

# Poverty and Equity: Access to Education in Bangladesh

Based on PTA Research Monograph No. 51 by  
Altaf Hossain and Benjamin Zeitlyn

[http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf\\_documents/PTA51.pdf](http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf_documents/PTA51.pdf)

Dr. Benjamin Zeitlyn  
Research Fellow  
CREATE  
b.o.zeitlyn@sussex.ac.uk



# Equity

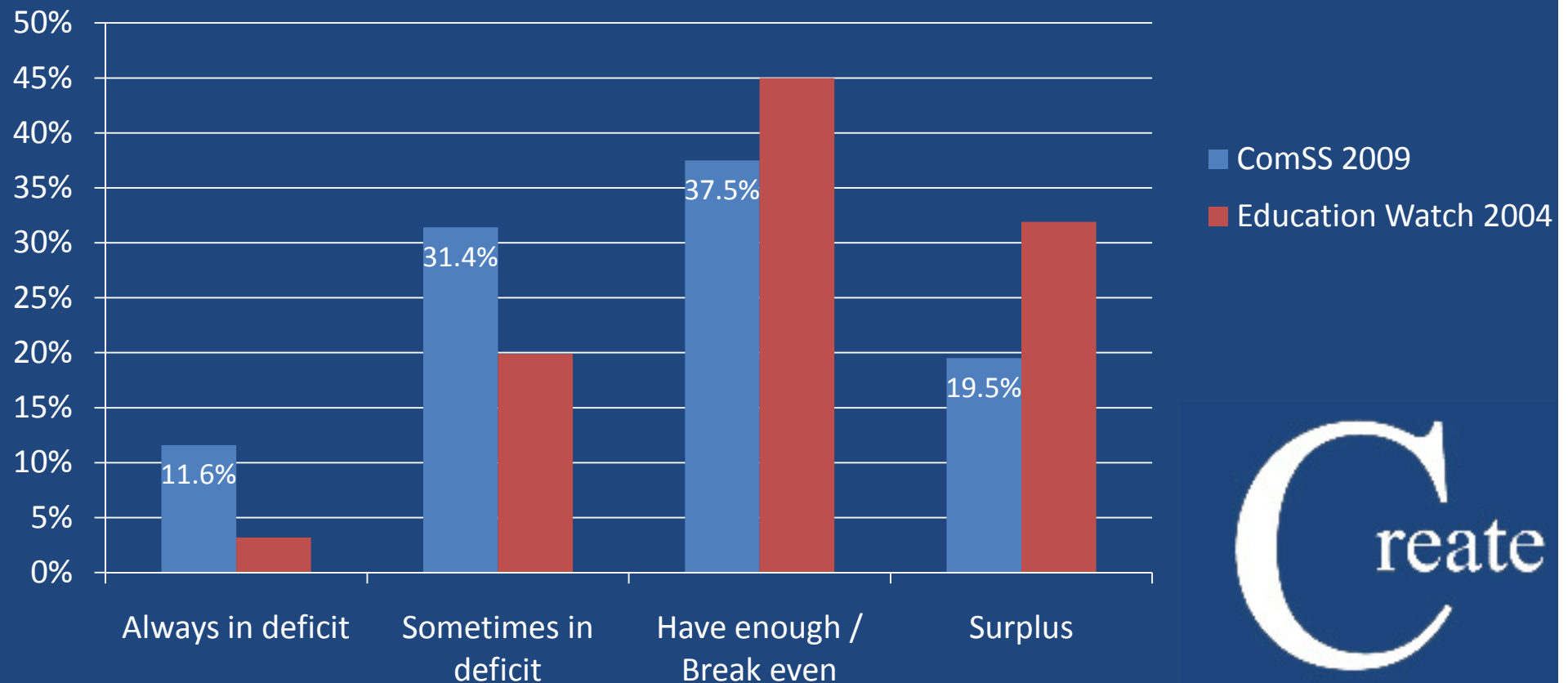
- Equitable access to education implies more than equal opportunity - it means ensuring additional and particular support for the poorest and most marginalised.
- The CREATE conceptual model expands the idea of access, revealing that it does not simply mean that children must be in school – *what happens in school is important too.*



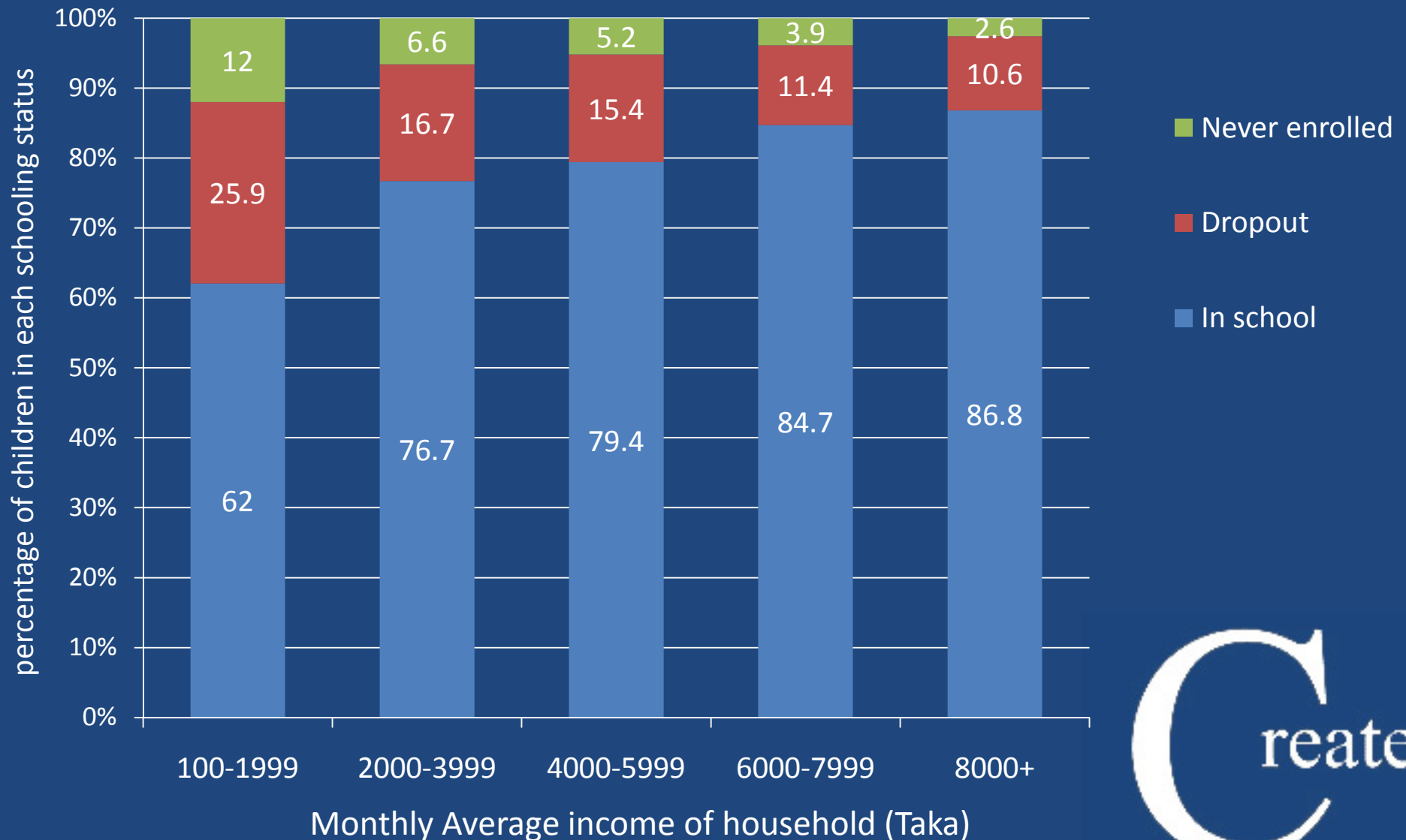
# Poverty: Bangladesh ComSS sample

90% of people in this sample lived below the US\$1 per day poverty line (Sabates and Hossain, 2010)

## Household Food security Status – ComSS 2009 and EW 2004



# Poverty and access: Zones 1 & 2



## Zones 1 & 2

- Clearly costs are influential - The average cost per child per year of attending primary school was Tk. 3,812, (about \$55). Average per capita income is Tk. 14,315 (about \$207)
- Children suffering from health problems were twice as likely as others to be in zones of exclusion 1 and 2 – never enrolled or dropped out of primary school



# Silent Exclusion: Zone 3

The silently excluded are those who are in school but at risk of dropping out. To identify children who are silently excluded, the ComSS in examined three indicators of silent exclusion identified by Lewin (2007):

- a) Low attendance: the child was absent from school for more than one day in the past week
- b) Low achievement: the parent ranked child as being in the 'bottom 25%' of the class.
- c) Repetition: parents report that the child has repeated a year of school at least once.



# Health and silent exclusion



# Factors associated with silent exclusion

- Poor health (Pridmore, 2007)
- Over age in Grade (Hossain, 2010)
- Lack of School equipment: Books, pens, bags, geometry sets.
- School Type: Average monthly income of the households of GPS catchment areas is significantly higher (Tk. 6,693) than those in the RNGPS catchment areas (Tk. 5,315)

*All associated with poverty*





# Policy response

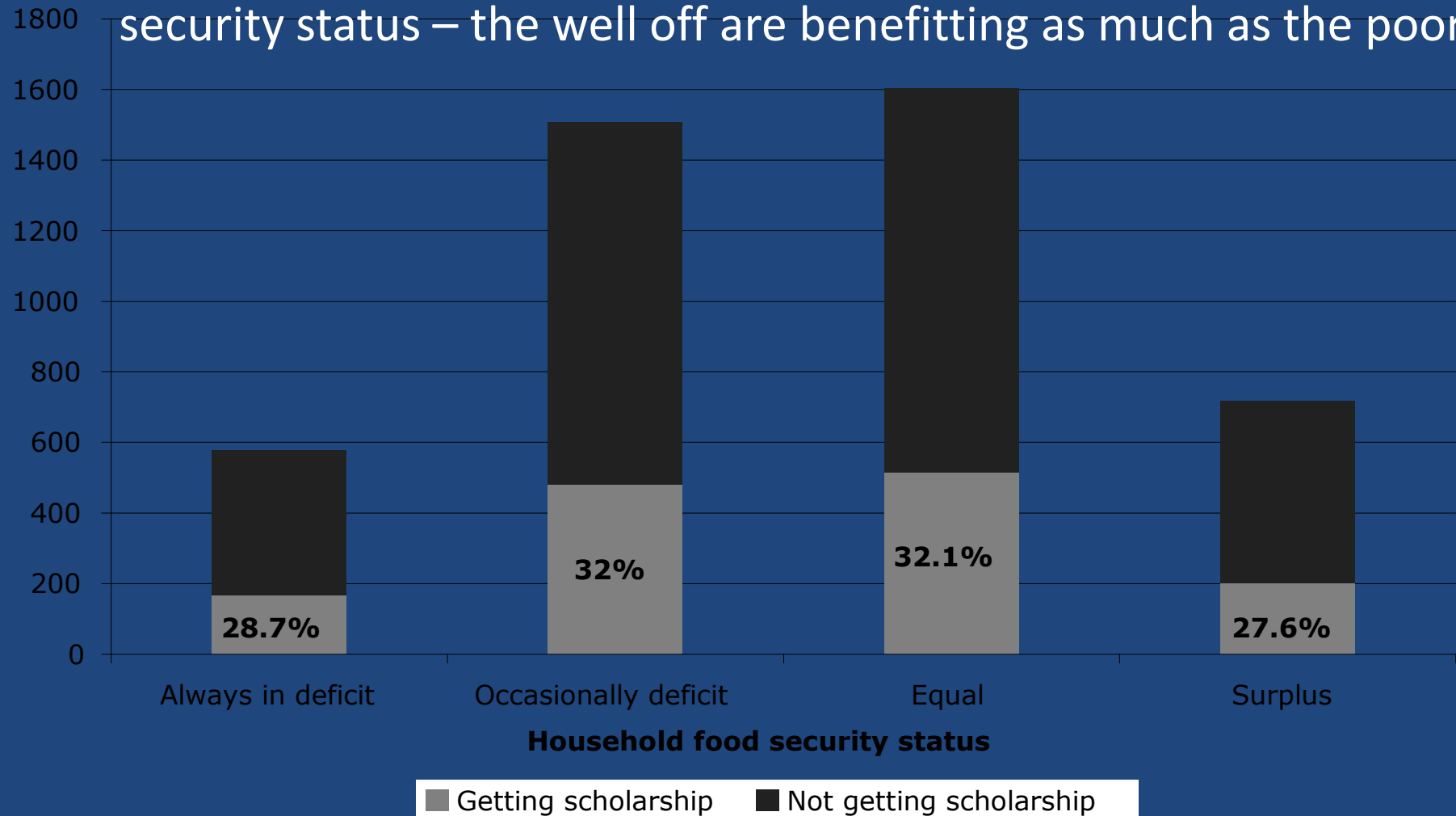
- Pre primary school – private / NGO
- PESP primary education stipend project
- Girls secondary education stipend

*All dominated by the well off*



# Primary Education Stipend Project

The proportion of primary school children who receive the primary education stipend is very similar across the different categories of food security status – the well off are benefitting as much as the poor



# Why is PESP ineffective?

- Stipend of Tk. 1,200 per year, but an average cost per year of child's education of Tk. 3,812.
- Conditions too tough for the most deprived to meet (80% attendance, 45% achievement)
- Poor targeting – Upazila level identification of poor
- 60% of the development budget for primary education (excluding donor inputs)
- Corruption



# Policy ideas – instead of cash:

- School health programme
- School feeding programme
- Nutrient supplements for mothers and babies
- free school books, pens/pencils, note books, geometry boxes and school bags
- Reusable textbooks
- Majority of learning in school

