

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Pramod Bhatta

Introduction

This paper focuses on community mobilization and participation in one of the biggest social sector projects in the history of Nepal – the Basic and Primary Education Project, now program, hereafter referred to as BPEP.¹ BPEP envisions community mobilization as the key to address the issues of non-enrollment, non-attendance and low retention in primary education on a sustainable basis. It has laid stress on bottom-up, community based planning where parents, teachers and other stakeholders are consulted in program formulation and management of BPEP activities on an institutional basis. To bring about increased public awareness for mobilization, it has devised specific programs such as sensitization and information dissemination on BPEP through: village level discussions; use of posters and pamphlets; plays; conducting of surveys and literacy drive campaigns.

I begin my discussion with a general introduction to BPEP and the provisions it has for community mobilization and participation. I then provide a detailed account, based on fieldwork, of the nature of community mobilization and participation in the communities of Dhanusha district. I argue that while there is plenty of community interest in education, meaningful participation is not possible without proper access to information and ownership over the program. Furthermore, much remains to be done to translate the policies, plans and programs of BPEP into practice.

The Basic and Primary Education Program

In 1990, Nepal became a participant and a signatory to the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand. Affirmed by

1 This paper is based on my master's dissertation "Community Mobilization in Primary Education: A Sociological Study of Community Mobilization in Basic and Primary education in Dhanusha District," submitted to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of Tribhuvan University, Nepal, in May 2000 AD.

Ministers of Education from around the world, as well as representatives of most multi-lateral, bilateral, and international non-governmental organizations involved in educational assistance, this conference emphasized education for all by the year 2000 AD. Soon after this conference, His Majesty's Government of Nepal formulated and implemented the BPEP. The first phase of BPEP (BPEP I) started in 1992 and ended in 1997. BPEP I is said to have borrowed extensively from, and built upon, the experiences of Seti Education for Rural Development Project (SERDP) and the Primary Education Project (PEP) of the 1980s (BPEP 1997:96)². BPEP I attracted immense foreign assistance (mostly in the form of grant aid but also as loans) - over a hundred million US dollars - making it the largest and the most impressive looking social sector project in the history of Nepal. The major donors for the first phase were the International Development Association (IDA), Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (BPEP 1997:225). By 1997, BPEP I covered forty districts and served about fifty five percent of the total public schools in the country.

The primary objectives of BPEP I were to increase access and equity, enhance quality and relevance, and improve the management efficiency of primary education (BPEP 1997:97-102). It had identified fourteen components of focus: textbook and curriculum development and dissemination; regular evaluation; teacher training; resource center development; early childhood development; construction; non-formal education; women's education; education for special target groups; special education; community mobilization; enhanced technical capability; improvement in educational management and information system; and program management and improvement.

In the first phase, the programs and activities of BPEP were carried out independent of the Ministry of Education (MOE). At that time the organizational structure of BPEP at the central level consisted of three layers: a policy formulation and coordination committee, a central level project management office and field level project operations. The central level project management office headed by a project director was responsible for overall planning, programming, implementation,

2 SERDP and PEP tried to decentralize the school management system by adopting a school cluster system, with resource center schools and satellite schools. SERDP also tried to encourage community participation by linking basic education with rural development.

supervision, and evaluation of the project activities (BPEP 1997:136). At the district level, a separate BPEP office had been created for overseeing the implementation and management in the district within the District Education Office (DEO). At the community level, schools were clustered under a resource center school (usually a high school) manned by a resource person. The resource person was responsible for the implementation, monitoring and supervision of BPEP activities and the extension of professional support to the cluster of schools, called satellite schools. The resource person was accountable to the project coordinator at the district level.

However, in 1997, the project was changed into a program and firmly placed within the MOE. BPEP II, to be implemented in all seventy five districts, has been designed within the overall framework envisaged in the Ninth Plan and in line with the objectives identified by BPEP I (BPEP 1999:11-13)³. It has been implemented since 1999 in more than sixty districts of the country. BPEP II covers the period 1997-2002 and has also mobilized foreign assistance of over one hundred million US dollars. The major donors are DANIDA, the European Union (EU), IDA, Finish International Development Assistance (FINIDA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD). In addition, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), UNICEF and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) provide funds for well-defined items of the program (BPEP 1999:51).

In BPEP II, the fourteen components identified by BPEP I have been restructured into eight components and sub-components. These are: school physical facilities; special needs education - alternative schooling, education of girls, education of special focus groups, special education; early childhood development; community mobilization and literacy; curriculum renewal and assessment - curriculum and textbooks renewal, continuous assessment; teacher training and professional support - recurrent training and support, certification training; strengthening institutions - strengthening central level institutions, strengthening district planning and implementation, local capacity building; and, core investment program management - program management and a Technical Support Advisory Group (BPEP 1999:16).

3 The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) has emphasized the gradual introduction of compulsory primary education and the launching of national literacy campaigns with the involvement of national and international agencies, local bodies and communities as a strategy for achieving Education for All.

A Department of Education (DOE) has been created at the central level to implement the programs of BPEP within the decentralized planning and management framework. At the district level, the DEO is fully responsible for planning and implementation of basic and primary education programs. Each district has a basic and primary education sub-committee working under the District Education Committee (DEC). The sub-committee consists of representatives of the District Development Committee (DDC), Village Development Committee (VDC), School Management Committee (SMC), head teachers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), education experts, and resource persons. At the community level, there have been no substantial changes except that the resource persons are accountable to the District Education Officers (DEO) (BPEP 1999:60-64).

Provisions for Community Mobilization and Participation in BPEP

BPEP has rightly acknowledged the central place of community mobilization and participation for effective implementation and performance of its activities. BPEP I had the objectives of "more effective information provision and feedback to communities regarding opportunities for basic and primary education and school management issues" and "effective participation of parents and communities in school management, school construction and implementation of other BPEP activities" (BPEP 1992:24). In addition, it had devised a Village Readiness Program. Under this program, the SMC members, teachers and students were expected to launch awareness campaigns on BPEP and conduct surveys of households in their localities to find out the number of school-going age, dropout, and out of school children (BPEP 1992:24).

In BPEP II, it has been recognized that "successful implementation of grassroots level development activities requires effective participation of stakeholders in planning, programming, management, decision-making, resource mobilization and implementation of program activities. [Thus] community awareness programs, orientation programs, interaction meetings, ... have been planned to ensure regular community participation. ... NGOs, parent groups, mother groups, and communities will be entrusted to work as watchdogs of program implementation" (BPEP 1999:28, 65). In addition, it states "community mobilization will begin with the establishment of Village Education Committees (VEC) and SMC. Making them operational will require the active involvement of teachers and resource persons/resource teachers" (BPEP 1999:28). Furthermore, it emphasizes that "mobilization strategies will utilize

literacy programs, local songs and dance, theater and cultural activities to bring about community awareness. Every district and VDC will plan and implement door-to-door campaigns involving teachers, students, local NGOs, mother's groups, religious bodies and other local institutions. National and local events such as Children's Day, Literacy Day, and Women's Day will be utilized for organizing enrollment and retention drives" (BPEP 1999:29). In BPEP II, a total of US dollars 1.2 million has been allocated for community mobilization.

Under the component of community mobilization, SMC members, resource persons and teachers have been entrusted to carry out activities that enhance community mobilization and participation. The SMCs have been authorized to mobilize financial resources for school management, fix tuition and other fees of the school with approval of the DEC and make periodic school inspections and temporary appointment of teachers (BPEP 1997:133). The head teachers are required to "maintain coordination among the teachers, staff, students and parents of the school so as to create a mutually cooperative environment" (BPEP 1997:132-133). The resource persons are required, in addition to pedagogical activities, to "launch community awareness programs to promote enrollment and retention of children, particularly girls and disadvantaged, and collect data, opinions and recommendations on how to best adapt national curriculum to local conditions" (BPEP 1997:44). The DEOs are required to "arrange meetings or seminars of head teachers, teachers, and SMC members with a view to upgrade the education of the district" (BPEP 1997:132-133).

The Reality of Community Mobilization and Participation in BPEP in Dhanusha

The overall objective of this research was to assess and analyze the effectiveness of BPEP with regard to its stated objectives of bringing about community mobilization in public primary education in Dhanusha district. BPEP was chosen because it looms large over the contemporary public primary education sector and affects the lives of almost all primary school-going (and non school-going) children of Nepal. Moreover, at the time of this research, substantial sociological analysis of the program was lacking.

The research was conducted in six public schools – one primary school each in Godar, Labtoli and Kharihani VDCs respectively, a lower secondary school in Manguraha, and two high schools (also the resource center schools) in Kishanpur and Godar VDCs. BPEP has been

functioning in these schools since 1994 and during the time of data collection, the second phase of the program had also been implemented.

The data for this article derives mainly from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations. For each school selected, on average 8 students, 8 parents, 3 teachers, and a head teacher were interviewed. Two resource persons from the resource center schools were also interviewed. More detailed research was carried out in Ghyampali tol and Umra tol of Labtoli VDC and Tadiya of Godar VDC, where a large number of parents, local activists and politicians, youths and students were interviewed. Care was taken to ensure that the perspectives of girl students, Dalit students, Dalit parents (of both school going and non school-going children), female parents and female teachers were included. In addition, the secretary and chairperson of all the VDCs were approached with a series of checklists. Informal interviews were conducted with DEO and BPEP personnel and officials of Aasman-Nepal, Save the Children-Japan and Nepal Red Cross Society. Personal communication with a member of the BPEP Master Plan Team was used to gain additional insights into the program.

Public Knowledge on BPEP

Most people in these communities did not know about BPEP nor its implementation in their localities. Most parents, especially women and Dalit, had never heard of BPEP. Some VDC representatives and educated people were familiar with the name BPEP but had little knowledge about it. Teachers knew that BPEP has made school buildings and provided training to teachers. But even some of them had not heard of the program.

Resource persons too did not have complete information on BPEP; their knowledge was confined to the routine pedagogical activities of the resource center. Resource personnel and teachers had not seen a copy of any of the BPEP documents that have been prepared at the national level and knew nothing about the financial aspects of the program. A teacher from Manguraha stated that BPEP "fosters both physical and mental development of children", while the head teacher from Labtoli said that BPEP "makes buildings". The teachers did not know that there was a Village Readiness Program under which school teachers and SMC members together with the students had to conduct household surveys to find out the number of school going, dropout and out of school children in their localities. Similarly, they did not know that there are provisions for ensuring regular participation of local stakeholders in basic and primary education plan formulation, program implementation, monitoring and

evaluation. However, they did know that the project had recently been changed into a program.

Before the implementation of BPEP in Dhanusha in 1994, an orientation had been organized for the head teachers. However, there had been no further discussions on the strategies, achievements, or problems of BPEP after its implementation in the district. Some teachers alleged that those who represented their schools in meetings, seminars and training at the resource center or the DEO did not share what they had learnt when they returned.

The teachers, parents, and representatives of VDC, NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBO) working in education did not know that BPEP II has provisions for the formation of VEC, parents' groups and mothers' groups. Likewise, they did not know that BPEP includes policies for greater collaboration with local organizations for more effective implementation, monitoring and supervision of BPEP activities.

The major documents of BPEP are published in English only and according to a member of the BPEP Master Plan team, have been prepared for 'donor consumption'. They are highly inaccessible even to researchers based in Kathmandu, let alone people at the grassroots.

Participation in the Formulation of Plans and Programs

Generally, the annual plans and programs of the schools are formulated on the basis of specific directions that come from the resource center and DEO. The head teachers fill out the annual plan form provided by the resource center and send a copy to the concerned resource centers, which then forward it to the DEO. Not all teachers are consulted or informed of what is contained in such plans.

For the first time in 2000 AD, the VDCs and schools were asked to formulate a five-year plan for the primary school in their locality. For this purpose, the resource centers informed the head teachers, VDC officials, NGO representatives and other prominent local personalities in their cluster a few hours before the meeting. VDCs and schools were asked to provide data on the physical infrastructure of the school as well as the number of school going, dropout, disabled, Dalit and girl children in their localities. They were then asked to formulate a five-year plan for improving primary education in their communities by using the format provided by the DOE. All this was accomplished in one meeting and those present did not have the opportunity to ask in-depth questions.

The data provided by the VDCs and schools was then scrutinized. Then the five-year plan was consolidated and forwarded by the resource centers to the DEO which eventually produced a District Education Plan (DEP). The DEP was then forwarded to the DOE with the task considered accomplished. Ironically, the schoolteachers and VDC officials had not seen the DEP, let alone know what it contained.

Resource Mobilization, School Management and Decision Making

In all areas, community members had actively participated in generating resources by, for example, donating cash and providing construction materials and physical labor for school construction. Dalits, in general, had not contributed to school construction either in kind or cash. Many of them stated that they were not aware of such activities. Most VDCs have been providing one or more schoolteachers from their development fund. Many VDCs have also provided money for construction, furniture and drinking water. Local youth clubs and NGOs have also been involved in generating resources for the school.

Though primary education is theoretically free, parents said they have to pay for admissions, examinations and extra-curricular activities. Parents said they were not consulted over how much to be charged and not informed of how the money thus raised was spent. It was reported that school authorities consulted the parents and VDC officials only when there were problems in the school. For example, when some parents in Labtoli threatened teachers physically, the teachers immediately called a community meeting. Likewise, when the locals of the same area accused the teachers of appropriating 'haluwa' (nutritious food), a meeting was called to settle the matter through mutual agreement.

During the time of this research, the SMCs of all schools had been dissolved. According to respondents, some of whom were ex-SMC members, SMCs were primarily concerned with matters related to the physical construction of schools and not with those related to improving the academic environment of schools. Local people were also highly critical of the political elements prevalent in SMCs. The major problem of SMCs in the past, as cited by parents and teachers of Dhanusha, was that there was no proper representation of all the stakeholders. There was too much influence of political parties, especially of those in power, and also of the village elite whose children studied in private boarding schools. Furthermore, there was no system to make SMC's selections or decisions transparent; there was no way to make them accountable to the stakeholders. Consequently, they were unable to generate genuine public

support for improving education. BPEP documents have laid emphasis on revamping the SMCs and establishing community level bodies. However, at the time of research no such bodies had been formed.

Decisions like appointment and transfer of teachers are done solely by the DEO without consultation with, and regard for, the opinions of VDC officials and community members. There were widespread allegations of politicization, 'chakari' and corruption in teacher appointment and transfer. For instance, some people from Labtoli VDC tried to seek the transfer of irregular teachers by directly contacting the DEO over telephone but to no avail. The DEO of Dhanusha, on the other hand, expressed frustration with political intervention at all levels of bureaucracy. He said, "taking action against some teachers is not easy. Some teachers are so powerful that they can have us transferred instead if we try to take actions."

Monitoring and Supervision of Teacher Regularity and Quality of Education

Resource persons and supervisors from the DEO carry out school inspection and supervision. However, it was reported that many local people also took interest in the academic environment of schools. Some were also involved in general monitoring and supervision of teacher regularity and teaching quality.

Interaction between teachers and parents was found to have occurred on issues such as: admission fees; scholarship and textbook distribution; school construction; teacher attendance irregularity and the quality of teaching in the school. Parents stated that schools have never invited them to discuss academic matters of the school. Many parents, mostly male, said they frequently go to schools to urge teachers to be more punctual and teach better. Most female and Dalit parents said they have never gone inside the school premises and interacted with teachers. However, some of them said they had urged teachers to be more regular and teach well when they had the opportunity to meet teachers outside the school. Some parents said that they did not have time to go to the school because they have to go to work.

Teachers pointed out that most parents do not usually come to school. When they do, they come in aggressive moods to ask why their children were beaten, or why their children did not get scholarships. According to teachers, parents have rarely come to discuss the academic performance of their children and the problems of the school. However, they pointed out that more Dalit parents now come to school than before, usually to

inquire about Dalit scholarships⁴. Many Dalit respondents pointed out that some schools had not distributed the scholarships, and in some cases these scholarships have been distributed to non-Dalits and teacher's relatives. However, the VDC and other parents were not aware of such malpractice.

In some communities, people had taken collective action for improving the quality of education. In Tadiya, community members had temporarily shut down the school after they found out that the teachers were declaring unauthorized holidays. A local youth club in Godar had organized interaction programs between teachers, parents and VDC representatives for improving the quality of education in its locality. It had also invited the resource person and DEO to attend these discussions, but they had not shown up. The club has formed a '*Shiksha Sudhar Samitee*' consisting of youth club members, students and other community people to act as a local level pressure group. Similarly, some enthusiastic members from Labtoli had voluntarily formed a committee to monitor teacher attendance regularity and the quality of teaching in the local school. However, their activity was discontinued after there were disputes and allegations that their actions were politically biased.

Many parents acknowledged the poor quality of education in government schools. But instead of taking initiatives to improve the existing system, those who can afford it, have started sending their children, usually male, to private 'boarding' schools. Sending children to tuition classes has also become very popular. When asked what can be done to improve the quality of education in primary schools, the general reply was "we alone cannot do anything; if people from 'above' initiate actions we will definitely help them."

Collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations

Save the Children-Japan and its partner organization Aasman-Nepal⁵, and Nepal Red-Cross Society (NRCS) are the main non-governmental organizations working in the research areas. In most communities, there

4 Dalit scholarship is a scheme developed in line with the component of education for special target groups. At the time of this research, these scholarships were provided through the DEO to 3 or 4 students from the so-called untouchable caste from each school. Beneficiaries each received about Nepali Rupees 250 in cash or equivalent.

5 All the programs of Save the Children-Japan in Dhanusha had been handed over to Aasman-Nepal since 2000 AD. Most of the field level staff and executive members of this organization are from Dhanusha.

are also local youth clubs whose members are relatively well educated, well organized and have a voluntary spirit. Many of these youths command the respect and confidence of community people. Moreover, the youth club members often are the alumni of the local schools and have a very high potential for community mobilization.

NRCS has focused primarily on non-formal education. It has been providing a six-month basic and a nine-month advanced literacy course for women, the elderly and children. After completion, women are encouraged to form savings groups and are given soft loans and training for income generation activities such as goat rearing, and soap and candle production. The children are admitted to formal schools after the completion of the course.

Save the Children-Japan has conducted child literacy classes, graduates of which have been admitted to formal schools. Community facilitators were mobilized to help in school admissions and to generate awareness about education especially among the Dalits, women and poor. Save the Children-Japan has also conducted women's literacy classes and these women have now been organized into savings groups for income generation activities. The organization has also implemented school support programs with focus on school construction, furniture support, child rights and teacher training on multi grade teaching. The teacher training program was carried out in collaboration with the DEO and the resource center at Godar. However, it was discontinued soon after it started as there were frequent transfers of teachers involved in such training and the DEO refused to give recognition to the training provided by Save the Children-Japan.

BPEP has clearly stated that active collaboration will be sought with NGO's working in the area of education. However, it was reported that the DEO had no formal relationships with either the NRCS or Save the Children-Japan. Officials from these organizations stated that they have been forwarding their educational programs to the DEO for approval and consultation. However, they reiterated that the DEO did not inform them and seek their advice when launching similar programs in the same communities. Officials from NRCS, Save the Children-Japan and Aasman-Nepal stated that the DEO had not provided them with information on BPEP despite repeated requests.

BPEP in Dhanusha: What can We Conclude?

There is plenty of community interest in education in Dhanusha. Parents, VDC officials, local youth club members and other community

people are aware of, and concerned about, the low quality of education in their locality. Some of them have been individually and institutionally (as in the case of local youth clubs) involved in the monitoring and supervision of schools. Almost all people interviewed expressed the sentiment that when it comes to education they are ready to provide all help necessary. However, BPEP has not been able to institutionally tap into and channel the enthusiasm that communities have towards education.

Community mobilization, according to Cohen (1996), is a process that involves creating awareness and organizing for action. Cohen outlines two factors that may facilitate community mobilization. The first, which he calls the push factor, occurs when the response to a threat or a felt need acts as a unifying factor. The second, the pull factor, occurs when people see new opportunities (Cohen 1996:233). In the case of BPEP, people have failed to see new educational opportunities; most of them have absolutely no idea about it. Similarly, the low quality of education imparted on their children has failed to push local people to engage more actively in public education; rather those who can afford it, have started sending their children to private boarding schools and tuition classes. Effective mobilization has only occurred with respect to the construction of school buildings. Such types of participation have been often referred to as 'pseudo-participation', in which "the control of the project and decision-making power rests with the planners" (White 1994:17). Here, the participation of the local people is "to obey, willingly or otherwise, a government order to make materials or labor contributions to specific projects" (Stone 1989:212). Access to information is a pre-requisite for meaningful participation in any development programs. Information needs to be provided not only on the BPEP, but also on what provisions are in place for community participation in the program. Moreover, information sharing and dissemination can be better done by community organizations than by government bureaucrats. These responsibilities need to be immediately handed over to such organizations and support needs to be provided for their capacity building. Such provisions already exist in BPEP documents. What is required is more effective implementation.

Similarly, in line with the objectives of a decentralized educational policy, BPEP has emphasized the creation of different grassroots level institutional bodies to promote the participation of local people in need identification and decision making. According to Govinda (1997), even though the formation of such mechanisms marks the first essential step

towards community involvement, the critical questions are: Are these bodies functioning effectively and regularly? Have they been able to generate genuine community participation in school management? And more importantly, how does one activate the functioning of these communities and sustain their involvement in school management? As Govinda puts it,

An essential prerequisite for sustained participation through such mechanisms is an ambience of mutual confidence and open, informal interaction among the stakeholders. This would also imply that decision-making regarding school functioning is made transparent and open to community members (Govinda 1997:33).

Research in development and participatory communication has revealed that government bureaucracy and the cumbersome process of 'red-tapism' usually inhibit the free flow of information. Narula (1993) states that government officials often tend to assume that "they are not for the people; rather the people are for them". This unreceptive attitude of bureaucratic officials towards public participation, according to Narula, creates counterproductive situations in which people stop giving feedback and communicating with the change agents (Narula 1993:143). Moreover, in the case of Dhanusha, the highly centralized nature of the bureaucracy has perpetuated 'top-down' flows of information. Typically, all information or the directions and demands for information come from the central level (the MOE or the DOE), and the function of the DEO, resource center or the head teachers is to respond to them in an unquestioning manner. Thus, supervision for the resource person means just reporting on the number of school visits carried out per month and not on the qualitative aspects of such visits. Likewise, formulating DEP means filling in what has been asked for in the format specified by the central level. Local stakeholders are not consulted as there are no provisions for the incorporation of their perspectives in these forms and local people remain oblivious of what is happening around them. This situation is very similar to the following account of the supervision of community health in Nepal by a noted anthropologist years ago:

....[The] Village Health Worker (VHW) was expected to visit thirty houses daily, to record vital statistics about family members in a register, and to disseminate health information..... In reality, the VHWs could do little more than paint the date of visit on each house for the benefit of future supervisory visits from the health assistant and record basic data in the register. Villagers often asked why they came.....(Justice 1989:86-87).

It is ironic that BPEP, which recognizes the crucial role of community mobilization and participation for its success, continues to be reflected upon, devised, implemented, monitored, evaluated and modified by native and expatriate technocrats whose children do not attend public primary schools. Government and donors do not go beyond paying lip service to the concept of people's participation. Extensive and ongoing debates at the local and national levels on BPEP are necessary to find alternative ways to increase the role of people in the program.

Research and experience from the community forestry sector and the pre-National Education System Plan (1971) period of school management in Nepal have pointed out that community participation is greatest when the sense of community ownership is present. Community ownership can be ensured in a number of ways. One way to do this is to form school management systems with stakeholders organized according to the concept of self-help user groups (Shrestha 1998:96). According to Shrestha, the school management committees must be made the exclusive organizations of the beneficiaries, vested with the authority to perform *prime* functions in relation to the management of their own schools i.e., planning, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such an organizational structure, according to Shrestha, will not only diminish the adverse effects of politicization in education, but will also remove the traditional caste or gender or even class-based barriers to participation (Shrestha 1998:96).

Another way to ensure community participation is to devolve the rights of school management to locally elected bodies, who in turn should ensure proper representation from the various sections of the community. Such bodies should have the authority to modify, within broad limits, local learning needs, such as the syllabi, modes and media of instruction, the school calendar as well as the hiring and firing of teachers (NESAC 1998:96). This, according to the Nepal Human Development Report 1998, will not only make the school system more responsive to local settings and relevant to everyday life but will also increase local stakeholding (NESAC 1998:96). In fact, the media has already reported on the successful management of public educational institutions by locally elected bodies.⁶ The government has also passed the Local Self-

6 There have been reports, for example, of the successful implementation of the Compulsory Primary Education Project by Banepa municipality and the Quality Education Project by Dhulikhel Municipality, both in Kavrepalanchowk district.

Government Act of 1999. What we now need is pressure on the government from civil society and locally elected bodies to sincerely facilitate the implementation of such provisions.

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