

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
BANGLADESH**

**EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT
PROJECT**

BGD/92/009

REPORT OF THE EVALUATION MISSION

9 November-5 December 2000

**Thus, the task is not
So much to see
What no one yet has seen**

**But to think what nobody
Yet has thought
About that which everybody sees.**

Schopenhauer

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BANBEIS DEO DNFE

DSHE DPE DTE EMIS

FSSAP GB GIS

GOB GEP IER

IMED LAN MIS MOE MOE-PC NAEM NAPE PATC PC

PCU PIU PMED PP PPER SC SMC SPA TOT TPR TWG UNDP UNESCO

ACRONYMNS

Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics District Education Officer

Directorate of Non-formal Education Directorate of Secondary and

Higher Education Directorate of Primary Education Directorate of

Technical Education Educational Management Information System

Female Secondary School Assistance Project Governing Body

Geographical Information System Government of

Bangladesh General Education Project

Institute of Education and Research (Dhaka University) Implementation,

Management and Evaluation Division Local Area Network

Management Information System Ministry of
 Education
 Ministry of Education Planning Cell
 National Academy of Educational Management National Academy
 for Primary Education Public Administration Planning Center
 Planning Commission
 Project Coordination Unit Project
 Implementation Unit
 Primary and Mass Education division Project Proforma
 Project Performance Evaluation report Steering
 Committee School Managing Committee Senior Advisor
 Training of Trainers Tripartite review
 Technical Working Group
 United Nations Development Programme
 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

BGD/92/009
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM
PROJECT
Bangladesh

	Phase 1	Phase 2
Total UNDP Contribution	US\$ 750,000	USA 873,62
Govt Inputs in Kind	Tk 32 471 000	Not <u>known</u>
Duration of Project	20 months	34 months
GoB/UNDP signature		December 1997
Actual Start-up	Mar 1993 -	Mid Sept 1998
Estimated End Date	Dec 1995 (actual)	June 2001

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Bangladesh, And its People, With all Respect.

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Special gratitude is extended to the Senior Project Advisor, Lekh N. Belbase and the Senior EMIS Advisor Charles C. Villaneuva for their insights and perspectives.

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INTRODUCTION WITH RESPECT

The core of the word "evaluation" is the word "value" and the evaluation of this project seeks to identify what is of value in this project, how much it is valued by those who are key stakeholders, who values it, why is it valued and what is the value of the progress being made. Asking about the value of the objectives of a project or endeavor is not always done and staff members of the project blindly try to achieve goals and objectives without considering their overall worth.

With respect, in the case of BGD/92/009, the goals and objectives are viewed by the Mission as being very valuable to Bangladesh. These **efforts are of course**

just one piece (or two pieces) of the educational puzzle to be solved in the much bigger picture of providing education of quality to the people of Bangladesh.

With respect, this Mission aims for fairness and balance but also a candid picture of project activities. progress, problems and prospects. In its recommendations` the Mission seeks to prod the "development partners" into needed actions, some of them urgent. The call to action applies to all the partners, for while there is progress, there are also problems to be solved; solved with respect and diplomacy. The Mission can only point out the problems to the best of its ability and also point the way towards solutions The real, operable solutions lie not with this Mission but with those who are most involved in the "dance of change".

With respect, the Mission considers the degree of project "ownership", good communication and coordination, and the potential for sustainability to be key indicators of project success. The world continues to be littered with projects that use all their money, finish on time and meet technical specifications and yet, and yet, these projects are ultimately failures.

With respect this Mission is striving to be objective, to be independent and ask good and required questions but as with all "outside evaluations" of its type, it is biased This Mission is quite frankly biased toward the following principles and concepts and it is important to state them, to introduce them, in this Introduction.

- "Learning" is more important than Training.
- Participation, and the use of a variety of good learning techniques are keys to good training.
- Capacity Building is difficult: it is "messy" because it involves helping people to learn new attitudes and new styles. It is time-consuming.
- The timing of "Projects" often does not fit the timing' of real development. This is a disease called "projectitis".

- The concept of the "Shared Vision" in an organization is very important. This means a "vision" for where an organization is going that is closely shared by all staff. Such visions are rare but when they exist they inspire great commitment and teamwork. It should be added that these are not visions held by one person, the big boss, who plasters them on the wall so that the staff know she or he is a "visionary". Shared Visions may originate with one person but such visions are thoroughly discussed so that there is a sense of ownership by everyone as to where the organization is going. This leads to true Teamwork.
- The Concept of "The Learning Organization". Proposed by Peter Senge a decade ago, it is defined as "an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together."
- Technology is wonderful and the Mission admires the power of technology to help people learn more and do more. The "romance" of technology is very attractive but in education the technology is sometimes deceptive. The importance of watching a fine teacher help her students learn for themselves, with interaction, cannot be under-estimated. Good human relations must come before good technology. Information is only "information until it is used wisely and perhaps becomes knowledge and even wisdom."
- Respect, courtesy, politeness, curiosity, humility.

With all due respect, the Mission asks the development partners to consider this project, BGD/92/009, in this evaluative report, and then reconsider how the project can be changed as necessary, improved, be more effective and efficient, be of real "value", and be respected for its quality.

**With Respect
The Evaluation Mission
November/December 2000**

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A research study on more than 600 development projects around the world sought to verify if the "traditional" indicators of project success were true. Those indicators were (1) Spend all the money, (2) Get the project done on time, and (3) meet all of the technical specifications. After asking the project field managers of these projects what they thought were the best indicators of project success, it became apparent while the "traditional" indicators were still important, by far (more than 70 per cent) of the managers said the very best indicator of project success was "good human relations; good communication and coordination". A project that focuses on "Education", "Management", "Information" and "Systems" (EMIS) should above all model all the best **of human relations**, communication and coordination. That this indicator is not all that it should be in this project is an important general finding of this Mission.

The Education Management Information System project (BGD/92/009) has had a long history, before even its actual start-up date of March 1993. Soon after the signature of the Programme Intervention, however, a bifurcation of the Ministry of Education resulted in the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) being put under the Prime Minister's secretariat. The Tri-partite Reviews of 1995 and 1997 indicated that the project should be redesigned, and a project redesigning mission was fielded in July 1997. The present redesigned (revised) Project Document was the result of this effort. The purposes of the revised project remain much the same as in the original project but are restricted to the needs of post-primary education. Principally supporting two institutions, NAEM and BANBEIS, and to a lesser extent the Directorate of technical Education (DTE), the revised project is focused on reinforcing the existing system for the collection, processing, storage, analysis, dissemination and use of educational information and statistics, and revitalize training and research in educational planning, management and administration.

Recommendations

Given, the project as it stands has profound difficulties, particularly in terms of capacity-building, management, government and donor commitment, donor-MOE coordination and communication, and sustainability. Also given, previous if not continuous long-term support, considerable investment, and the current on-the-ground presence of two carefully selected and well-qualified international advisors. Finally, given, a holistic view must be taken to the situation of the focal institutions in this project; they operate within a system that **makes progress** more difficult than it should be.

'Great Expectations' on impact should be tempered by a realistic perspective on where the project is on its implementation continuum, how much **as** been done, and how much has yet to be accomplished. Once again it is **important to note**

that this revised project has only been fully functioning, and fully staffed, for a very modest six months.

Having carefully weighed the options for this project at mid-term, the following recommendations are made by the Mission:

A. In order to "stay the course" to best effect, and to promote sustainability, an important and urgent effort must be made to improve what is perceived by this Mission as a major weakness; a perceived lack of "ownership" of the project by the Government AND a perceived lack of full commitment to it by all of the development partners. "Commitment", it should be emphasized, does not mean only the commitment of money. From the point of view of the Mission, commitment means much more, including taking time for good communication and coordination. This statement on ownership and commitment is made in full cognizance of the overall pledges of the Government to increased efforts in the Education sector, and to the difficulties of coping with a wide variety of projects, donors and their requirements. Immediate activation of the required Steering Committee and the PIU would be part of this recommendation to all of the development partners. "By All Means" the Mission calls upon a renewed effort by the development partners to sit down and coherently, diplomatically and practically determine how the project, during its remaining time frame, can become "fully owned" by the Government.

B. It is strongly recommended that all of the development partners in this project (the Government, UNESCO, UNDP) take immediate steps to improve the coordination and communication problems that have plagued the project; between the Government and the donor partners, and to a lesser degree between UNESCO and UNDP. This is a key to project success.

C. With sustainability and an acute awareness of the limited time frame remaining in the project as key considerations, it is strongly recommended that the Government partner take immediate steps, within the next three months, to explore alternative funding and implementation solutions for the work of the project beyond its current time period.

D. In order to stay the course, even in difficult circumstances, it is desirable that the tenure of the capable project staff be extended until the end of the project in order to ensure the achievement of priority activities.

E. In order to make maximum use of a talented person, it is recommended that the Senior EMIS Advisor prepare for and conduct a training program for NAEM staff on planning and research that makes use of the data hQw being collected and compiled by BANBEIS. The linkage that should -bop built

between these two institutions is an important consideration and **should** be

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emphasized in the training program, to be held during the last two months of the project.

F. The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) has received all of the equipment planned for it by the project but needs and should receive training in EMIS.

G. It is essential to the security of the database being compiled **at** BANBEIS on post-secondary education in Bangladesh, that a diesel-powered generator be purchased for the project for use at BANBEIS in the first quarter of 2001.

H. The Government partner should make an immediate effort, within the next three months, to find funds to hire an outside contractor to improve the operation of the LAN network in the Ministry of Education. It should be recognized that this activity is not expressly within the purview of the project but that it would facilitate key personnel within the Ministry to access the EMIS database from BANBEIS. The Senior EMIS Advisor has noted that this can be done for approximately 1000 taka per computer and is relatively easy to accomplish. Total number of computers: 46. Nevertheless, the Ministry is in need of more modern, faster computers.

I. Project-related training programs conducted by the two institutions which are the focus of this project, BANBEIS and NAEM, should follow to the greatest extent possible the recommendations set out for the Ministry of Establishment in the research study report Bangladesh Public Administration Training Strengthening Project (November 1998): basically this means a major reduction in the amount of lecture time and an increase in the culture and use of hands-on and participatory techniques.

J. Leadership in BANBEIS and NAEM, and all of the staff members of these organizations, should develop, for each of their organizations, a "Shared Vision" ¹ during the remaining project period that is appropriate for each of these key, apex institutions, (This does not mean a vision shared by NAEM and BANBEIS but rather separate organizational visions). In essence a "Shared Vision" is a vision for what an organization can and should be and where it should be going, that is not just the idea of one person but rather is developed and "shared" as part of a participatory process that involves all of the members of the organization. Part of this process could involve developing short-, medium- and long-term plans of development by each individual for the duration of the project and beyond, and then working according to these plans. Performance-based objectives for each institution should be developed in the process

' For a complete definition of a "shared vision", please see the book by Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline, a copy of which is being given to the NAEM Library as well as to the Senior project Advisor.

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K. In the remaining period of the project, the Senior Project Advisor and the Senior EMIS Advisor should (A) identify strategically critical **areas and** activities which the local personnel should undertake to develop necessary competence and expertise to function independently and effectively beyond the project period, and (B) assist each institution to produce concrete plans for sustainability as vital "learning organizations" ² beyond the project period.

L. In order to eliminate the continuing fund disbursement bottlenecks in this nationally-executed project, it is recommended the development partners should discuss, agree upon and implement as quickly as possible, a modified financial disbursement process which requires the signatory participation of both the Government and the donor "Executing Agency". This recommendation is made with the full realization of the formalities and difficulties involved in reaching the necessary approval after the project document has already been signed and the project is in the process of being implemented.

M. It is recommended that the development partners in this project consider the following scenarios or options (and/or any other variations), and their implications, for the remaining life of this project:

Scenario One: The project should continue on to its end, with existing funding, in 2001 as planned. A lot of investment has gone into this project, and although implementation in some areas has been slow, it is important that the work of the project proceed. "Stay the course". In this scenario are two sub-recommendations: (1) all of the development partners should take positive steps to show full commitment to the project and its key institutions by expediting project resources according to previously agreed-upon rules and regulations, and through marked improvement of coordination and communication within the project and between the development partners (Commitment, as has been emphasized, does not mean only the commitment of money; it means much more, including taking the time for good communication and coordination) and (

2), the Government, with assistance from current donor representatives, immediately (within three months) fully explore alternative funding sources and other means to sustain the work of the project beyond its current end date (this exploration should specifically determine how the two focal and apex institutions of this project, NAEM and BANBEIS, can grow into vital "Learning Organizations" as defined, rather than just "existing". "Existence" should not equal Sustainability) . The Mission prefers this scenario.

Scenario-Two: This scenario is the "scenario of the status quo". The project should continue on to its end, with existing funding as planned in 2001, but the development partners would not take the **recommended actions** in Scenario One. Implications: the project may "fade **away**" from lack of full

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For a definition of a "Learning Organization", also see The Fifth Discipline by Peter Senge..

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commitment and the necessary planning, with adequate "lead time" for the future, beyond the project end date. In this scenario, all the money would be spent, most activities would accomplished, some but not all **goals** would be met, and technical specifications reached, but an otherwise valuable project will not be a "success" because of ownership and sustainability considerations.

Scenario Three: The project should be extended, perhaps for one or two months, in order to allow a better opportunity to complete project activities at full quality. This scenario should only be contemplated with full and immediate commitment by the development partners to the two sub-recommendations within Scenario One. This scenario is basically the same as Scenario One but with a slightly longer time frame.

Scenario Four: The project, and funding, should be shut down as soon as possible, preferably by the end of the year 2000, due to considerations of ownership, funding. continuing implementation delays, communication and coordination difficulties between the development partners as well as within the project, and sustainability. Implications: project activities and assistance currently underway would be curtailed or stopped.

All of the above scenarios, and variations of them, should be considered by the development partners immediately following the completion of this Mission. The time to make key choices that will affect the project's future is now.

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II. PROJECT CONCEPT AND DESIGN

A. Context of the Project

With a projected 5-year duration for the purpose of strengthening educational information, management, planning and administration in Bangladesh, the original major Program Intervention (PI) BGD/92/009 for this project began in June 1993. The intermediate objective was to assist the primary and secondary schools and local educational administration to improve the management of the educational system and to improve data collection, preparation and analysis procedures.

The genesis of this project, however, began long before 1993 with efforts` to strengthen NIEAER (National Institute for Education Administration and Educational Research) the predecessor institution to NAEM (National Academy for Educational Management), now one of the focal and apex institutions of the current project. These strengthening efforts began in 1982 when UNDP formulated the project, "Strengthening the Capacity of NIEAER to Impart Quality Training in Educational Administration and Management (BGD/82/055)" in answer to a Government of Bangladesh Project Performa. The proposal remained in the pipeline until 1989 when an International Development Administration (IDA)-led General Education Project Staff Appraisal considered the relevant institutional strengthening. A Preparatory Assistance phase (BGD/891023), Strengthening of NIEAER, began in 1989 with UNDP funding of US\$ 43,000. Critical of the project as proposed, and the past performance of NIEAER, a Government of Bangladesh Project Evaluation Committee proposed a reformulation of the project on the basis of the report of an External Evaluation Committee on NIEAER constituted by the Government in March 1990. This report provided the foundation for restructuring NIEAER into the National Academy for Educational Management and for the more effective utilization of UNDP technical assistance. NIEAER was renamed and started functioning as the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) on July 1, 1991.

Implementation of the 1993 Programme Intervention (BGD192/009) faced many obstacles, the most important of which was a major change in the institutional set-up of education in Bangladesh. The Primary and Mass Education (PMED) Division of the Ministry of Education was subsequently transferred to the Prime Minister's portfolio, thereby dividing the sector into two separate entities. The management implications of this bifurcation were not foreseen. Control Of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) was transferred from the Ministry of **Education** to the PMED, and projects related to secondary education and educational information and management, while still remaining with the Ministry of Education, were no longer considered of immediate interest to the General **Education** Project (GEP). The GEP gave priority to primary education. A joint initiative by the PMED and IDA was negotiated to set up a primary sub-sector EMIS, notwithstanding the provision already including in the Program Intervention.

In February, 1995 a decision was made to have the Ministry of Education's Planning Commission (PC) act as the coordinating agency of the Program in place of the Project Coordination Unit of the General Education Project. A Project Implementation Unit in the Ministry of Education was established' under the control of the Chief (Planning). Activities related to the primary education sub-sector, meanwhile, would be implemented separately by the Primary and Mass Education Division.

At this point, UNDP was not ready to continue its support to those' components restricted to the secondary education sub-sector without a thorough review of the technical and operational viability of the Program in the changed set-up. With the suspension of UNESCOIUNDP involvement in December 1995 awaiting decisions of restructuring, the level of activity under the Program Intervention was greatly reduced.

NAEM required restructuring in order to improve training in educational management and EMIS in secondary and higher secondary education agencies and institutions and to provide policy and planning advice to the Ministry of Education based on a program of research and analysis. In **October 1995**, a consultant made a detailed analysis of the restructuring plans. The analysis also extended to the requirements of the National Academy of Primary Education (NAPE) but with the bifurcation in effect this component was no longer considered part of the Project.

With Government of Bangladesh funding (under the Project Proforma "Strengthening the Management Information and Statistical Services of the MOE") , the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Studies (BANBEIS) has continued its activities related to the integration and dissemination of data from sources within the Ministry of Education and provision of technical advice on hardware and software, and the services of programmers and trainers as required to MOE agencies. NAEM has also continued implementing some of the Program Intervention (PI) educational management and administration activities with limited development budget funds provided by the MOE on the basis of NAEM's Project Proforma submission.

The bureaucratic re-alignments resulting from bifurcation and the separate primary EMIS initiative of the Primary and Mass Education Division overlooked the interdependence of EMISs operating at the different educational levels and the need for a flexible and coherent system which supports an integrated approach to developing educational policy and avoids wasteful duplication of effort in educational management and related areas.

In view of these differences, and after detailed discussion with **UNDP**, a decision was finally made to re-design the Project Document. This re-designed document

was signed on 17 December 1997, with the duration of the project extended until June 2000.

At the Project Inception Meeting held on 9 December 1998, it was decided that the databases to be developed through the National Education Survey (NES) should be updated in and through the District Education Offices and that computer facilities should be provided from the UNDP project document (BGD/92/009) through a revision of the project. At the Tripartite Review (TPR) meeting held on 15 December 1999, it was decided that the ongoing Project Document should be further extended until June 2001 in order to implement all of the inputs from the UNDP Project Document BGD/92/009 in terms of fellowships and consultancy services for establishing an operational EMIS in the Ministry of Education.

The Development Objective, as described in the revised project document, is:

"improving the management of post-primary education by establishing an integrated EMIS for policy analysis and planning in the Ministry of Education and by developing the capacity of BANBEIS and NAEM as the key apex organizations to undertake policy research and provide training in educational management and information-based decision-making at all levels of the post-primary system."

The five major project objectives as described in the project document, are:

Objective One: To develop a statistical profile of education at the post-primary level and keep it updated on an annual basis.

Objective Two: To strengthen BANBEIS as the technical support service institution for EMISs in the Ministry of Education.

Objective Three: To create and strengthen EMIS in BANBEIS and subsectoral EMIS in the Ministry of Education Planning Cell (PC) and the Directorate of Technical Education.

Objective Four: To promote increased efficiency and effectiveness in the management and administration of the secondary education sub-sector.

Objective Five: To upgrade NAEM for advanced training and research in the field of educational planning and management.

The immediate "Target Beneficiaries" of the project are decision makers, planners, administrators and managers of education programs **at all levels**, who

will make use of educational management information and training. Staff Development Training and Technical Assistance are to directly benefit the faculty of the BANBEIS and NAEM institutions, The indirect beneficiaries are identified in the revised project document as the participants in the training activities organized by BANBEIS, NAEM and other networked institutions as well as benefits from advisory services provided to these institutions. These include staff members of the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) who participate in Training of Trainers (TOT) courses, district education officials who are involved in NAEM workshops or who receive MIS guidance from BANBEIS, principals and vice-principals of colleges, headmasters and assistant headmasters of secondary schools and madrashas, and members of Governing Bodies (GB) and School Managing Committees (SMC).

Throughout all of the long and sometimes meandering evolution, UNDP, as well as the Government, have basically maintained a constancy of concept and design, that taking cognizance that the expansion and equitable distribution of educational facilities and improvement of educational quality was contingent upon a sound system of gathering relevant information and its prudent use through effective planning and management. The evolutionary nature of the project design has been an asset in many ways and appropriate to the growing needs of the educational system.

The concept and design of the revised project has also taken into account the potential economic benefits.. Fitting into UNDP's poverty-oriented agenda for Bangladesh, the Project Revision takes note of the research showing that literacy and access to higher education is a major determinant of household income. The importance of upgrading the quality of post-primary instruction by route of improving the quality of teacher instruction was an important consideration. The National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), one of the two focal and apex institutions of the project, was and is considered a key institution in relation to training, curriculum development and the monitoring of teaching standards in, the government Teacher Training Colleges. The project clearly also fits into the Fifth Five Year Plan with its heavy emphasis on the importance of education, and its decentralization and devolution of governance.

The project does fit with the new UNDP/Government of Bangladesh Country Cooperation Framework (CCF), 2001-2005, as well as with the previous CCF. Neither document explicitly mentions EMIS efforts. The new CCF does supply, however, an excellent foundation and sense of fit for this project. The project is relevant in its intent to the new CCF in terms of its focus on Sustainable Human Development and more specifically its overall goal to:

accelerate poverty reduction through **improved governance** at sub-national and national levels.



This goal is also complemented by an emphasis on "policy and institutional support to local governance for improved delivery of socio-economic services". The revised Project Document, with its continuing emphasis on data and training related to post-primary education notes that "according to BIDS research literacy and access to higher education is a major determinant of household income". The EMIS project also is contributing important information to the effort to reduce gender inequalities through its effort to provide an up-to-date database on female schooling to decision makers. The project fits too with the comparative advantages of UNDP and particularly with such "areas of concentration" as poverty alleviation, women in development, management development, technical cooperation between developing countries (through inter-country group trainings and study tours), transfer of technology (through purchase of equipment for use at BANBEIS in establishing a national post-primary database as well as training involved in making the database operational, and in the use of GIS (Geographical Information System).

The project was and is intended to tie into other sources of external assistance. Specifically this other assistance includes (A) the Higher Secondary Education project mostly financed under an Asian Development Bank (ADB) credit and supported with a UNDP TA grant (BGD/91/022); efforts which are focused on comprehensive higher education reform with a management improvement and EMIS component; (B) the Secondary Education Development Project, also

assisted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which works with NAEM and other networked institutions; (C) the IDA assisted Female Secondary School assistance Project (FSAAP), in which the EMIS was noted as completely self-sufficient and independent; and (D) the Technical Education Project, assisted by UNDP, through which computers and other equipment were supplied to the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) .

The Project Document

The Project Document (revised version, signed in December 1997) appears complete in all of the required elements. The project background is carefully detailed, (important because of the convoluted histories of the project and its focal institutions), and strategies are laid out for strengthening BANBEIS, NAEM, the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) and the Ministry of Education Planning Cell. (MOE-PC).

It is interesting to note that the greatest amount of attention, and space, in the strengthening strategies, is paid to NAEM, and that is entirely ' appropriate because the situation in that institution requires much more of a capacity-building effort, and patience, and time than this project actually gives. In this sense the project document is not entirely realistic. The activities planned for NAEM in the work plan, otherwise well-detailed, may not be fully accomplished.

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Having paid so much attention to NAEM in its strategy section, the statement of risks does not accurately reflect the severity and difficulty of the capacity-building challenges at that institution. The first two "Risks" are related to NAEM and are rated "low":

- 1. Delays in recruitment of additional staff for the PIU; delays in divesting NAEM of (the) task of conducting foundation training or if that is not done, allowing NAEM to hire five additional faculty members. Risk: Low.**
- 2. Transfers of qualified staff after gaining experience and training through NAEM. Risk arises if there is no MOE provision for NAEM to retain staff after their promotion; or no change in legal status to provide for NAEM's autonomy. Risk:Low.**

These assessments of risk appear mixed to this Mission in their accuracy. NAEM has hired more staff but is still not fully staffed nor is it staffed with qualified people (though many are certainly talented). NAEM is still conducting the foundation trainings and will apparently continue to do so: it is the activity that consumes much of the institution's time and effort. The risks involved with potential future transfers of faculty would appear high, not low, to the project because such transfers would continue to threaten efforts to stabilize and enhance that institution's capacity. There is certainly no move going on, **legal** or

otherwise, to give NAEM more autonomy. Lip service is given to decentralization but true devolution of power is slow in coming and presents high risks for any profound sustainability.

Of greater interest regarding risks and NAEM is what is not stated. Despite expressions of concern early in the document, the "big picture" of risks in capacity building at NAEM (and even to some extent at BANBEIS) does not arise in the risks section. The Mission feels there should have been more risks listed related to the capacity-building efforts; risks related to management, leadership, communication and coordination, establishing performance-based objectives (as noted in the report of the Education Finance consultant), and establishing a "shared vision", commitment and a sense of team work among the faculties. That these are not listed as risks that threaten capacity-building efforts is an important omission and is related to the time frame of the project and sustainability. It is perhaps 'natural' that writers of project documents do not want to fully state risks because of course the document has to be "sold" as a potentially viable enterprise: this is a tendency to be fought in future project documents.

The other major point to be made about the revised project document is the brief attention paid to sustainability (no mention of sustainability is made in the statement of risks) and yet sustainability is an important and crucial issue in this project and this document. On sustainability the document states:

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"The sustainability of these institutions (MOE-PC, BANBEIS, NAEM) is already assured by the commitment of GOB funding at a time when there has been no UNESCO/UNDP intervention. The Project will enhance this sustainability as a result of the training provided to staff, both in-country and overseas".

What is troublesome about this too brief statement is the implication that there is an equivalence between continued "existence" of the institutions (even with enhancements of staff through training) and "sustainability". Sustainable capacity is a lot more than the trainings outlined in this document. It requires leadership, good management, shared vision, and a dynamism and vitality that contribute to institutions becoming true "learning organizations". Merely "sustaining" an organization at some vague level of operation without other considerations is not nearly enough. Sustainability is not "assured" for these institutions by this document or this project and training does not guarantee success. Well-trained persons thrown back into an unwelcome, rigid and otherwise stagnant organizational environment will not be able to sustain that organization unless the other elements leading to sustenance noted above are in place.

This project document does identify the project problem but it could *have* been more clearly stated in a specific "problem statement". The document does delineate the intended users of the project outputs, the potential concerns of women are recognized and the project objectives are clearly stated. The phrasing

of the project inputs and activities appears realistic although, as noted, the time in the project for the capacity building effort actually needed is not nearly enough. Monitoring mechanisms were noted and management and coordination mechanisms described. with UNESCO as the "Co-operating Agency", and including requirements for a Steering Committee and a Project Implementation Unit (PIU). A detailed Work Plan is included. Government involvement in drafting the project document extended to representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Directorate of Higher and Secondary Education, Directorate of Primary Education, Directorate of Technical Education, NAEM, BANBEIS, Education Boards Computer Center (EBCC), the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Planning Ministry, and the Planning Commission.

Finally, despite a long list of acronyms at the beginning of the document, parts of it would rate very low on a "readability index" for overuse of those acronyms in the text .

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III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Development, especially capacity-building of institutions, is not an easy process. One anthropologist has noted that getting something done, implementing it, in any country, has at least some relationship with traffic and traffic patterns in that country. It is difficult to know if this is exactly true but it would seem to be a useful analogy in this case. Like the traffic in the capital city, there are often "jams" in getting things moving through the system in Bangladesh. Maneuvering a development vehicle, such as this project, can sometimes be frustrating to all concerned. Sometimes the problem is only because the drivers, including outsiders, really don't know which roads to take or the traffic rhythms or how to drive. Other times, it is just a jam in the system too full of other development "vehicles" and with too few traffic police to adequately cope with helping the traffic to flow. "Bottlenecks" occur. Project implementation is often this way.

A. Activities

BGD1921009, the EMIS project, has had its share of problems in getting things done but, as a whole, it is actually being implemented. Its activities are being achieved, one step at a time, and in general the project is moving forward albeit with delays and frustrations. An objective-by-objective summary assessment of where the project is now and its prospects to do all its activities appears in the "Project Results" section of this report.

A fundamental finding, upon which other findings related to project implementation should be reviewed, is that it is important to recognize that the EMIS project in its revised form, even with its long but "hiccupping" history has actually only come to together and been fully staffed six months ago. This is a

very short time given the stated project objectives. With a core purpose of institutional strengthening, it must be recognized too that such strengthening, unlike the purchase of hardware, is a lengthy and difficult process. The extent of that realization has not yet fully come to the development partners in this project.

It is essential to note that the EMIS project is a Nationally Executed (NEX) project; the general operational strategy, alongside a programme strategy that promotes decentralized governance for accelerated poverty reduction, adopted by UNDP in its Country Cooperation Framework (CCF). This is in principle an excellent strategy if proper support and training (capacity-building) is given to those in charge of overseeing such development projects as this one. UNDP, in its new CCF, has recognized this need in its national execution promotion strategy that includes two mutually reinforcing aspects:

1. - "The National Execution Management Support Programme will improve the NEX Operational Guidelines, provide training on NEX and improve monitoring and evaluation arrangements, Other initiatives include: (a) review of the implementation capacity for more systematic

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strengthening of national implementation capacities and (b) training of NPDs and Government staff on thematic SHD (Sustainable Human Development) areas and project management, direct UNDP country office support and appropriate use of UN agencies for the implementation of some components";

2. " The second part of the NEX promotion strategy involves a longer-term approach. NGOs may be considered for execution in cases where efficient delivery of services , transparency and accountability can be assured. All prior execution arrangements will be based on prior assessment of capacities and the goals of the intervention. An exit strategy will be developed and underpin the coordination of execution."

In this project the National Execution modality is entirely appropriate and should certainly assist to some degree in increasing sustainability in the project. That the NEX strategy in the new CCF contains measures (particularly in Aspect 1 above) to strengthen the approach is relevant here because this project provides evidence of the need for that strengthening.

For a variety of reasons, there have been implementation problems in the EMIS project.

It has been reported to the Mission, for example, that much of the funds for the project have been decentralized to the institutional level; to the offices of the Director-Generals of the key institutions. It is unclear, however, how much real discretion (power) these officials actually have to use those funds (responsibility

without authority) or whether they are simply unsure of the true boundaries of authority in the project and in their institutions. The reality seems to lean more towards the first view; that institutional leaders really do not have discretionary authority, even within set project budgets, to administer project funds without approvals from above. It has also been reported to the Mission that some delays in disbursement are coming from the donor agencies. UNDP, for its part, assures the Mission that all requests from the Project are acted upon with all due speed and that there have been no delays of this type on its part. What is clear is that there have been and continue to be important "disbursement" problems in this project involving long delays in the dissemination of funds for key: activities or reimbursements. These delays in disbursement are now becoming crucial and may eventually prevent the completion of key project activities by the end date of the project unless something is done.

It has also been reported that there were major delays in getting the two international advisors in place this year (they came in May 2000), which was unfortunate because they are both talented and work well with the staffs of their respective institutions, NAEM and BANBEIS. A representative.; of the Government has stated that these delays have occurred in good part because the required numbers of potential candidate choices for each position were not

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submitted on time by the donor(s) to the Government. An important part of this finding is that the advisors, instead of being in place and working two years ago, only began work 6 months ago.

Note has also been taken by the Mission of processing delays for approval of candidates for international group trainings and study tours. This is causing great difficulties for the candidates, who are only approved at the last minute, and for those who administer the arrangements for such trainings. . It would seem that the concept of "lead time", a simple management idea, is not being implemented in this project. "Lead time" means that if two months are required for the full selection and approval process, (or for any activity) that process cannot be compressed into a few weeks without severe and painful "distortion" of the selection and administration process.

Related to the timing of these group trainings are reported problems with the actual selection and nomination of candidates not appropriate to the capacity-building aspect of this project; a focus mainly on building the capacity of NAEM

and BANBEIS. While some leeway has been given for "orientation" trips, there appears to remain continuing difficulty in the selection of candidates for the international group trainings, with future nomination lists of these trainings containing personnel either outside of the project's institutional focus or simply not relevant to its specific capacity-building process.

Implementation problems at the institutional level have occurred simply because of the project's changing requirements during the past several years. This is seen, particularly at NAEM, as a source of continuing and extraordinary stress and turmoil in keeping up with changing requests for information from above. The meandering process by which such requests make their way up (or down) the bureaucratic chain has been described by one institutional staff member as "Desk Fever".

Communication and coordination are key elements of the implementation process in any organization or in any project (as well as key indicators of project success) and there have been recurrent difficulties with these elements in the EMIS project. These problems have occurred between the Government and the two donor agencies involved, UNESCO and UNDP, and also between the donor agencies themselves, who are just a few floors from each other in the same building. The communication and coordination gaps among **all** of the development partners have been witnessed first-hand by this Mission because they have even extended to the preparations for and implementation of the Evaluation Mission. Itself.

It is difficult to know whether the lack of two "steering mechanisms" for the project, as required in the revised project document, have anything to do with the communication and coordination gaps that are occurring in the *project* (the Mission suspects that they do) but most of the other steering mechanisms focus

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principally on BANBEIS. A "Technical Advisory Group" for **NAEM** was proposed three months ago but has yet to be implemented. Relevant to the work of BANBEIS, a "Survey Committee" has met 8 times during 1999 and 2000. Also relevant mostly to BANBEIS is a "Technical Committee" that has met 3-4 times. This committee has advised on the purchase of equipment and soon finishes its work upon completion of the Final Report on the National Education Survey (NES). There is a "Working Group" which meets once a week to review work progress at BANBEIS. There is also a major "EMIS Coordination Committee" noted in the Project Proforma (October 2000), composed of high-level education officials but no record of its meetings was available. A PIU (Project Implementation Unit) was required in the revised project document and, as noted in the case of NAEM, this has not been constituted.

Nevertheless, the important Steering Committee (SC) required in the revised

project document, and which brings together, quarterly, representatives of the development partners in the project, has not been constituted. This committee is responsible for formulating policy and for overseeing general management of the project, and for review, approval, monitoring, and facilitating project activities. Based on the Mission's previous experience in Bangladesh, there is considerable doubt as to whether a "Steering Committee" would actually be a practical remedy in this situation. There is, however, an important need for some "steering" in this project but it should be on a more operational level.

All of these implementation problems lead the Mission to question the commitment of all of the development partners to this project. "Commitment", it should be emphasized, does not mean only the commitment of money. From the point of view of this Mission, commitment means much more, including taking the time for good communication and coordination. It may be that the representatives of all the partners are too over-burdened with other projects and work. It may be that there is a shortage of people to adequately care for the needs of this project. It may be that the project is perceived by one or more of the partners as less important than other work or projects. Why an institution, NAEM, which should be regarded as-so important in the educational system, is not given full support and energy towards becoming a "star" institution, a five star institution, is puzzling and sad. It should be given full commitment and support but it isn't. Perhaps it is all these reasons, but somehow the passion of commitment is not to, be seen, for the project or the institutions. Yes, the presence of money does show commitment, financial commitment, but in complex projects such as these, money is not enough.

Despite these problems, there have been many inputs, and processes, in the past six months which have been (or may be) valuable in this project.

Excellent hands-on training has been provided on various EMIS topics to BANBEIS staff and others by the international Senior EMIS Advisor. Much of the hands-on nature of this learning has come from the fact that the national- staff of

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BANBEIS have been heavily involved in the organization and analysis of the important National Education Survey (NES) effort. This database will be very useful to Bangladesh if the information receives good dissemination and use.

In terms of databases, it is important to note that NAEM also needs a database of its own and that little has yet to be done on this. NAEM now does have a computer laboratory but is understaffed. It originally was envisioned for training: now there is a need for staff who can do database development.

Four consultants have worked at and with NAEM during the past six months.

A consultant conducted training programs at NAEM for its faculty on Research Methodology from April to June 2000 and was well-received. This was very important because Research has been identified as a "weak link" in NAEM skills. The consultant also prepared training manuals and modules on Educational Research and assisted in guiding NAEM faculty to conduct policy-oriented model researches in the field of education in general and in the secondary education sub-sector in particular.

A consultant on Education Materials, also working at NAEM (from 8 April to 7 June 2000) provided input to that institution in the form of materials and recommendations related to the analysis and assessment of educational materials and their impact. The consultant strongly recommended that "early action be taken to set up an Educational Materials Division in NAEM under the administration of a Director. Among its functions would be the preparation and implementation of a three-year operational plan (re educational materials).

From 8 August to 8 October 2000, a management consultant began the first half of a total four month assignment at NAEM by making an overall assessment of the management courses with a view to (a) improving the overall quality,(b) teaching methodology, (c) learning materials, and (d) making recommendations for improvement. The report of this consultant not only contains training materials on topics she has recommended for five modules in the Manual for the Non-Government Secondary School Head Teachers Training course but has also made general recommendations as well. A National Workshop was held on October 12 to review the materials that were prepared. A comment by this consultant in the Introduction to her report is that:

"From my previous extensive experience at NAEM and from the existing work culture I was aware that to produce training materials would be an effort for the staff members who are involved mostly in training and related administrative activities."

A consultant on Education Finance conducted a needs analysis of NAEM academic staff, developed a curriculum for a short course on Education **Finance**,

reviewed NAEM's management courses, and reviewed the financial management of NAEM from 7 July to 2 September 2000. His report contains many useful observations and ideas not only on educational finance but also on management and organizational development. His needs analysis of NAEM academic staff brought this cogent comment:

" It appears, however, that NAEM staff have two deeper needs in the field of education finance than that of greater knowledge. The first lack is their attitude to new learning and the second, to the organizational environment into which they have been socialized. These deficits will be very much more difficult to overcome than a lack of knowledge."

The reports of these four consultants to NAEM provide some very good foundation materials and analysis for future capacity building at that institution. That process, based on these reports, is going to take in a time frame much longer than that of this project. These consultants have rendered useful services but before their many ideas can take root, some major commitments need to be made and "restructuring" needs to take shape at the institution. Before the faculty gets involved in their hands-on learning, the management, and the Ministry, must take some fundamental decisions to re-shape the institution into the vital organization it should be, and could be.

Group trainings, study tours and fellowships have been an important part of this project. In 1998, 6 participants took part in a study tour to Pakistan and India with the principal focus being EMIS/GIS. Also in 1998, and on the same topic, five persons took part in a study tour to Korea, and five persons went to Malaysia. In December 1999, ten persons took part in a study tour on Educational Planning and Management to India.

Other efforts by the project at capacity building have included a study tour to Thailand (19-29 June 2000; eight participants) with the objective to acquire knowledge about Educational Planning and Management, and a group training to Nepal (late November 2000) for 10 participants re EMIS, through the Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI) in Kathmandu. Fellowships have included the fielding of one faculty member of NAEM on an eight month fellowship to IIEP, UNESCO, in Paris to study educational planning and management (she returned after completion of her study in May 2000); the fielding of a second NAEM faculty member to the same institution for a similar period and for the same programme in the last quarter of 2000; and a fellowship for one person to Harvard University in July-August 2000 to study Educational Policy Analysis and Planning.

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While the fellowships are perceived by the Mission as of good value and quality, the value of the study tours in terms of true capacity building is doubtful. The systemic or holistic problem with such short-term trips is not only that they are of such short duration and very general, but the personnel who participate in them come back to an organizational environment that does not allow them to make use of their learning. The fellowship participants face the same problems. Also of concern is that only 40 per cent of the participants on the study tours represented NAEM, BANBEIS and DTE.

A complete review of the activities, and the objectives under which they are subsumed, appears in the "Integrated Work Plan for EMIS Project: BGD/92/009" as an Annex to this report. This Work Plan is an excellent tool with which to review/monitor project progress and is used as such. To date much of the project is relatively on schedule although activity 4.1.5, the development and publishing of materials in Bangla for thana level training of School Managing Committees (SMCs) and Governing Bodies (GBs) still requires revision and is not yet done. An activity that must be emphasized, an 'on-going activity', is 4.1.6 in the Integrated Work Plan; "to include such training (management training) in the Training of Trainer (TOT) programs of the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs)". This activity is particularly important in the project because it is a decentralizing effort.

Comment must be briefly made by the Mission on the nature of training being conducted by NAEM. Much of the training effort of NAEM goes into conducting the long "Foundation Courses" (these courses are not part of the project). These courses, as verified by talking with participants in an ongoing programme, are at least 90 per cent lecture. Other courses are judged to be much the same; a "

deadening", pedantic form of training that has little to do with learning. Basically NAEM staff hire a variety of experts to come in and do these lectures. "Planning" such training programmes by NAEM thus largely comes down to hiring outsiders to deliver, with varying degrees of vitality, lectures. The need to reform all Public Administration" courses has been urgently called to attention in the important research study and report to the Ministry of Establishment (November 1998) entitled "Bangladesh Public Administration Training Strengthening Project". Key points of this study are presented in an Annex to this report and include reducing the amount of lecture content in these courses to just 30% over a five-year period. NAEM obviously has much work to do in order to prepare the kind of participatory trainings, and the materials for them, that are necessary in the near future. NAEM faculty and Ministry of Education officials are urged to take the time to review this report (and accompanying Action Plan). Copies are to be given by the Mission to the National Project Director, the two international advisors, the NAEM library, and to UNDP and UNESCO.

While the major focal institutions of this project **are NAEM and BANBEIS**, the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) was also mentioned for **strengthening** in the revised project document. It was noted in the document **that DTE had**

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developed a Technical Education Management Information **System (TEMIS)** for its twenty institutions, that worksheet reports are produced on a regular basis, mainly to monitor the assignments and profiles of teaching **staff**, **and** that the entire operation had been found to be working efficiently. The project has successfully supplied equipment (principally computers) to DTE but to date the Directorate does require more training on EM IS.

It should be noted that the library of NAEM is beginning to feel the capacity building effort of the project. The library received, under project auspices in late November 2000, approximately 70-75 books and journals from UNESCO. The Director of Research and Documentation of NAEM, newly appointed, **has on** his own initiative obtained 175 books (not yet catalogued) from the Asia Foundation in mid-November 2000. Last year (1999) the library at NAEM reportedly received 700 books. Nevertheless, the operational capacities of the NAEM library as a useful educational tool currently can be said to be in a "state of limbo", with training of the librarians urgently needed as well as new, bright, inviting facilities. Trainers should then actively have their students make use of the library on a regular basis for class assignments and research. (self-learning).

Finally, the project has procured an assortment of equipment, including computers, an air conditioner for one of the BANBEIS computer rooms, a line scanner and other equipment related to GIS. Without listing it all here, to date the equipment requested for the project has been delivered and is in use but it will be very important, especially for BANBEIS, that the remaining equipment be

delivered on time. BANBEIS is also in urgent need of a large diesel generator (not in the revised project document) because frequent power outages endanger the valuable database being assembled there as well as slowing the processing of data

B. Quality of Monitoring and Back-Stopping

Project monitoring is carried out through a variety of means. The Ministry of Planning, for example, uses a regular Project Monitoring Form. This focuses largely on "inputs" such as money allocated and spent, quantities of purchases, and approvals given. Outputs and processes are ignored.

Project monitoring is also done however within the project through Quarterly Project Reports and Six Month Reports, as well as the afore-mentioned "Integrated Work Plan". These are valuable, detailed, timely component-by-component monitoring tools.

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IV. PROJECT RESULTS

On an objective-by-objective basis, project results to date and their prospects for accomplishment by the project end date in June 2001 can be summarized as follows:

Objective 1: "To develop a statistical profile of education at the post-primary level

and keep it updated on an annual basis." Based on current progress, all activities will be completed and the objective of developing a statistical profile (the highly important National Education Survey, NES) will be accomplished.

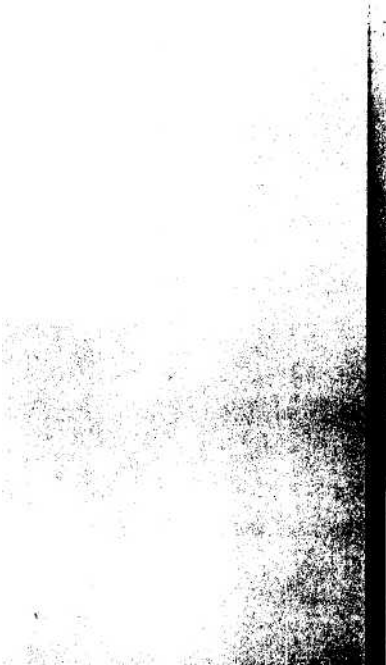
Objective 2: "To strengthen BANBEIS as the technical support service institution for EMISs in MOE". Based on current progress, all activities will be completed by the end of the project and the objective will be accomplished.

Objective 3: " To create and strengthen EMIS in BANBEIS and sub-sectoral EM/S in MOE PC and DTE". Based on current progress, project activities will be completed by the end of the project and the objective will be accomplished.

Objective 4: "To promote increased efficiency and effectiveness in the management and administration of the secondary education sub-sector". While there is a good chance that all activities may be accomplished under this objective, it is unclear whether this will actually lead to "increased efficiency and effectiveness in the management and administration of the secondary education sub-sector". The objective may indeed 'promote' efficiency and effectiveness but other factors, including poor quality, largely lecture, training; difficulties in devolution and decentralization of authority; and problems in communication and coordination; may hinder the real accomplishment of this objective.

Objective 5: "To upgrade NAEM for advanced training and research in the field of educational planning and management. " At the present rate of progress, as noted in the current Integrated Work Plan, many but not all of the activities will be accomplished. While NAEM's capacity will be "upgraded", the extent to which NAEM can operate as a dynamic "Learning Organization" that will be an example to educational managers in Bangladesh remains in doubt. It is important to note, however, that the design of the project allows a relatively short time frame for capacity building; a long-term process.

While the results and progress of the project, by activity, as noted previously, may also be examined in the "Integrated Work Plan" which appears' in the Annexes of this report, a more analytical perspective is presented here in ten succinct categories.



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A. Relevance In essence the Mission views the purpose, approach, modality of execution and the selected recipient institutions to all still be relevant in the current context. As the needs of the educational system continue to grow in size and complexity, the project becomes even more relevant.

B. Efficiency While the project is accomplishing its activities, supplying the planned consultants, and procuring the required equipment in a relatively methodical fashion, it is not doing so with any great degree of efficiency. Communication and coordination problems have plagued the project, and disbursement of funds for project activities has been slow and threatens the completion of some of the project activities during the project time frame. To accomplish project tasks requires extraordinary amounts of effort.

C. Outputs The outputs of the project, also described and monitored in the "Integrated Work Plan", are in the process of being produced, as indicated too in the objective-by-objective summary above.

Output 1.1 Original plan of nation-wide school census has been modified

by reducing its scope. Baseline data on post-primary education collected and critical information updated annually. *Progress Summary: on schedule. Final Report for the National Education Survey almost complete.*

Output 2.1 A competent cadre of technical experts in each organization, and upgraded physical facilities to provide technical support to their respective EMISs. *Progress Summary: activities being accomplished as planned.*

Output 2.2 Operational EMIS in BANBEIS to facilitate production of reports. *Progress Summary: Computer Equipment procured; staff trained in computer application.*

Output 3.1 Operational EMISs in BANBEIS, MOE-PC and DTE capable of , providing statistics for management and planning of developmental programs at the thana, district and national levels. *Progress Summary: activities on schedule.*

Output 3.2 Operational GIS in BANBEIS and MOE-PC and to facilitate project Implementation and monitoring via Infomaps of important indicators at the district level. Procurement of GIS equipment completed, educational progress indicators identified and developed; design, install, pilot test and operationalize GIS equipment. Other activities on schedule.

Output 3.3 Operational EMIS in MOE-PC to facilitate project implementation and monitoring. *Progress Summary: largely completed.*

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Output 3.4 Operational EMIS network or EDuNET in BANBEIS with linkage to MOE-PC. Efficient operations between BANBEIS, MOE-PC, and DTE assured and capable of accepting on the network all other EMISs. *Progress Summary: on schedule.*

Output 3.5 Quality of data improved; data presentation and reporting Modernized. *Progress Summary: on schedule.*

Output 4.1 An education management and administration training network to facilitate and coordinate improved school-based management training program through Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) for secondary school head teachers and SMC members. Development of a decentralized program of orientations and training for

upgrading the effectiveness of SMCs and GBs. *Progress Summary: In process. Materials for thana level training in Bangla being revised,*

Output 4.2: Senior level education management, administration and planning programs and materials for various client groups, at different levels and in different institutions. *Progress Summary: activities in process.*

Output 4.3 Enhanced capacity of NAEM for education management-related research and development activities. *Progress Summary: activities either yet to be started(re assessing training needs of NAEM faculty with regard to preparation of case studies and commission 3 case studies and publish) or not yet complete (provide research support in the formulation of policy and plan documents by the MOE, conduct workshop and print documents).*

Output 4.4 Support of EMIS through management training program. *Progress Summary: Computer center completed in 1999; 9 training courses completed, two more courses to be completed by end of 2000 (re computer-based planning and management.*

Output 5.1 Enhanced human resources, software and hardware facilities to support NAEM's research and training functions. *Progress Summary: Books and journals now being received for library from Asia Foundation and UNESCO; one fellowship completed (to REP In Paris), another in process (each 8 months); also a fellowship to Harvard University for one participant from MOE in July-August 2000; The project has fielded study tours in 1998 re EMISIGIS to*



Pakistan, India, Korea, and Malaysia. (with a total of 16 people) In 1999, the project sent a study tour to India(10 participants) with a focus on Educational Planning and Management, and, on the same topic, to Thailand in June 2000.(8 participants). Of the 34 participants on the study tours from 1998-June 2000, only 6 represented NAEM (only 8 from BANBEIS).

Output 5.2 Technical support role of NAEM established, with appropriate production of new course materials, for field level training and other management training needs *Progress Summary: in process*

D. Immediate Objectives: Overall, there has been a partial accomplishment of these objectives, with those for NAEM proceeding more slowly because of more challenging capacity-building tasks. The outputs of the project are instrumental in achieving the immediate objectives. Micro-level effects of the project include improving capacity of some individuals from training. The future effects at the micro-level are difficult to predict; at BANBEIS there is more likely to be a "critical mass" of talented and energized staff while immediate prospects of the same thing happening at NAEM will take longer and are dependent on other variables.

E. Development Objectives: If the immediate objectives are accomplished, educational decision makers in Bangladesh will have greater access to information on the status, annually updated, of their educational system and a greater opportunity to improve that system, , with all of the improvements that better education can bring If capacity building takes place at NAEM, there is a better chance that educational managers will receive better training, although this does not guarantee improvements in teaching skills of teachers at the post-primary level.

F. Effectiveness: The nationally executed project approach is in principle a good one but requires the improvements outlined in the new CCF to be more truly effective (such as training programs for those administering such "NEV programs).

G. Capacity-Building: While human resources development is occurring, the establishment of an "enabling environment" particularly at NAEM requires much more time than this project allows as well as other, bold high-level decisions about the basic operations of such institutions. In essence, by the end of this

project, neither BANBEIS nor NAEM will truly be vital "learning organizations" where individuals and the organizations are continually expanding their learning horizons.

H. Impact: There will be some "winner" individuals in this project; those who have received fellowships or international group training. Other winners are those experiencing hands-on training in EMIS. The "losers" may **be organizations**

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that receive some capacity building but not enough to achieve a "critical mass" of talented individuals who could be linked to a good team leader/administrator.

I. Sustainability: There is a greater chance of sustainability at BANBEIS than at NAEM but actually both institutions require further support and greater commitment from all of the development partners

J. Follow-Up: There needs to be full-blown commitment to both organizations from the Government or they will stagnate. It is suggested that other sources of funding being explored immediately for beyond the project end date. There needs to be follow-up on the decentralization efforts in EMIS at the district level begun in this project.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Terms of Reference for an In-Depth Evaluation of the Education Management Information System Project (BGD/92/009) restates clearly the intent

of this project and it is important to note its intent in this summary.

"The project is expected to give particular attention to management rather than technical issues. While several distinct databases are in process of being developed in the different agencies, the essential expertise in system development is not being built up. The missing element is the system of linking the analysis and evaluation of data to the routine, and sometimes special, needs of decision makers".

The evaluation team has examined the project carefully, in-depth, component-by-component, objective-by-objective. This focus on detail should not lead the reader to ignore what this project is trying to do in its essence, and how well that is being accomplished.

A. Findings


~ Protect Concept and Design

1. The project concept and [design. as](#) stated in the Revised Project Document, (1997) is basically logical in and of itself and presented in an integrated fashion.

2. The project document is, however, flawed in its overly optimistic statements of "risk" as presented ("low" in two statements where the situation was and is "high") and an incomplete listing of other risks (on coordination and communication, implementation delays, institutional management weaknesses).

3. The project document should have more clearly acknowledged that "capacity-building" (especially in the case of NAEM) is a long-term process; not an activity that can be adequately accomplished in the relatively short time frame of the revised project.

4 The statement on "Sustainability" in the revised project document gives a very one-dimensional view on this concept ("the Sustainability of these institutions is already assured by the commitment of GOB funding **at a** time when there has been no UNESCO/UNDP intervention"). That the physical buildings (they will continue to exist) and even some of the staff may have been and be "sustained" - and even "enhanced" through training (which is sustained in individuals), does not give an accurate prediction of sustainability in terms of the



true continuing vitality and viability of an organization (NAEM is the particular focus of this finding).

5 The Project and the New CCF (Country Cooperation Framework): The new CCF (2001-2005), while not explicitly mentioning EMIS efforts, does supply an adequate foundation and sense of fit with the BGD/92/009 project. The project is relevant to the intent of the new CCF, as with the previous CCF,; in terms of its focus on Sustainable Human Development and more specifically its overall goal to "accelerate poverty reduction through improved governance at sub-national and national levels", complemented by "policy and institutional support to local governance for improved delivery of socio-economic services". The Revised Project Document, with its continuing emphasis on data and training related to post-primary education, notes that "according to BIDS research, literacy and access to higher education is a major determinant of household income". The EMIS project also is contributing important information to the effort to reduce gender inequalities through its effort to provide an up-to-date database

on female schooling to decision makers.

~ Project Implementation

1. A fundamental finding, upon which other findings should be reviewed, is that it is important to recognize that the EMIS project in its revised form, even with its long but "hiccupping" history, has actually only come together and been fully staffed six months ago. , This is a very short time given the stated project objectives. With a core purpose of institutional strengthening,- (and with the recognition that the Ministry of Education has been trying to fill many empty posts related to the project) it must be recognized too that such strengthening, unlike the purchase of hardware, is a lengthy and difficult process. This realization, among all the project's development partners, is not yet in place.

2. The progress and implementation of the project, despite the caveat in the finding just above, rest largely with the initiatives being taken by the international advisors and consultants. It has been noted by the Mission that the Government states it has taken "substantial initiative" but the staff and management of the institutions, despite "decentralization", seem reluctant or unable to take initiative. (Decentralization without true 'devolution' of power).

3. The physical facilities components of the project are being pursued more avidly than the human resource development components (training, research, publications). While understandable (the human resource components are fundamentally more difficult to implement), it remains an important finding.

4. International group trainings and study tours continue to be plagued by processing delays (through the Ministry of Education) and frustrations re the selection of candidates. The concept of "lead time", a simple management idea,

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has not been implemented in this project, resulting in last minute stressful, crisis management situations.

5. International group trainings have been subject to the selection and nomination of candidates not appropriate to the capacity-building aspect of this project; a project with a key objective of building the capacity of the principal institutions involved. Despite some leeway for "orientation" trips, there remains obvious difficulty in the selection of candidates for group trainings, with future nomination lists of these trainings containing personnel either outside of the project's institutional focus or simply not relevant to its specific capacity-building process. With capacity-building focusing on NAEM and BANBEIS in the project document, the Mission has noted that out of 34 participants on study tours to India, Pakistan, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand during 1998-2000, only 6 represented NAEM and 8 represented BANBEIS.

6. At the institutional level, the project's changing requirements during the past several years are seen, particularly at NAEM, as a source of continuing and


extraordinary stress and turmoil in keeping up with changing requests for information from above. The meandering process by which such requests make their way up (and down) the bureaucratic chain, from desk to desk, has been described by one institutional staff member as "Desk Fever".

7. There have been recurrent inter-organizational coordination and communication problems, between these two agencies and the Government of Bangladesh, and to a lesser degree between UNESCO and UNDP.

8. Coordination difficulties have extended to the preparations for and implementation of this Mid-Term Evaluation Mission.

10. Two international advisors, one each in NAEM and BANBEIS, appear to be highly valued by those institutions and have made important strides in helping institutional management and staff to achieve project objectives. Importantly, these advisors, who were supposed to be in place almost two years ago, actually only began 6 months ago.

11. There are "steering mechanisms" for the project but they focus principally on BANBEIS. A "Technical Advisory Group" for NAEM was proposed three months ago (and reportedly formed) but has yet to move into active implementation. Relevant to the work of BANBEIS, a "Survey Committee" has met 8 times during 1999 and 2000. Also relevant mostly to BANBEIS, is a "Technical Committee" that has met 3-4 times. This committee has advised on the purchase of equipment and soon finishes its work upon completion of the Final Report on the National Education Survey (NES). There is a "Working Group" which meets once a week to review work progress. There is an "EMIS" Coordination Committee" noted in the Project Proforma (October 2000), composed of high level education officials but no record of its meetings is available. Nevertheless, the key Steering



Committee (SC), (which also includes the donor partners) required in the revised project document and responsible for formulating policy and overseeing general management, and for review, approval, monitoring, and facilitating activities, has not even been constituted. It is important to note, however, that based on the Mission's previous experience in Bangladesh, it is doubtful that a "Steering Committee" is the most useful mechanism for this project. The project definitely

requires "steering" but an oversight group at a more operational (and less lofty) level, would be more desirable. A PIU (Project Implementation Unit) was also required in the revised project document and that too has not been constituted.

12. Project monitoring, as conducted by the Ministry of Planning through the use of a Project Monitoring Form, focuses principally on funds allocated and spent, quantities of purchases, and approvals given. Outputs and processes are ignored.

13 Project monitoring, through Quarterly Progress Review reports and Six Month Progress Reports, as well as an "Integrated Work Plan", all provided by the project, are valuable, detailed, timely, component-by-component monitoring tools.

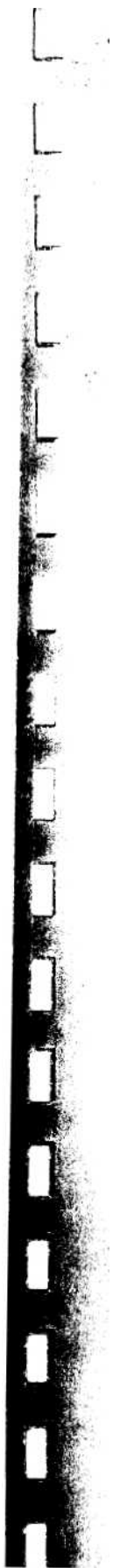
14 The project, as it presently stands, has very adequate funds but dislodging those funds from the 'funding tree' seems to require inordinate effort to get them spent for activities already planned and agreed-upon. Exceptionally slow, often late, disbursement of funds for the project is a continuing problem. It has been reported to the Mission that some delays in disbursement are coming from the donor agencies. UNDP, for its part, assures the Mission that all requests from the Project are acted upon with all due speed and that there have been no delays of this type on its part. These delays are becoming so crucial that they may prevent the completion of key project activities by the end date of the project.

~ Project Objectives: Predicted Completion

Objective 1: *"To develop a statistical profile of education at the post-primary level and keep it updated on an annual basis."* Based on current progress, all activities will be completed and the objective of developing a statistical profile will be accomplished.

Objective 2: *"To strengthen BANBEIS as the technical support service institution for EMISs in MOE"*. Based on current progress, all activities will be completed by the end of the project and the objective will be accomplished.

Objective 3: *"To create and strengthen EMIS in BANBEIS and sub-sectoral EM/S in MOE PC and DTE"*. Based on current progress, project activities will be completed by the end of the project and the objective will be accomplished.



Objective 4: *"To promote increased efficiency and effectiveness in the management and administration of the secondary education sub-sector".* While there is a good chance that all activities may be accomplished under this objective, it is unclear whether this will actually lead to "increased **efficiency** and effectiveness in the management and administration of the secondary education sub-sector". The objective may indeed 'promote' efficiency and effectiveness but other factors, including poor quality, largely lecture, training; difficulties in devolution and decentralization of authority; and problems in communication and coordination; may hinder the real accomplishment of this objective.

Objective 5: *"To upgrade NAEM for advanced training and research in the field of educational planning and management."* At the present rate of progress, as noted in the current Integrated Work Plan, many but not all of the activities will be accomplished. While NAEM's capacity will be "upgraded", the extent to which NAEM can operate as a dynamic "Learning Organization" that will be an example to educational managers in Bangladesh remains in doubt. It is important to note, however, that the design of the project allows a relatively short time frame for capacity building; a long-term process.

1. BANBEIS has no electrical generator (nor does NAEM) and the lack of such a generator, especially at BANBEIS with its important processing of educational data, endangers the considerable investment already made in setting up the technical side of an EMIS system.

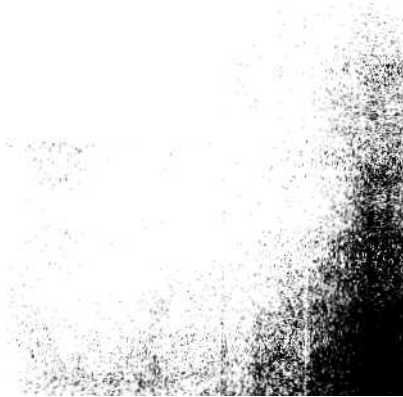
2. Computers do exist in the offices of senior staff but as yet there are only a very limited number of personnel who have developed the necessary skills to actually use them. The computers continue to be treated as "typewriters" which should only be used by secretaries/clerks. Senior personnel insist on keeping computers in their offices but are unwilling to learn to use them (perhaps creating an "indispensability syndrome"). While this is somewhat understandable from many perspectives (computers and the "computer culture" are relatively new in Bangladesh), it is nevertheless a situation that must change.

3. GIS is a marvelous tool but it basically focuses on physical features while ignoring the learning-teaching resources of the area. This statement in no way means that GIS is not valuable; it is.

4. BANBEIS is moving steadily towards the full establishment of an important database. It has done the preparation, 'is doing and will -continue to do the processing, and will have ready data available and increasingly **accessible** to educational decision makers. While this institution should not have the burden of getting the information "used" placed upon it, the degree to which ~~in~~ it can make it accessible is very important. The "linkage" between accessible data and getting it used routinely by educational decision makers in a shared fashion ~~not~~ just by

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Technology, Information and its Use



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decision makers at the top) will be an important (and later) test of the importance of this whole effort. Information does not equal wisdom.

5. The LAN computer network within the Ministry of Education is reported to not be functioning properly, basically because it is too slow. In large part this is because the computers within the system, (46 of them) are old, out-of-date and slow. In addition, there is a problem with the system itself and this can be repaired quite easily by an outside contractor, according to the Senior EMIS Advisor, for about 1000 taka per computer. It should be noted that this activity and problem is not specifically within the purview of this project but addressing the problem would facilitate key personnel within the Ministry in accessing the EMIS database from BANBEIS.

6. The Directorate of Technical Education DTE) has received all equipment (basically computers) provided for it by the project but does require training programs on EMIS.

7. NAEM has a completely equipped computer laboratory but with 2 personnel who focus on training. NAEM requires personnel who can work in database development.

8. There is a plan to place a computer in each of the districts of Bangladesh, with the computers connected into a network. This appears to be an excellent idea

but is a major undertaking.

~ Capacity Building/Institution-Building

1. No change is seen as yet in the overall "system", which transfers personnel receiving regional or overseas training through the project out of the institutions that are the project's focus. Capacity building, particularly at NAEM, is basically stymied by "the system". There needs to be a "Critical Mass" of appropriately qualified, dynamic staff at NAEM. As yet there is not. As noted earlier, it is very important to not view NAEM or BANBEIS in isolation; they are part of a system that often frustrates the efforts of talented people to get things done in the institutions.

2. Major efforts have been made to start building human resource capacity at NAEM and at BANBEIS. Study tours to Pakistan, India, Korea and Malaysia during 1998 focused on EMISIGIS. In 1999, a study tour brought ten people to India to focus on Educational Planning and Management. On the same subject, eight more persons participated in a study tour to Thailand in June 2000. One person, from NAEM, has completed an 8-month fellowship to IIEP in Paris on Educational Planning and Management, and another person, also from **NAEM** is currently following the same program. One person from MOE **participated in -a** fellowship program on Educational Policy Analysis and Planning'. at - Harvard University in the USA. It is important to note, however, that out of 34 participants

on the study tours/group trainings from 1998 to June 2000, only 6 represented NAEM and 8 represented BANBEIS. While it is understood that there rules and regulations to be observed for nominating the candidates for these study tours and group trainings, this effort does not seem to maximize the possibilities of strengthening the capacity of these focal institutions.

3. In terms of upgrading the Library at NAEM, that institution has now received (late November 2000) approximately 70-75 books and journals from UNESCO. The Director of Research and Documentation of NAEM has, on his own initiative, obtained 175 books (not yet catalogued) from the Asia Foundation in mid-November 2000. Last year, (1999) the library at NAEM received 700 books. Nevertheless, the operational capabilities of the NAEM library as a useful educational tool currently can be said to be in a "state of limbo" with training of

the librarians urgently needed and the facilities upgraded. There is no sub-component of substantial library development in this project; a perceived need.

4. Relevant to technical support at NAEM, no Newsletter has been published for the past 15 months. There is no financial allocation for this newsletter.

5. Capacity-building at BANBEIS is in a more positive mode with the staff working with a good degree of enthusiasm on project activities with considerable learning taking place.


6. Neither BANBEIS nor NAEM, however, is a **"Learning Organization"; "an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together"**. This is sad. Further, NAEM and BANBEIS also need to "share a vision" with other educational officials.

7. As noted, the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) was also earmarked for strengthening in the revised project document. Though not a "focal" institution of the project, it does require more training programs in EMIS under the project to build its own capacity.

~ Training and Training Methodologies

1. Relevant to the technical support and training role of NAEM, training methods used are approximately 90 per cent lecture, with little effort at implementing participatory methodologies as recommended for government training institutions in the Ministry of Establishment study and report of the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Strengthening Project (1998).

2. Much of the training effort at NAEM goes into the "Foundations" course (not a part of the project) and is delivered in large auditoriums via the lecture technique.



3. It is important to note that, substantively, Educational Management and Administration contains an important component of "curricular management and administration".

4. 'Follow-ups' to training programs implemented by BANBEIS and NAEM are not being done.

Assessment

1. Relevance

A. The purpose of the project, and its stated objectives, is very worthwhile. The need for a usable database of educational statistics and for well-trained educational managers is clearly relevant to the overall development of Bangladesh. The approach is suitable and its capacity -building aim is merit worthy. The modality of execution (nationally executed) in and of itself is highly relevant, but first requires adequate strengthening of the government entities to administer and generally cope with projects such as this before asking those entities to efficiently and effectively administer, monitor and evaluate the many projects funded by donor agencies. Without such strengthening at higher levels of administration, and proven, enhanced capabilities, strengthening lower level institutions through the traditional project process becomes frustrating and very difficult. The institutions selected for this project (the recipient institutions) would appear to be appropriate and quite relevant. Strengths and weaknesses, especially in statements of "Risks" in the revised project document are inadequately represented/estimated (much too low) and therefore give far too optimistic a

perspective on the challenges of this undertaking. The project fits with the goals and objectives of the new CCF (2001-2005).

2. Performance

A. Personnel: The two long-term international advisors for this project are highly appropriate, and highly skilled; above average in all respects. They are both efficient experts and are being used to build capacity in a difficult situation. It should be noted that, in a project that has a long, stop-and-start-again history, the Senior EMIS Advisor is now working with the project for the second time. This has given an important sense of "continuity" to at least the BANBEIS part of the project. The short-term Education Finance consultant provided valuable training and training materials on that subject, and also made useful observations and recommendations regarding finance in NAEM. The composition of the project consultants to date has been **principally** male, principally international, and balanced in terms of types of expertise..

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B. Training: The training provided through the project appears to be of high quality. Of major concern, however, is the selection of appropriate trainees. Despite project intentions to focus on the major project-related institutions for trainee candidates (re international group trainings), in order to promote capacity-building, far too many candidates from outside of the key project institutions are being nominated. This subverts the focused capacity-building intent of the project.

Of equal concern is what will happen to the personnel who have received training. The concern is two-fold. First, there may be a continuation of the practice of transferring civil service personnel out of the institutions to which they first return. Second, if the trained personnel do stay in their institutions after receiving training, they are often frustrated, and their talents wasted in institutions which have little vision, or support, and therefore there is little "critical mass" for reform of the old ways of doing business.

C. Equipment: Equipment is appropriate, and is being delivered largely on time to this point. It is essential that remaining equipment be delivered as per schedule. It is difficult to make a determination on the quality of maintenance. It is important to note that computers in the offices of key NAEM staff members (Directors) are not yet being used by the Directors themselves but rather by secretaries.

D. Management: Dialogue between the donor organizations for this project and the Ministry of Education seems to be at a difficult stage. If not acrimonious, it

can be described as tense Back-stopping of the project via the efforts of the international advisors is fine, but the over-all back-stopping by donor representatives is only adequate because of the coordination and communication problems of this nationally-executed project and because of "ownership" problems of the government partner. Monitoring of the project by the Ministry of Planning unfortunately focuses only on "inputs" but monitoring through the donor agencies is somewhat more qualitative and thus more useful. Management of the two principal project institutions requires considerable capacity-building

3. Success

In terms of capacity building, this project must so far receive a mixed review, based principally on the situations at the two major focal institutions. The project as revised, however, has only been fully functioning and fully staffed for six months. The context at BANBEIS seems to be a reasonably good "enabling environment", while the context at NAEM as yet leans more towards a "disabling environment". Institutional development and Human Resource Development are at least satisfactory while at NAEM the situation remains frustrating and marginal.



A positive and modest impact is being made on the BANBEIS beneficiaries, its staff. The impact on NAEM' staff is still quite marginal but with some highly

talented individuals waiting for visionary and dynamic management. It would be difficult to say at this point if "target groups" are receiving impact: basically the answer is "not yet". BANBEIS as an institution can be said to be receiving a modest impact while the impact on NAEM institutionally is still small.

Sustainability is very mixed. Based on an objective-by-objective review of the project, it can be said that BANBEIS overall has the better chance for postproject sustainability. Since one of the key objectives for NAEM basically concerns capacity-building, it must be said that the chances there remain weak, although if project activities are completed, this will improve. In terms of Government commitment, this project does not appear to be a high priority. If it was, there would be a much more solid effort to support it. NAEM should be a "star" institution for the Ministry of Education. At present it is not. It is important that the situations at NAEM, and BANBEIS, be considered, "holistically"; as part of a larger system with major problems of its own. From NAEM come forth trainees who have and can have a profound influence, through innovative management of education, on the destiny of the nation. In socio-economic terms, there are so far few positive signs in terms of sustainability from the NAEM side but with partially successful signs in terms of BANBEIS. Sustainability influences from the project on management are as yet weak, but could, with immediate firm steps by the development partners, strengthen. It is possible that in terms of finance, there may be some effort to preserve the computerized database, and the positions and talents of the people who deal with it at BANBEIS but there has been no sign that appropriate and strong financial sustaining efforts will occur, at NAEM. The technology is suitable and people are learning from it at BANBEIS, with potential for outreach to many organizations if the project receives strong support. Having technology, and maintaining it is important. Having people, educational managers, with talent, vision, enthusiasm and top-notch training is much more important for the future of education in Bangladesh and the country itself.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given, the project as it stands has profound difficulties, particularly in terms of capacity-building, management, government and donor commitment, donor-MOE coordination and communication, and sustainability. Also given, previous if not continuous long-term support, considerable investment, and the on-the-ground presence of two carefully selected and well-qualified international advisors. Finally, given, a holistic view must be taken to the situation of the focal institutions in this project; they operate in a system that makes progress more difficult than it should be.

'Great Expectations' on impact should be tempered by a realistic perspective on where the project is on its implementation continuum, how much has been done, and how much has yet to be accomplished. Once again it is important to note that this revised project has only been fully functioning, and fully staffed, for a very modest six months. Development is a continuous process.

Having carefully weighed the options for this project at mid-term, the following recommendations are made by the Mission:

A. In order to "stay the course" to best effect, and to promote sustainability, *an important and urgent effort must be made to improve what is perceived by this Mission as a major weakness; a perceived lack of "ownership" of the project by the Government AND a perceived lack of full commitment to it by all of the development partners. "Commitment", it should be emphasized does not mean only the commitment of money. From the point of view of the Mission, commitment means much more, including taking time for good communication and coordination. This statement on ownership and commitment is made in full cognizance of the overall pledges of the Government to increased efforts in the Education sector, and to the difficulties of coping with a wide variety of projects, donors and their requirements. Immediate activation of the required Steering Committee (or better, a more operational oversight body) and the PIU would be part of this recommendation to all of the development partners. "By All **Means**" the Mission calls upon a renewed effort by the development partners to sit down and coherently, diplomatically and practically determine how the project, during its remaining time frame, can become "fully owned" by the Government.*

B. It is strongly recommended that all of the development partners in the project (the Government, UNESCO, UNDP) take immediate steps to improve the coordination and communication problems that have plagued the project; between the Government and the donor partners, and to a lesser degree between UNESCO and UNDP. This is a key to project success.

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C. With sustainability and an acute awareness of the limited time frame

remaining in the project as key considerations, it is strongly recommended that the Government partner take immediate steps, within the next three months, to explore alternative funding and implementation solutions for the work of the project beyond its current time period.

D. In order to stay the course, even in difficult circumstances, it is desirable that the tenure of the capable project staff be extended until the end of the project in order to ensure the achievement of priority activities.

E. In order to make maximum use of a talented person, it is recommended that the Senior EMIS Advisor prepare for and conduct a training program for NAEM staff on planning and research that makes use of the data now being collected and compiled by BANBEIS. The linkage that should be built between these two institutions is an important consideration and should be emphasized in the training program, to be held during the last two months of the project.

F. The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) has received all of the equipment planned for it by the project but needs and should receive training in EMIS.

G. It is essential to the security of the database being compiled at BANBEIS on post-secondary education in Bangladesh, that a diesel-powered generator be purchased for the project for use at BANBEIS in the first quarter of 2001.

H. The Government partner should make an immediate effort, within the next three months, to find funds to hire an outside contractor to improve the operations of the LAN network in the Ministry of Education. It should be recognized that this activity is not expressly within the purview of the project but that it would facilitate key personnel within the Ministry to access the EMIS database from BANBEIS. The Senior EMIS Advisor has noted that this can be done for approximately 1000 taka per computer and is relatively easy to accomplish. Total number of computers: 46. There is, however, a fundamental need to purchase more modern, faster computers.

I. Project-related training programs conducted by the two institutions which are the focus of this project, BANBEIS and NAEM, should follow to the greatest extent possible the recommendations set out for the Ministry of Establishment in the research study report Bangladesh Public Administration Training Strengthening Project (November 1998); basically this, means a major reduction in the amount of lecture time and an increase in the culture and use of hands-on and participatory techniques.



J. Leadership in BANBEIS and NAEM, and all of the staff members of these

organizations, should develop a "Shared Vision" ³ during the remaining project period that is appropriate for each of these key, apex institutions. (This does not mean a vision shared by BANBEIS and NAEM but rather separate organizational visions). In essence a "Shared Vision" is a vision for what an organization can and should be and where it should be going. that is not just the idea of one person but rather is developed and "shared" as part of a participatory process that involves all members of the organization. The vision is then "owned" by the organization's members and greater commitment results. Part of this process could involve developing short-, medium- and long-term plans of development by each individual for the duration of the project and beyond, and then working according to these plans. Performance-based objectives for each institution should be developed in the process.

K In the remaining period of the project, the Senior Project Advisor and the Senior EMIS Advisor should (A) identify strategically critical areas and activities which the local personnel should undertake to develop necessary competence and expertise to function independently and effectively beyond the project period, and (B) assist each institution to produce concrete plans for sustainability as vital "learning organizations"⁴ beyond the project period.

L. In order to eliminate the continuing fund disbursement bottlenecks in this nationally-executed project, it is recommended the development partners should discuss, agree upon and implement as quickly as possible, a modified financial disbursement process which requires the signatory participation of both the Government and the donor "Executing Agency". This recommendation is made with the full realization of the formalities and difficulties involved in reaching the necessary approval after the project document has already been signed and the project is in the process of being implemented.

M. It is recommended that the development partners in this project consider the following scenarios or options (and/or any other variations), and their implications, for the remaining life of this project:

Scenario One: The project should continue on to its end, with existing funding, in 2001 as planned. A lot of investment has gone into this project, and although implementation in some areas has been slow, it is important that the work of the project proceed. "Stay the course". In this scenario are two sub-recommendations: (1) all of the development partners should take

³ For a more complete definition of a "shared vision", please see the book by Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline, a copy of which is being given to the NAEM Library as well as to the Senior project Advisor.

For a definition of a "Learning Organization", also see The Fifth Discipline by Peter Senge..

positive steps to show full commitment to the project and its key institutions by

expediting project resources according to previously agreed-upon rules and regulations, and through marked improvement of coordination and communication within the project and between the development partners (Commitment, as has been emphasized, does not mean only the commitment of money; it means much more, including taking the time for good communication and coordination) and (2), the Government, with 'assistance from current donor representatives, immediately (within three months) fully explore alternative funding sources and other means to sustain the work of the project beyond its current end date (this exploration should specifically determine how the two focal and apex institutions of this project, NAEM and BANBEIS, can grow into vital "Learning Organizations" as defined, rather than just "existing". "Existence" should not equal Sustainability). The Mission prefers this scenario.

Scenario Two: This is the "scenario of the status quo". The project should continue on to its end, with funding in 2001 as planned, but the development partners would not take the recommended actions in Scenario One. Implications: the project may "fade away" from lack of full commitment and the necessary planning, with adequate "lead time" for the future, beyond the project end date. In this scenario, all the money would be spent, most activities would be accomplished, some but not all goals would be met, and technical specifications reached, but an otherwise valuable project will not be a "success" because of ownership and sustainability considerations.

Scenario Three: The project should be extended, perhaps for, one or two months, in order to allow a better opportunity to complete project activities at full quality. This scenario should only be contemplated with full and immediate commitment by the development partners to the two sub-recommendations within Scenario One. This scenario is basically the same as Scenario One but with a longer time frame.

Scenario Four: The project, and funding, should be shut down as soon as possible, preferably by the end of the year 2000, due to considerations of ownership, funding, continuing implementation delays, communication and coordination difficulties between the development partners as well as within the project, and sustainability. Implications: project activities and assistance currently underway would be curtailed or stopped.

All of the above scenarios, and variations of them, should be considered by the development partners immediately following the completion of this Mission. The time to make key choices that will affect the ^{project's} future is now.

It is not lost upon this Evaluation Mission that there are major "ironies" to be seen in the findings of the evaluation exercise. "EMIS", the abbreviation, represents four key words, chief of which is "Education". Having a "System" that works harmoniously together is important. Having good "Information" is important. "Management" through good information for decision-making can, though not necessarily will, lead to better Education.

It is therefore an irony that what should be the "star" institution for the training of educational managers in Bangladesh, NAEM, receives so little support and that the training the managers do receive, pedantic and non-participatory, is what is passed down through the system; to teachers, and to children. It should be just the opposite. While Information can be helpful, it is "attitude" as well as how the Information is used, and in what style, that can make a difference. "Learning", not training, is the key.

It is an irony that the work of a project whose focus basically comes down to good communications and coordination, good human relations, is so mired in poor communication and coordination.

Finally, It is an irony that "Management" is a key word in this project. The project itself has had repeated delays and coordination problems throughout its history that come down to "Management" that is basically weak and lacking in vision at the institutional level and so entangled (despite 'lip-service' to 'decentralization') in systemic regulations and approvals that talented and good people below are being wasted. Those people can only raise their hands to the sky and blame "The System".

Having said this, the Mission firmly believes that Scenario One, (or Three)) as outlined, are by far the best options. At the other extreme, to end the project earlier would defeat all that it is trying to accomplish, which is basically relevant and good. The Mission has already seen, first-hand, what happens, in another project outside of the Education Sector in Bangladesh, when communication and coordination breaks down and donors and the Government become so involved in fractious negotiations that all progress being made is stopped and offices darkened. That should not happen here, for an important evaluative question then comes into play, "What would happen if nothing is done? Despite all difficulties, to come to nothing, after having traveled so far, is too easy, and should not be contemplated.

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V. LESSONS LEARNED Old

Lessons (To Be) Learned Again:

1.

The "'traditional' indicators of project success" are: (A) Spend all the money; (B) Get the project done on schedule, and (C) meet technical specifications. When the World Bank asked project field managers in more than 600 diverse development projects what they thought of these indicators, more than 70 per cent agreed that, while the above indicators were important, the most important indicator of project success was "Good Human Relations/Good Communication and Coordination". This lesson applies to the EMIS project.

2.

Reasons Why Training Programs Succeed or Fail: (1) Lack of support from Top Management, (2) Little knowledge of the audience and their needs, (3) Inadequate pre-selling of participants by their bosses, (4) Training program is 'canned' (The Not-Invented Here Syndrome), (5) Too much lecture and one-way communication, (6) Instructor lacks credibility and/or familiarity with the subject, (7) no transfer of training from classroom to job, (8) Too much theory. No 'how to' or 'hands on'. (9) Drives a wedge between participant and boss, (10) No ongoing plan for continued growth, (11) no evaluation of impact, (12) Wrong people as participants.

3.

Over-expectations of Training Impact: Training is not a cure-all; it frequently does not solve the problems of organizations, and many managers expect too much impact from Training. Trained participants thrown back into their old organizational environments, with continuing routine problems, frequently end up more frustrated than before the training. Training must be coupled with many other *efforts* at organizational change to make any impact at all (good management, mentoring, on-the-job training. better funding and overall better support).

Project Specific Lessons:

1.

Experienced, highly qualified international project advisors who have been carefully selected for their "fit" with the project and the culture of a country are a major asset and can help a project make great strides and achieve its goals.

2.

When there is a "continuity" of a qualified project advisor who is respected, over

the life of a long project (even if the advisor is not there during the full project period but does return repeatedly, the project will receive greater benefit than a series of different advisors/personalities.

3.

"Estranged" relationships between donor agencies and government agencies in a Nationally Executed Project severely hinder project progress. It is often the project beneficiaries who are "executed" by frustration in the process.

4.

When government agencies and their staff must cope with large numbers of projects, from various donor agencies, and involving large sums of money and different methods and requirements for reporting and administration, it becomes difficult to manage the complexities of all of the projects with consistent high-quality management and personal attention. This is particularly true when there are inadequate numbers of staff, adequately trained. Greater attention should be paid to strengthening higher administrative bodies to administer the multitude of donor funded development projects.

5.

It is much more difficult to change people than to change technology or physical facilities.

6.

Care must be taken to view project progress in a realistic project and development time frame. Expecting more than is humanly possible, for example after full staffing for only six months, is counter-productive. Development, and especially "capacity-building" is often "messy" and difficult (because it involves people) and takes more time than forecast.

7

All project partners must allow realistic amounts of "lead time" (forward planning) for activities, (particularly, in this case, gaining approvals for participants studying in other countries, but this applies to all project activities). Continual and unnecessary "management by crisis" is too difficult for all concerned. Mistakes are often made and quality of outputs and outcomes are lowered.

8.

Proposing candidates for group trainings and other international study who are *not appropriate for the focus of the training, who have received similar training previously and really do not need it, or who are simply not even within the* institutional capacity-building focus of a project, wastes precious funds, time and talent. Ultimately, beneficiaries and the nation suffer from such choices.

9.

Under-estimation of project risks in a project document, perhaps made in order to originally "sell" a project for funding, ultimately leads to problems in the implementation process by under-estimating the amount of time and effort required.

10.

A full sense of responsibility and "ownership" of a project, as evidenced by maximum support and commitment to the institutions involved by the Government partners in a nationally-executed project, is a key to project success and its sustainability..

11.

Transition Lessons.. With the end of a project in sight, it is the responsibility of the government partner(s) to make speedy and effective efforts to make sure that the project's capacity-building efforts are strongly sustained beyond the end date of the project with Government funds if available and if not, through inquiries and applications to all other appropriate funding sources. Learning this lesson leads to smooth transitions, good planning, continued sustainability, and the protection of investments already made.

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"HUMAN BEINGS ARE DESIGNED FOR LEARNING.
NO ONE HAS TO TEACH AN INFANT HOW TO WALK,
OR TALK, OR MASTER THE SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS
NEEDED TO STACK EIGHT BUILDING BLOCKS THAT DON'T TOPPLE.
CHILDREN COME FULLY EQUIPPED WITH AN INSATIABLE DRIVE
TO EXPLORE AND TO EXPERIMENT.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS IN OUR SOCIETY
ARE ORIENTED PREDOMINANTLY TOWARD CONTROLLING
RATHER THAN LEARNING, REWARDING INDIVIDUALS RATHER

THAN CULTIVATING THEIR NATURAL CURIOSITY AND IMPULSE
TO LEARN.

THE YOUNG CHILD ENTERING SCHOOL DISCOVERS QUICKLY
THAT THE NAME OF THE GAME IS GETTING THE RIGHT ANSWER
AND AVOIDING MISTAKES---
A MANDATE NO LESS COMPELLING
TO THE ASPIRING MANAGER.

OUR PREVAILING SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT
HAS DESTROYED OUR PEOPLE"

**W. Edwards Deming (Leader
of the Quality Movement)**

**As quoted in:
The Leader's New Work: Building
Learning Organizations.
Sloan Management Review Fall,
1990. p. 7**