

**Towards UPE with Equity and Quality  
in Bangladesh:  
Insight from Community and School Studies**

Manzoor Ahmed & Altaf Hossein  
IED, Brac University



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## Policy Context

- Major progress made in enrolment – close to 100% gross
- Gender disparity in enrolment eliminated

***But Bangladesh will fall short of 2015 MDG and EFA goal of UPE completion, because half of grade 1 students dropout by grade 5.***

Major challenge for next phase of primary education development (2011-15) as PEDP II ends –

- ***How effective access can be accelerated by 2015 and a solid foundation laid for UPE with quality and equity soon after.***
- ***What should be the structure and components of a comprehensive sub-sector programme and how external partners can support it.***

***(In the context of sixth 5-year plan and new Edn. Policy)***

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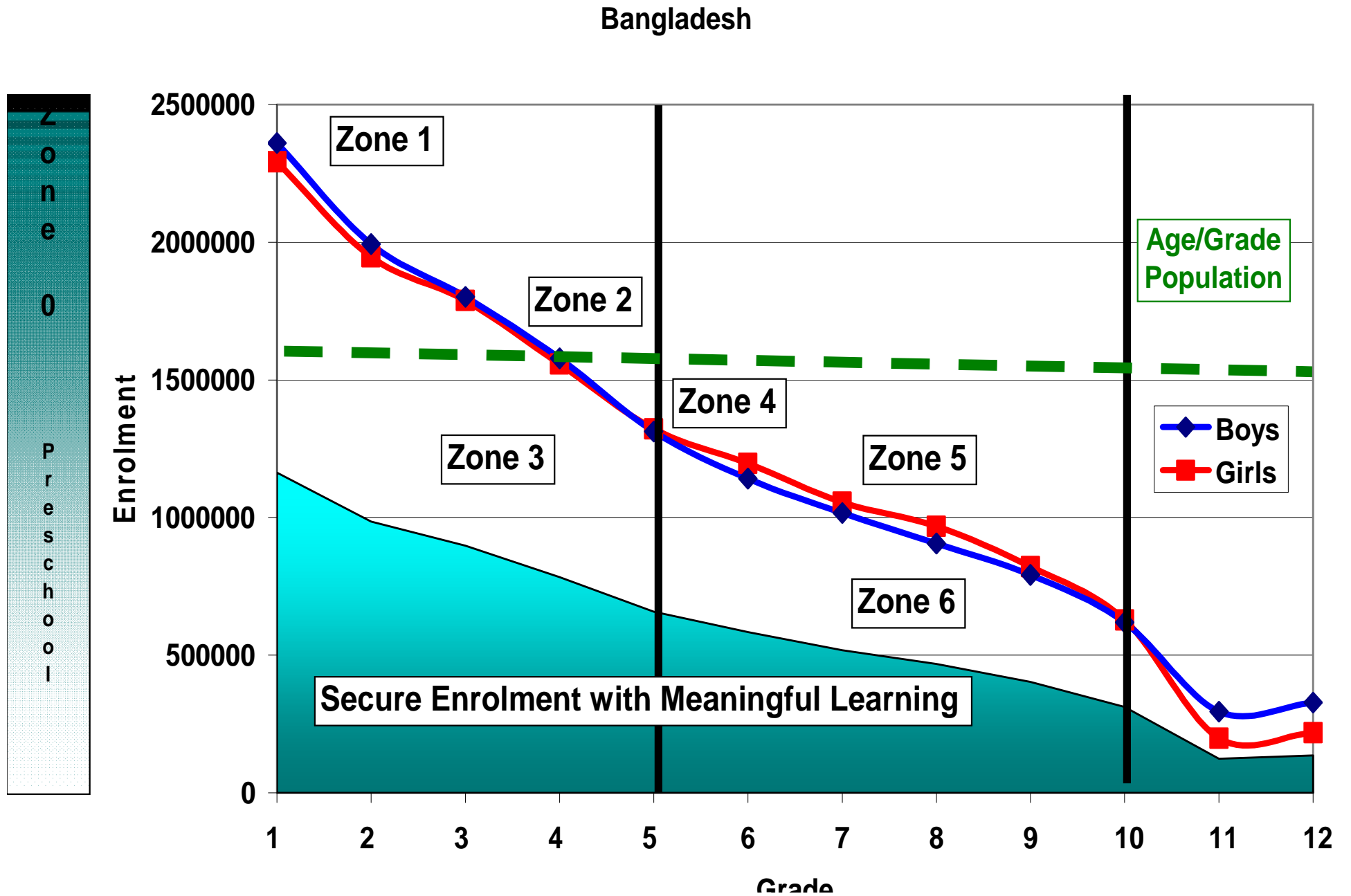
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## Table 1: Diversity of primary education providers (2008)

<i>School type</i>	<i>Enrolment %</i>	<i>Institutions (rounded numbers)</i>
Govt. Primary Schools	56.9	37,700
Regd. Non-govt. Pry. School	18.7	20,100
<b>Non-formal Pry. Education</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>&gt; 30,000</b>
<i>Madrasa</i>	7.0	16,000
Kindergarten	4.7	2,700
Pry. attached to high school	1.3	1,000
Others (Community school, unregistered, etc)	1.8	3,900
Total	100.0	81,400 <b>+&gt;30,000 NFPE</b>

# Figure 1 Enrolment by Grade - Bangladesh



**Table 2. PEDP II progress on selected indicators**

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>2005 Baseline</i>	<i>PEDPII Target</i>	<i>Latest Year</i>
<i>Net Enrolment Rate</i>	87.2	90.0	90.8 (2008)
<i>Student Completion grade V (% of 1)</i>	<b>52</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>52 (2008)</b>
<i>Education Budget ( % of GNP)</i>	1.93	2.80	2.28 (2007)
<i>Primary Budget ( % of total edn.)</i>	37.1	45	41.0 (2008)
<i>Pupil-Teacher ratio</i>	54:1	48:1	50:1 (2008)
<i>Literacy/numeracy of students (% grade V students) *</i>	44/66 (2006)	65/75	63/69 (2008)

## Teachers and Pedagogy

The high student-teacher ratio, low contact hours (90% schools run on double shift), and low student outcome are consequences of **low overall public sector allocation for education and low allocation for primary education**, which has remained less than 1% of GDP, one of the lowest in the world.

The PEDP II target projects only a modest increase.



## Community/School Study

Communities and schools in **six locations from six divisions** over three years with two rounds of data collected in 2007 and 2009

*To gain insights into the dynamics of participation and exclusion of children in schooling.*

Sample: 6,696 households, **9,045 children 4-15 years** from 18 school catchment areas (12 govt. and 6 registered non-govt. Primary schools)

The survey used CREATE's **conceptual model of 'zones of exclusion'** :

- *Children excluded in both 2007 and 2009 'zone 1' – never enrolled.*
- ***Children who dropped out from primary school (zone 2),***
- *Those enrolled but attending irregularly, being over age and learning little (zone 3)*
- ***Those not transitioning to secondary level (zone 4)***

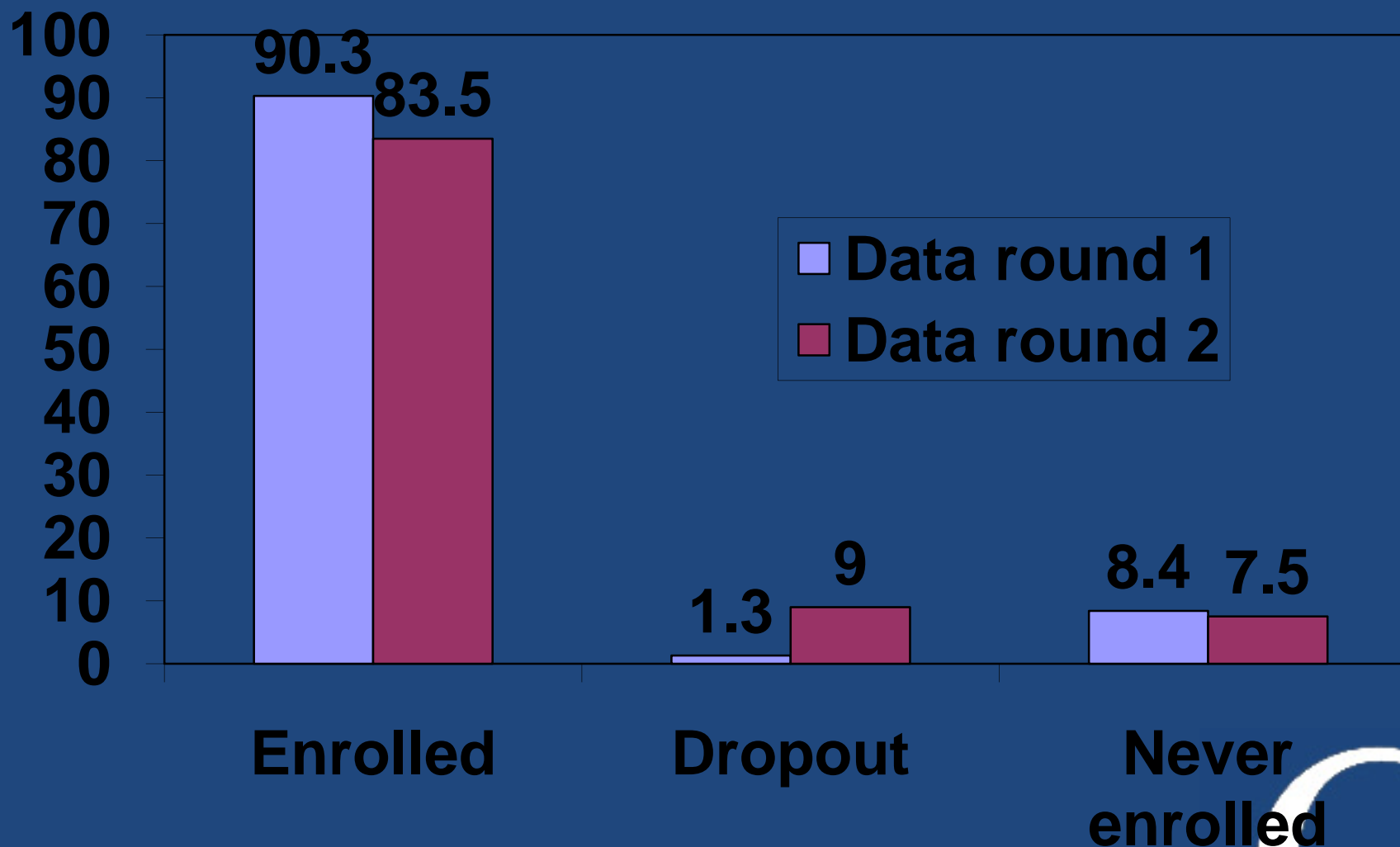


## Some key findings

- The excluded children (zones 1,2,3, & 4) were from poorer families, *both economically and educationally.*
- Those who dropped out were on average
  - ✓ *Older at entry to school*
  - ✓ *Repeated more school grades,*
  - ✓ *Came from lower income families,*
  - ✓ *Had parents with lower levels of education,*
  - ✓ *Had more household responsibilities. and*
  - ✓ *Received less support from parents for their school work.*
- Poverty, low levels of parental education, and unskilled parental occupations related to *late entry into education.*
- ***School related factors in exclusion*** – large classes, too little learning time, school too far, dislike of school by students, parents' negative view of school.



**Figure 2: Education status of primary school age (6-10) children by data rounds, 2007 and 2009**



*Source: Community and School Study (ComSS); Household Survey, 2009*

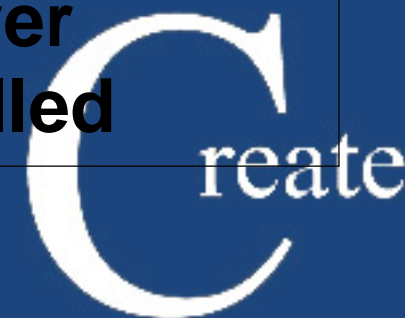
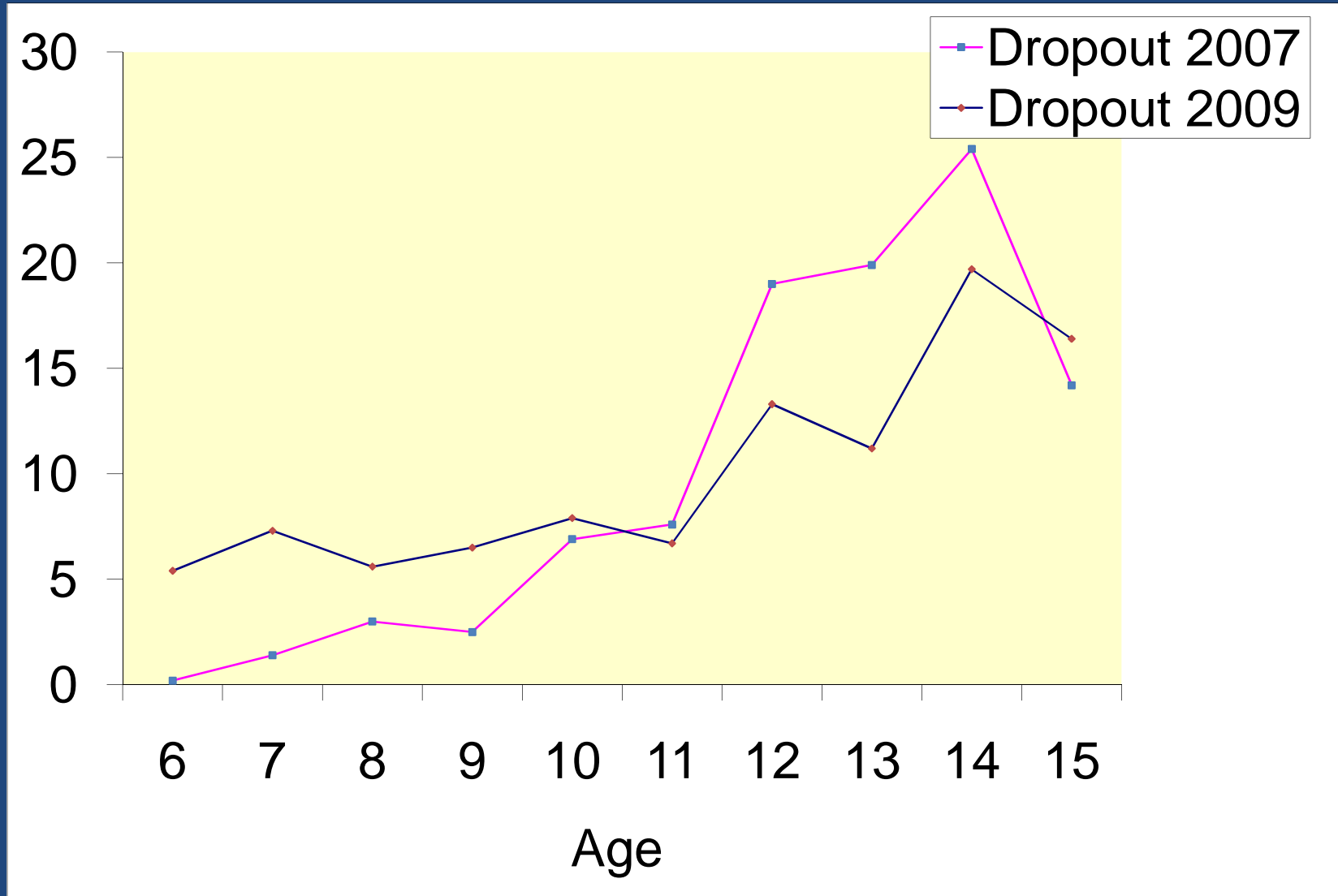


Figure 3: Percentage of dropout children by age and data round



## Enrolment data issues

- Fig. 2 showed an increase in dropout and a decrease in never-enrolled category at 2-year interval in study sites.
- An actual change or a problem of recognising and recording status of children?
- **Confounded by child migration, multiple providers, intermittent attendance, no birth registration**
- **Household survey appears to underestimate out of school children and school data inflate enrolment**
- Non-enrolment rate under 10% officially, but difficult to establish rate definitively for a particular time in specific communities.

*Signifies problems of diagnosing different dimensions of exclusion and complexities in remedial strategies.*



# Child Migration

- ComSS revealed half of children recorded as dropout apparently were migrants to urban centres.
- Child migration is a livelihood strategy for families – children taking up paid/unpaid job or informal apprenticeship.
- Pattern of child migration of indicated scale has important implications for policy and strategy for access, continuation, completion of primary stage and transition into secondary.



# Late enrolment

- 40 % of students 2 or more years older for grade in primary school.
- The culture of enrolling children at age 6 has not caught on.
- Absence of birth registration and birth record supports a casual approach to age for starting school.
- Consequences of late enrolment - high dropout and high opportunity cost as children seen ready for paid/unpaid work.
- For older girls, increased concern about safety and family pressure to marry them off.



## Stipends & Supply-side Constraints

Stipends to poor students (conditional cash transfer) is a government strategy to promote equity, but targeting a serious problem (1/2 poor missed out).

Supply-side constraints perceived by parents suggest funds could be better used in providing essential quality-enhancing inputs.

This question needs to be examined rigorously, especially because of major budget implications of choices made.

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# Children in urban slums

- Rapidly growing poor slum dwellers are under-served by both governments and NGOs.
- Even low private education costs are prohibitive for the poorest quintile.
- Special coordinated efforts by city corporation and education authorities to reach urban poor essential to achieve UPE.



## Areas of Strategic Policy Actions

A long list of problems cannot be addressed in isolation;  
Must be tackled by strategic policy interventions , recognising  
connectedness among problems. Key blocks of actions :

- A system of basic education with diversity in delivery, but unified by common quality standards.
- Decentralised, participatory and accountable governance at local and school level
- Adequate resources to ensure quality with equity
- Effective modality and structure of programme management and external assistance.

*These strategic policy blocks can be **scaffolding** for other specific interventions as needs are determined by research, evaluation, analyses and dialogue.*



## ***Policy Area 1: Common quality standards***

The critical policy challenge is to set and enforce common quality standards for all types of schools;

- *ensuring acceptable learning outcomes from them;*
- *recognising contribution of diverse providers;*
- *assessing relative strengths and potential of each for improving outcomes in specific circumstances ; and*
- *making best use of strengths and potentials of each.*



## ***Policy Area 2: Development /trial of upazila-based UPE planning and management***

A rigorous trial should be conducted involving local government and all service providers in selected upazilas *as a key feature of the UPE strategy;*

Supporting as a part of development and trial, school and community-based actions to *help the poor, the silently excluded, and overcoming mis-perceptions* of role of non-governmental and community organisations



### ***Policy Area 3. A major increase in public resources***

Question of affordability must be turned around to ask –

Can we afford **not to** make the necessary Investments for education with quality-and-equity.

Much larger public resources must be committed for 6<sup>th</sup> 5-year plan and new education policy targeting quality-with-equity.

Equally important - effective use of resources, e.g., **upazila-wise capitation formulas, decentralised resource management and assessing optimal use of resources** – case in point, spending on stipends.

More resources needed at school level and greater discretion with accountability for schools in their use.



## ***Policy Area 4: A pragmatic programme approach***

In designing modality of programme management and cooperation with donors, a pragmatic/flexible programme approach for UPE (not a SWAp template) needed:

- Based on principle of **a comprehensive programme that includes all modes of primary education, including second chance/non-formal provisions, and all children with various special needs, and going beyond the domain of DPE.**
- Structure of the programme, its components and implementation mechanisms, have to be appropriately flexible.



## Specific Interventions within Policy Scaffolding /Framework

*Various specific action priorities surfacing from CREATE and other studies must be carried out within strategic policy measure blocks. E.g. actions in :*

- **New and retroactive birth registration**
- Diagnostics and action on child migration
- **Coordinated city+education bodies' actions in urban slums**
- Initiatives on teachers' number, quality, incentives, role model
- **Probing and action on silent exclusion**
- Proper use of learning assessment and public examinations
- **Harnessing NGO contribution**
- Expanding preschools for the poor.
- **School health, school meal**
- Adequate schools, classrooms and so on.



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