has brought together under its umbrella what would have been several separate education projects, it has not integrated the public sector reforms indicated for the MOPME with the wider work in this area. Discussion of recruitment and promotion policies, career development, performance appraisal and professional development are all core issues of civil service administrative reform. Yet, as has been pointed out, the HRDMP dealt with such issues as if the MOPME stood alone in tackling them.

It was also surprising to learn how most development partners' education advisors were only moderately aware of – and uninvolved, even – in their own agencies' support for public sector reform in Bangladesh, given its implications for the MOPME and in particular, the establishment of a primary education cadre. Clearly, the parallel and largely self-contained units one typically finds in the civil service across different ministries are also mirrored within the development agencies, where the advantages of sectoral specializations tend to isolate these specialists from issues outside their immediate day-to-day and short-term wider concerns. Such a lack of joined-up approaches is often compounded by inadequate coordination across development agencies in their support of public sector reform efforts. In the case of Bangladesh, whereas different agencies often share common diagnoses of the problems and have divided up their particular involvement, it appears that there has been a slowdown in such reforms because of the nature and priorities of the present caretaker government.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) began a Civil Service Change Management Programme in January 2008. This essentially adopts an umbrella approach, attempting to attract development agency support for its different elements. These include the following areas:

- managing change in the civil service;
- motivating and empowering civil servants through modernizing human resources management systems;

- enabling, managing and monitoring organizational performance;
- transformation and strategic repositioning of PSC and change management;
- promoting human resources development and transforming civil service training institutions;
- organizational development and capacity strengthening of MoE and HRM units in pilot ministries.

As outlined in the UNDP programme, what is done in the central institutions such as the Ministry of Establishment, the Public Service Commission and the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, will clearly influence what occurs in the MOPME and the Ministry of Education, though it may take a considerable time before the reforms are realized. Besides the overriding change-management approach that is being introduced – as opposed to the traditional, delimited, hierarchical bureaucracy which discourages people from deviating from long-established norms – the transformation of the civil service training institutions, and specifically the generalist orientation of the BPATC foundation course, has huge ramifications for what is offered at NAEM and NAPE. Needs-based specialist training that could fit into pathways of career development, for instance, could be provided, opening the door perhaps to forms of capacity development in educational planning and management which go well beyond the limited orientation to national planning currently offered. Indeed, the formulation mission report for the UNDP programme gives a specific example of possible twinning between, for instance, NAEM and NAPE with India's National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the India Institute of Planning and Management (IIPM) (UNDP, 2007: 37).

The UNDP is trying to attract those agencies currently supporting elements of public sector reform to adopt and provide assistance to some of the broader components outlined above. Much is already being implemented, especially by particular agencies. Those development agencies currently involved in different public sector reform efforts include the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, the World Bank, the European Union and the Asian Development Bank. Of particular note are the following: DFID and the Netherlands Embassy are together providing support to public financial management reform; Danida is supporting the independence of the judiciary from the executive branch; the ADB is supporting the strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Commission; DFID is offering high-level management training of civil servants with the aim of creating a critical mass of reform-minded civil servants; the Netherlands is supporting a Master's degree course in Governance and Development at the Institute for Governance Studies (IGS), BRAC University (we were told the IGS course is intended to train public sector leaders in a different way from government institutions such as BPATC, to involve them with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and to change their mindsets); the European Union (EU), DFID, the World Bank, the Netherlands and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) together are supporting a financial management reform programme to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the allocation of resources and to achieve more equitable and improved public service delivery; and the World Bank is supporting the improved performance of the public procurement system, focusing on the key sectoral ministries and implementing agencies. In addition, several development partners are supporting local governance reforms and the involvement of civil society.

A recent World Bank report (2008) on public sector reform by its Independent Evaluation Group outlined several reasons why the bulk of World Bank civil service administrative reforms have failed. One of the most telling causes highlighted in the report was the lack of political commitment to reform as well as discontinuities in implementation, including changes in political leadership and the constraints imposed by public sector trades unions. However, the report was also quite frank about the paucity of political analysis, which is seen as crucial to contextualize any approaches to

public sector reform and assess their likely success. If one adds to this paucity of political analysis the mobility of development agency staff and typically, the rather poor institutional memories passed on, the challenge of donor support for public sector reform becomes that much greater.

Many lessons can be learned, however, from the positive experiences noted in the report, some of the key factors being more realistic expectations on the part of the donor community, the necessary patience required for sustainable capacity development, and donor coordination. All of these factors are relevant in the case of Bangladesh. Indeed, the donor community's ongoing unrealistic expectations of the MOPME's capacity to manage and implement PEDPII were continually mentioned in our discussions with the GOB and development partners alike. And the lack of a champion for the organizational reform of the MOPME has already been noted, as well as the current slow pace of all reforms due to the caretaker government.

Neither has there been much demand for capacity development beyond the foreign courses on offer, which are attractive in part for the other incentives they provide. And as was noted at the start of this paper, neither have there been any serious evaluations conducted of the capacity development initiatives that have been tried – whether by donors or the GOB. (We were told, for instance, that participants on NAEM courses fill out evaluation forms but that there is no coordinating body to evaluate such courses and the institutions that provide them. The Ministry of Education monitors NAEM and sends reports to the Secretary, but the MOPME is not involved.) These are all factors raised in current proposals for public sector reform. Whether they will be acted upon remains to be seen.

So we return to the list of issues that, while on the agenda of the MOPME's reform, actually hark back to wider issues of public sector reform in general. Yet the joined-up thinking needed to tackle them comprehensively, both from the GOB and on the donors' side, would seem to be missing. In order to generate more bottom-up voice in service delivery – and contingent upon the service delivery, the feedback and evaluations of the public being served – another idea on current agendas for such reform includes a Permanent Education Commission. This would involve CSOs and other recipient organizations more directly in the reform efforts and their evaluation.

One further issue to which we need to return in the context of public sector reform is the GOB's own project pro forma (PP), which was ill suited to a programme-based approach in which some flexibility both in coverage and focus could otherwise have been afforded across different programme objectives. The PP, too, is part of 'the way things are done' and requires further change from that already brought about (from only one change to two being permitted in its lifetime). Moving from a project pro forma that suits a project and not a programme-based approach constitutes the same challenge that development agencies have had to face in moving towards SWAs and general budget support, given their inheritance of sector-specific staff with lifetimes of history working on projects alone. Clearly, this area – just like the many areas already raised that require a changed mindset among the staff – requires good leadership to overcome the resistance of those reluctant to learn and practice new approaches, or who are fearful of moving into new areas and of being given sufficient training to develop the new skills needed.

The implications of the Paris Declaration for donor support to capacity development in educational planning and management

The commitments made by industrialized and many developing countries in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness acknowledged many of the changed practices in donor-recipient country relations that had been experimented with over the previous decade. Thus, programme-based approaches

such as PEDPII carried with them certain expectations of behaviour on both sides, encompassing the harmonization of development partners in the alignment of their support with national or sectoral development plans and policies, and the movement toward government-led coordination of those programmes and supporting donors. Bangladesh, a signatory of the Paris Declaration, has been party to these commitments, as have the development partners supporting PEDPII.

As noted above, PEDPII has rightly been portrayed not as a sub-sector-wide approach (SWAp) but as an improved, programme-based approach, encompassing the bulk of donors to the formal primary education system. A key weakness, as also noted, is that it does not even encompass the whole of the sub-sector of primary education, there being a separate programme for non-formal education. Additionally, it includes only four of the ten types of primary schools in Bangladesh – excluding, for instance, the *madrassahs*, among others. Though it would be unfair and inappropriate to hold up PEDPII against some pure ‘SWAp’ template – as it is widely agreed that PEDPII is not a SWAp – this third part of our case study does discuss the extent to which in PEDPII one finds the kind of approach (by GOB and donors alike) that is consonant with the Paris commitments.

A recent Bangladesh case study evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration gives a quite critical assessment. The points that we have highlighted here, in sum, are as follows: First of all, capacity development, in terms of the necessary public sector reform, is problematic. At present, there is little incentive to invest in capacities in senior management in ministries such as the MOPME in which senior management, being part of the administrative cadre and therefore generalists, can be rotated elsewhere. At the same time, curiously, educational planning is not seen as a priority area for capacity development because the role of planning is done elsewhere by the Planning Commission and by consultants. Just the same, planning at the decentralized levels is being seen as important, namely, *upazilla* and school improvement plans, but these are not feeding into macro plans. Furthermore, capacity development of the MIS Unit at the MOPME is taking place, though with contracted-in staff. Despite provision for monitoring and evaluation, the policy and plan formulation loop is not closed. Similarly, despite orientation and training in the construction of the sectoral MTBF and its use, it would also appear that neither does this feed the strategic planning normally foreseen by the introduction of medium-term budgetary frameworks. Add to this the ad hoc and projectized nature of many of the consultancies brought into PEDPII, and we can see that a more holistic conceptualization of the capacity development needs – at least of central MOPME staff – is essential. In addition, it might be an idea to examine the procedures for recruiting consultants used by the different agencies contributing to PEDPII and the extent to which these procedures, including the process of designing and developing the terms of reference for consultants, are consonant with the Paris Declaration commitments.

Successive documents including the case study evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration in Bangladesh highlight the lack of capacity within the Ministry to implement and manage PEDPII. Yet, against the backdrop of the Paris Declaration and with development partners now poised to move towards renewed funding for the follow-on to PEDPII, we need to ask where the needs assessment of capacity development requirements is, where the Government’s leadership on this issue is, and what ownership and alignment mean in such a context. To what extent are PEDPII donors assisting the capacity development of the MOPME to lead and coordinate the process?

Notwithstanding the progress that has clearly been made in consolidating individual education projects, carrying out joint reviews and increasing the use of reformed GOB procurement mechanisms, much still remains to be done in putting coordination, management and planning in the hands of the GOB, rather than the donors. As one donor representative put it, “GOB is in the driver’s seat but we the donors tell them which direction to go. I do not see any projects planned by

the Government. Plans are drawn by the TA teams. They are then sent to the Planning Commission by the DPE". Or, as another donor representative put it, "PEDII has not been as big a step forward as we had hoped, for donor harmonization".

The other challenges identified for PEDPII in the case study evaluation of Paris include the following: "(i) harmonization of different types of financing and streamlining complicated fund management system; (ii) further alignment to GOB's procurement system; and (iii) capacity development to institutionalize the achievements of PEDPII" (ADB OED, 2008: xi).

A code of conduct for the PEDPII Consortium was drawn up to ensure 'good behaviour'. This is a welcome first step, but the crucial test of a code of conduct is whether signatories feel obliged to marry practice with principle, especially when the principles diverge (sharply) from their own ways of working. The PEDPII Code of Conduct is also weak in that it fails to cover areas and issues often included in other such codes of conduct among development partners. For instance, there is no mention of common regulation of incentives or top-ups paid to GOB staff, nor of any sanction for attracting trained GOB staff to posts in individual bilateral or multilateral development agencies. It is clear not only that such practices occur but that there appears to be little mutual (among development agency) accountability for drawing attention to and addressing such practices.

The continued use of donors' procurement systems remains a central issue in Bangladesh. One of the practical implications of this was cited in the case of the use of World Bank monies for the paper, printing and distribution costs of textbooks. Despite the reform of the GOB procurement system, World Bank procurement rules had to be followed which required international tenders. The procedure took so long that the GOB gave up in the end, as the textbooks would not have been ready in time for the academic year.

While one systemic reason why more hasn't been done on capacity development in the education sector can be traced to historical GOB practices, another can be traced to the donor community and particularly to the incentives structure for donor representatives acting in-country. Development partner officials tend to be judged predominantly in relation to outputs and joint recognized outcomes. They tend not to include assessment against long-term, sustainable, institutional capacity development. Indeed, notwithstanding GOB's request for a year's extension to PEDPII because of its slow start and its wish to draw lessons from PEDPII after a lengthier period of implementation, the ADB preparatory mission for the follow-on to PEDPII went ahead, and the impression of several respondents was that it was being rushed.

Add to this that PEDPII does not even embrace the whole of the primary sub-sector, no less the whole education sector, and the judgement of PEDPII against the Paris Declaration is that much more could be done to align with GOB policy and give it the coordination and management control of aid contributions to the education sector as a whole. Because the GOB suffers from systemic capacity gaps and weaknesses, development partners respond by providing predominantly still fragmented sub-sectoral support. Prior to Paris, such a response was perhaps more understandable. But in the post-Paris era, it is not enough for development partners to argue that delivering 'their' projects should continue to take priority over helping to 'deliver' improved capacity development. What is also absent is a vision for the sector that raises the capacity of GOB ministries to formulate, monitor and evaluate a sectoral plan and coordinate and manage aid contributions to it. As one member of the DPE put it, "The message for donors is that the GOB wants not just to spend money, but to use it." It needs to be supported in making good use of funds according to the strategic plans it is able to construct. The case study evaluation of the Paris Declaration's implementation in Bangladesh noted that "GOB respondents (had) further expressed their belief that the mindset of some donors

has yet to match the spirit of the Paris Declaration (PD) for promoting GOB's leadership in aid management and coordination" (ADB OED, 2008: 8).

Conclusion

A synthesis of findings

Three areas have been investigated in this case study of capacity development in educational planning and management in Bangladesh: the capacity development itself, the effect of wider public sector reforms on the MOPME, and the implications of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness for the support given to the primary education sub-sector. Despite the reification of the educational plan following Dakar – donors stating that no country with its own plan to reach the EFA targets would be denied funding – curiously, there is little educational planning being done by staff within the Bangladesh ministry responsible for primary education, the MOPME. Like its sister ministry, the Ministry of Education, it is an implementing ministry following strategic plans constructed by others, including teams of national and international consultants, and in alignment with the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

Educational planning is not part of the foundation training of those either in the administrative or current education cadre, and the majority of those trained in educational planning are not asked to use their skills on the job in the positions they have been assigned. While much capacity development has undoubtedly taken place in PEDPII, this has tended not to involve central ministry staff, nor to encompass specific educational planning requirements. Even when relevant training is offered, such as of the MIS Unit, it is not clearly linked to an educational policy and planning cycle. The main task of the Planning and Development Division is to construct annual work plans, the strategic decisions having been investigated and taken by others. Job descriptions and post qualifications are not necessarily linked, the notion of on-the-job training trumping most other modalities though there are not always local counterparts for the monies expended in such ways.

However, our discussions also provided different and certainly less pessimistic ways of analysing Bangladesh's capacity development weaknesses. One was to start by recognizing and acknowledging that educational planning is a technical task which can be carried out on contract, rather than within government departments, in effect accepting rather than criticizing the current situation. Another was to focus more explicitly on the important linkage between educational planning as a technical and a political exercise, and work from current socio-political realities rather than from some ideal 'norm' divorced from the concrete setting within which decisions are made and which clearly influence them profoundly. After all, where one situates a school, no less which teachers are appointed to that school, is highly politically contested in any country, even if an educational plan has been written in-house by ministry staff.

In a country with as vibrant a civil society as Bangladesh, if the MOPME is reluctant to take on the educational planning tasks and they continue to be carried out by consultants, perhaps the way forward is the proposal made for a National Education Commission in order to ensure appropriate appraisal of any educational plans so written. Fleshing out this proposal would be necessary, detailing its remit, the appointment of commissioners, and how civil society would influence its decisions and decision-making authority. A National Education Commission would be consonant with the efforts already being made to develop *Upazilla* and School Level Improvement Plans, but only if these were feeding upwards into a macro education plan, which does not seem to be the case at present. As has been mentioned, it appears that there is little connection between top-down and bottom-up planning. Furthermore, to the extent that strategic choices, in effect, are

being made by development partners offering the funding, there could be some teeth put into an Education Commission that could vet these different proposals. The difficulty is that without the developed capacities to weigh the educational policies with price tags on them, one cannot debate the feasibility of different, still largely theoretical choices. For instance, for a number of years there has been toleration of the separation of planning and finance for formal and non-formal education. The Bureau of Non-Formal Education, despite being part of the MOPME, relies on separate funding streams and development partner funding. The rationale for such a separation is tenuous, given the flow of students from non-formal to formal primary schools and the high drop-out rates from the formal sector, which the non-formal sector mops up to some extent. How will the debate between these two sub-sectors unfold? Wish lists regarding funding requirements need to be tied down to costs and feasibilities, such as the policy debates surrounding policy simulation models. Medium-term budgeting frameworks are ideal tools for continuing the debates from one year to the next, but what is required are policy evaluations which feed into the discussions. These have not been carried out, nor has there been the vibrant participatory debate that would need to surround such discussions.

Within the MOPME and the PEDPII donor consortium, there is still very little substantive discussion of the implications and necessary tailoring to primary education of public sector reforms which, as we have discovered, are also supported by many of the same development partners supporting PEDPII. Instead, what has been produced is a stand-alone document that doesn't acknowledge overarching work in this area and that does not cater to specific, central MOPME professional development. No evaluations of the capacity development that has taken place have been carried out – whether in the BPATC, NAEM or NAPE – or of the TA provided by development partners or their study tours. Indeed, in planning for the follow-on to PEDPII, the terms of reference for the consultancies have all been written by consultants, without any necessary institutional development envisaged.

Another key issue concerns the lack of clear incentives for observing in practice the commitments made in the Paris Declaration. For their part, development partners, it would seem, are only marginally moving away from the project approach, certainly when it comes to advances in terms of capacity development – with the possible exception of the welcome focus on the MIS unit, given the contrast with project-based monitoring and evaluation units. They would probably be more inclined to do so if the GOB made more noise about the current situation and challenged them to change their old ways and introduce practices that resonate more with the spirit of Paris.

Recommendations

Regardless of what decision is taken concerning the details of the development of educational planning capacities, there first needs to be some joined-up work and thinking on the part of the GOB and the donor consortium alike: unless both development partners and the GOB are willing to champion the cause of capacity development and do things differently, then capacity development will continue to be a distant dream. Relatedly, advances within the education sector will not occur unless they form part of a wider approach to public sector reform.

The joined-up thinking and action that is required of the donors relates to their country strategies on the one hand and their willingness to tackle *together* many of the issues raised in different sectors, such as primary, secondary and tertiary education, and formal and non-formal education. But these, in turn, also need to be located within the framework of an overall, cross-donor approach to public sector reform within which an overall approach to capacity development is not merely drawn up but fleshed out into operational plans with clear milestones and ongoing assessments. Within this framework, capacity development needs to be perceived not as individual and discrete

output-oriented TA activities, but approached by focusing on wider issues of what skills can be imparted, what institutional development can be sustained, and so on. It should not be acceptable that development partners attach their priorities to different sub-sectors and leave the unsupported sub-sectors to the Government. Alignment should mean that there is a holistic, national plan for education, which development partners can choose to support, aimed at ensuring national coordination and management and not that of donors. Partners should be judged by the type of support they give and its success in achieving results, and not in distracting the planning process to their aims.

It is hoped that this case study has produced some timely ideas that may be discussed in fora on assistance to capacity development in Bangladesh. Some of the specific areas for further consideration are the subject of these final paragraphs.

Moving to PEDPII from the more fragmented, individual projects that predated it may seem like a step forward but in many other respects, it is not. This is because there remains too much toleration of sub-sub-sectoral planning which, though important, is an inadequate way forward for trying to enhance and improve an education system in today's world. What is more, tackling EFA is not an issue merely for the formal primary education sub-sector. Acquiescence in such a differently fragmented approach is like plugging a hole in a dyke – as has been seen elsewhere, where sub-sectoral SWAps dealing only with primary or basic education is concerned. When the number of pupils increases, the overflow into the rest of the system has to be tackled.

The issue of education quality is the main focus of the MOPME today. What is taught and how teachers are taught, and the respect given to them explicitly and implicitly in the communities they serve, is part and parcel of their job commitment. The further joined-up thinking of the GOB that is necessary is embracing the politics of educational planning: joining the bottom-up planning that is being supported with the still absent centralized planning that specifies the funding available and the success – in real measured results – of the strategies selected, so that future plans can be constructed which have greater potential for reaching their targets.

The systemic constraints on educational planning and management need to be addressed in a holistic manner, incorporating the education sector as a whole, and the implications of wider public sector reform for the education sector. Whether a primary education cadre is developed or whether a bifurcated education cadre is constituted, which incorporates the needs of the primary sub-sector, is secondary to such holistic planning. Whether either alternative provides an 'answer' will depend on the foundation training, the continuing professional development of the cadre and a sector-wide capacity development plan for the cadre that is rooted in wider public sector reform. This should respond to the particular needs of the sector as a whole as well as the different levels and types of education services provided in Bangladesh. That is not the case today, when neither needs analyses nor evaluations of capacity development are carried out effectively. Moving in the direction of holistic planning requires a move away from ad hoc acceptance of capacity development opportunities that may or may not be appropriate to the requirements of the sector.

Such ideas are all well and good, but without government vision and leadership, the development community will continue to 'call the shots', with individual development partners likely to continue selecting those areas they judge they are able to help and support, rather than – as envisaged in the Paris Declaration – the government coordinating and managing their support. This calls for some reticence on the part of the donor community, or in the absence of government leadership, support for those would-be champions of such a vision. This is not, therefore, a plea for more fragmentation but rather, one of incorporation of those leaders, even if only leaders in the making.

Joined-up development partner approaches are also required to match the holistic planning envisaged on the part of the GOB. Perhaps it cannot be expected that a minister of education could have this overview, but there needs to be space somewhere – both in the GOB and in the development agencies themselves – for the airing of strategies and approaches which incorporate overlapping sectoral work. A separate island of support to public sector reform, which the education advisors or the education sector do not acknowledge, is surely not the way to go.

The notion of continuing with contracted, so-called ‘technical’ work raises the enormous problems of institutional memory, negotiation and ownership, all of which would need to be addressed if a decision were taken that further professional capacities would not be developed to better plan and manage the education sector from within the MOPME. The same would go for the Ministry of Education.

Going beyond the harmonization within development agencies of the different support given to individual sectors is, of course, the issue of harmonization among agencies themselves, holistically and within specific sectors – or, as in our case at present, the sub-sub-sector of formal primary education. While progress has clearly been made in the consolidation of individual projects, in joint reviews, in developing joint indicators, and in the establishment of consortium bodies that have been established with the ADB as the lead interlocutor with GOB, the gap between what has been done and what still needs to be done remains large. First, and above all, is the need to support *government*-led donor coordination, rather than the existing donor-led coordination. In addition, the notion of mutual accountability – among and between development partners as well as between development partners and the government – needs to be fleshed out and become more operational. Mutual accountability, typically, is seen by donors as a way of ensuring that the recipient government keeps its ‘side’ of the aid bargain. However, space also needs to be given, especially among in-country development agency representatives, for instituting ways of moving beyond merely information sharing to some more robust pulling and tugging among agencies, to ‘call those to account’ when the Paris commitments may not be strictly observed in practice. One way this could happen would be to use in-country the OECD/DAC’s ‘peer review’ system transparently and publicly to lay bare the failures of those whose practices and approaches remain at best at variance with and, at worst, frustrate the goals of recipient ownership, decision-making and capacity development. The existing code of conduct discussed above, to give one example, could be extended much further to regulate the ‘poaching’ of skilled GOB staff, top-ups and incentives, and donor behaviour more generally. Ideally, there should be a forum in which frustrations with individual donors’ procedures can be aired, for example, further enhancing joint donor responsibilities rather than merely bilateral relationships with government.

Finally, the notion of joining top-down with bottom-up planning needs to be fully orchestrated as current initiatives tend to fall between two stools. For instance, it would appear that once the *upazilla* and school-level plans have been constructed, the DPE may not know how to deal with them except on an immediate basis, correspondent to an annual work plan of activities. Yet, once matured, these decentralized plans offer the opportunity of developing greater voice of and accountability to stakeholders, rather than to central government as at present, via the DPE and the donor agencies. Connecting the notion of an education commission with the vetting of such plans could be key. If instead of accepting the consultancy approach to technical tasks, we opt to embark on a needs-based professional capacity development programme that is itself led by the GOB and not merely accepted by the Government, then perhaps some of the very sound ideas flagged in the OICR can be advanced.

Annex 1. List of persons interviewed: Guyana

Former and current MOE staff

Ansel Bailey	Planner, Planning Unit
Evelyn Hamilton	Chief Planning Officer
Yoganand Indarsingh	Head, MIS Section
Deborah Jack	Programme Manager – Education, VSO Programme Office (Former EFA Coordinator, Planning Unit)
Una Paul	Consultant (Former Permanent Secretary, Chief Planning Officer)

Former and current project staff

Savitri Balbahadur	Field Manager, GBET (Former Head, CPCE)
Mohandatt Goolsarran	Director, National Centre for Education Resource Development (Former Head, CPCE)
Kenneth Hunte	Professor, School of Education, University of Guyana (Former Director, SSRP)

Development agency representatives and others

Jo Cooke	Department for International Development, UK
Angela Demas	EFA-FTI Task Manager, World Bank HQ
Ana Iles	Programme Officer, CIDA, Canada
Marco Nicola	Representative, Inter-American Development Bank
Julio Norori	Social Development Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank
Audrey Michele Rodrigues	Project Officer, Child Survival and Development, UNICEF
Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues, SJ	Secondary School Teacher, St. Stanislaus College (Former Professor, University of Guyana)

Annex 2. List of persons interviewed: Bangladesh

Government of Bangladesh

Rasheda K. Choudhury	Advisor, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Cultural Affairs
Ali Imam Majumdar	Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Division
Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan	Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Khandaker M. Asaduzzaman	Director General, Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Programme Director PEDPII
Md. Faizul Kabir	Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Chowdhury Mufad Ahmed	Joint Programme Director, PEDPII, Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Mohd. Waliur Rahman	Director (Training), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Shamsul Alam	Director (Training), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Md. Abul Kashem Bhuiyan	Director (Planning and Development), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Md. Abdur Rouf Chowdhury	Director (Administration), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Meherunessa	Deputy Director (Administration), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Mohammed Abdul Hamid	Deputy Director (Monitoring and Evaluation) Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Mohammed Khairul Islam	Director (Finance), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Ratan Kumar Ray	Director (Monitoring and Evaluation), Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Md. Rafiquzzaman	Director General, Bureau of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Md. Khizir Hayat Khan	Deputy Director (Policy Support, School Monitoring and Quality Assurance Unit (PMQAU), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Education
K.M. Aurangzeb	Director General, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Education Deputy Director, Planning DSHE, MOE Director, Human Resources Management, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Education
Ashrafun Nessa	Deputy Director (Human Resources Management), Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Education
Baitun Nahar	Director General, National Academy for Educational Management
Md. Rafiqul Islam	Deputy Director (Administration and Finance), National Academy for Educational Management

Mohammed Salimuzzaman Assistant Director (Administration and Finance), National Academy for Educational Management

IIEP Advanced Training Programme Alumnae

Md. Ataul Haque Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Textiles and Jute
Md. Rafiqul Islam Deputy Director (Administration and Finance), National Academy for Educational Management
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The book



Development agencies' concerns about *aid effectiveness* are being increasingly linked to aid-recipient countries' concerns about *development effectiveness*. A consideration of these twin focal points has led to new ways of conceptualizing the potential role of capacity development in leading ministries of education away from sub-sectoral education 'projects' towards enhanced budgets that will allow for an adequate expansion of quality education for all – and, ultimately, poverty reduction. The challenge for development agencies, in particular, is how precisely to support capacity development, when, as the OECD's guidance states, it is likely to remain ineffective when not endogenous, when it lacks an impulse from within.

The case studies of Guyana and Bangladesh, while very different from each other, underline the importance of cross-sectoral public sector reform. The constraints on such reforms differ in each case, but the necessity of their underpinning any particular capacity development in education planning and management is clear. Another significant factor is the donor community's perspective in the two countries. The lack of incentive, seen in the case of Bangladesh, for donors to accede in their practices to the principles of the Paris Declaration (such as country leadership and donor harmonization) is noted. What becomes clear in both case studies is the need for policy dialogue on *aid effectiveness* to focus on *development effectiveness* – embracing holistic capacity development, supported by donor agencies but managed (where possible) by recipient countries.

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