



# Effectiveness Study on School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP)

Quality  
Accountability  
Equity

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সকল শিশুর জন্য

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# Preface



The Effectiveness Study on Strengthening Decentralisation of Decision Making through School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) was launched in March 2024. The study, commissioned by UNICEF has the purpose of supporting the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) as it navigates the transition from PEDP4. For PPRC as the executing agency, this has been a labour of love as it addresses PPRC's triple priorities of decentralisation, quality education and community engagement.

The Study has been a mixed-method research endeavour combining well-known and innovative research components spanning the macro, meso and micro levels. The study was national in scope and benefited from the active guidance and support of DPE and UNICEF at every stage of study implementation.

PPRC field research team and senior management ensured meticulous execution of all aspects of the multi-component field work. Special mention has to be made of Billal Hossain, Masudul Huq, Subodh Chandra Sarkar and Shajjad Hossain from the field research and data management teams. Mohammed Abdul Wazed, Programmes Advisor and Syed Ziauddin Ahmed, Director, HR deserve appreciation for their active engagement in the study process. The analytical work and report-drafting were ably steered by Mr. Shyamal Kanti Ghosh and Dr. Zia Sabur. PPRC greatly benefited from the contributions of these two experts of very high standing. PPRC is grateful to Deepa Sankar, PhD, Chief of Education, UNICEF Bangladesh for her technical guidance, and Mohammad Tanvirul Islam, Education Officer, UNICEF Bangladesh for being the study team member. Comments from DPE and UNICEF colleagues were very helpful and have been incorporated in the finalisation of the report. We do hope the report will be found useful for all those engaged in improving school-level learning outcomes. A companion revised guideline on SLIP implementation which takes into account insights generated from this Effectiveness Study is being developed and will be submitted separately.

**Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman**  
Executive Chairman, PPRC &  
Study Team Leader

# Message



It gives me great pleasure to present the Effectiveness Study on School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP), a joint initiative of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), UNICEF Bangladesh, and the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC). This comprehensive study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of SLIP as a key instrument for strengthening decentralised school management, participatory governance, and quality improvement in primary education.

Since its inception, SLIP has played a vital role in empowering schools to identify their priorities and plan for their own development with the active involvement of teachers, parents, and community members. This study provides valuable evidence and insights on how the SLIP process can be further strengthened to deepen decentralisation, ensure timely and effective use of resources, and align school-level planning with national priorities such as foundational literacy and numeracy, inclusive education, and climate resilience.

The findings and recommendations of this report come at a crucial time as we move toward the next phase of the education sector programme. They will serve as an important input for revising the SLIP guidelines and implementation arrangements, particularly to introduce advance financing to schools, promote needs-based allocation, and strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to UNICEF Bangladesh for its continued technical and financial support, and to PPRC for the rigorous research and analysis undertaken in collaboration with DPE. I also extend heartfelt thanks to our field officials, teachers, and community representatives whose active participation made this study possible.

The Directorate of Primary Education remains committed to translating these findings into action—ensuring that every primary school in Bangladesh becomes a vibrant centre of learning, inclusion, and community engagement.

**Abu Noor Md. Shamsuzzaman**  
Director General  
Directorate of Primary Education

## Message



For nearly two decades, Bangladesh has implemented School Level Improvement Plans (SLIPs) in government primary schools (GPS), under the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP). These plans are collaboratively developed by schools and communities to enhance school enabling environment, instructional quality, learning outcomes, and thus overall school effectiveness. SLIPs provide a structured, data-driven approach to address specific school needs, promote stakeholder engagement, and ensure continuous improvement in the education system.

Although SLIPs were introduced to promote decentralisation and community participation in education, a 2015 evaluation revealed limited effectiveness due to centralised governance, inconsistent funding, and weak enforcement of fund usage. Since then, SLIPs have continued under PEDP III and IV. As Bangladesh prepares to graduate from low-income status, ensuring that domestic resources effectively drive school-based quality improvements is increasingly critical—making it essential to assess whether SLIP design and implementation have improved since 2015.

It is with this intention that UNICEF collaborated with Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) to commission a study to understand the effectiveness of SLIP in GPS in the country. Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), a well-known think-tank and research organisation in Bangladesh was onboarded to do an independent and in-depth critical analysis of the SLIP.

I would like to commend PPRC for conducting a comprehensive review of SLIP design and implementation in Bangladesh. The study not only analyses SLIP expenditures and policy documents but also provides valuable insights into the adequacy and timeliness of resources, implementation processes, and stakeholder perspectives. Importantly, it captures voices from across the system—government officials, parents, school communities, students, and teachers—through interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys, offering a well-rounded understanding of SLIP's effectiveness.

The findings of this study offer valuable guidance on how SLIP can evolve into a more effective tool for participatory school governance and quality improvement. While challenges such as delays in fund utilisation, limited decentralisation, and capacity gaps highlight the need for bold reforms, the study also identifies promising opportunities. These include aligning SLIP with foundational literacy and numeracy, climate resilience, inclusive education, and deeper community engagement—all of which are crucial as Bangladesh enters the next phase of its education sector development.

On behalf of UNICEF, I reiterate our strong commitment to working closely with MoPME, DPE, and all partners and stakeholders to ensure that school-level planning and implementation on enhanced to fully realise its potential as a transformative instrument for improving the quality outcomes of primary education in Bangladesh.

# Five key recommendations

The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) has emerged as one of the most important instruments for strengthening participatory school governance, promoting accountability, and addressing context-specific needs of primary schools in Bangladesh. Over the years, SLIP has created opportunities for schools to plan and implement activities with community involvement, thereby enhancing transparency and responsiveness. However, the recent review highlights several operational and strategic gaps that need to be addressed in order to maximize the impact of SLIP in improving learning outcomes, equity, and resilience. Against this backdrop, the following five key recommendations have been identified to guide the way forward.

## 1. Advance Payment of SLIP Funds to Schools

One of the major operational challenges identified in the study is the delay in fund utilization caused by the reimbursement-based model of SLIP disbursement. Head teachers and Government Primary School Management Committees (GPSMCs) often face liquidity constraints, forcing them to “manage” expenses in advance while waiting for reimbursement, which discourages timely and effective implementation. Moving towards an advance payment system would reduce cash-flow bottlenecks, empower schools to plan and implement activities without financial stress, and ensure smoother alignment between planning cycles and school calendars. This reform would also improve documentation and audit practices, as expenditures could be tracked more systematically once funds are already available at the school level

## 2. Revision of the SLIP Formula-Based Approach

The current uniform slab-based formula for SLIP allocations does not adequately reflect the diverse needs of schools across Bangladesh. Schools in geographically disadvantaged, poverty-affected, or climate-vulnerable areas often require additional resources to maintain even basic standards. The report strongly recommends a differentiated, needs-based allocation model. This could include tiered funding based on student enrollment, socio-economic context, and geographic hardship, with provisions for additional allocations in special cases (e.g., very large schools or those in disaster-prone areas). Such revisions would promote equity and allow SLIP to more directly address learning gaps and infrastructure challenges

### **3. Align SLIP Funding with Foundational Literacy & Numeracy, Green Schooling, and Climate Resilience**

Current SLIP expenditures are concentrated on teaching-learning materials, health/environment activities, and cultural programs, while areas such as disaster management, early childhood education, and inclusive education remain underfunded. To meet emerging priorities, SLIP funding should be strategically aligned with national and global agendas—particularly foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN), climate resilience, and green schooling initiatives. This means allocating specific budget lines for FLN-focused learning materials, eco-friendly infrastructure, and disaster-preparedness activities. Such realignment would ensure that SLIP becomes a tool not only for school improvement but also for advancing Bangladesh's commitments under SDG-4 and climate adaptation strategies

### **4. Strengthening SLIP Planning and Implementation through Capacity Building**

The effectiveness of SLIP depends heavily on the capacity of head teachers, GPSMCs, PTAs, and Social Audit Committees (SACs). However, the study found that many of these stakeholders lack adequate training on planning, financial oversight, and participatory school governance. Regular and structured capacity-building initiatives—covering project planning, financial management, monitoring, and community mobilization—are therefore essential. Capacity development should also emphasize inclusive participation, particularly for women and marginalized groups, to ensure school planning reflects diverse perspectives. Such training would not only enhance accountability but also deepen community ownership of school improvement initiatives

### **5. Align SLIP with the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) to Ensure Decentralization and Empowerment**

The study highlights that despite SLIP's intent, the process remains largely “deconcentrated” rather than fully decentralized, with excessive central control over planning and budgeting. To transform SLIP into a genuine decentralization tool, it must be institutionally integrated with the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) of MoPME and DPE. By embedding SLIP directly into AOP processes, schools and upazilas would gain greater autonomy in planning and resource allocation, while retaining alignment with national priorities. This would create a coherent framework where local-level plans feed into national strategies, ensuring both bottom-up empowerment and top-down accountability

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# Acronyms

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADG	Additional Director General
AOP	Annual Operational Plan
ASIP	Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (in Nepal case study)
CAO	Chief Accounts Officer
DAFO	District Accounts & Finance Officer
DG	Director General
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DPEO	District Primary Education Officer
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GO	Government Order
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPS	Government Primary School
GPSMC	Government Primary School Management Committee
HT	Head Teacher
iBAS	Integrated Budget and Accounting System
IMED	Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, Division
JICA	Japan International Development Cooperation Agency
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, Practice
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NEP	National Education Policy
PAO	Principal Accounting Officer
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program
PEDP4	Fourth Primary Education Development Program
PEMIS	Primary Education Management Information System
PSQL	Primary School Quality Level
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SAC	Social Audit Committee
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLIP	School Level Improvement Plan
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPEO	Thana Primary Education Officer
UAO	Upazila Accounts Officer
UAPEO	Upazila Assistant Primary Education Officer
UEOA	Upazila Education Office Assistant
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPEO	Upazila Primary Education Officer
UPEP	Upazila Primary Education Plan

# Executive Summary

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## Background

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The context of this study revolves around the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP), a key initiative under the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) in Bangladesh. SLIP was designed to decentralize school-level decision-making, enhance financial autonomy, and improve the quality of primary education through participatory planning. While SLIP has been operational for over a decade and has shown positive impacts on learning outcomes, challenges persist in its implementation. These challenges include delayed utilization of funds (caused due to late disbursement of funds), governance challenges, weak financial oversight, and limited community engagement. Given these concerns, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), commissioned this study to evaluate the effectiveness of SLIP in strengthening school management and improving learning conditions.

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## Study Objectives

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The purpose of this study is to assess SLIP's effectiveness in terms of quality education, policy design, financial management, institutional capacity, and stakeholder engagement within the framework of KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) study. Specifically, it aims to evaluate how well SLIP facilitates decentralization, ensures timely and efficient use of financial resources, and strengthens the role of school-level actors such as Government Primary School Management Committees (GPSMCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and Social Audit Committees (SACs). The study also seeks to generate evidence-based recommendations for revising SLIP guidelines, improving financial accountability, and fostering greater community participation in school governance.

The contents of this report include an analysis of SLIP's implementation, its financial expenditure patterns, the role of stakeholders, and key governance issues. The report is structured around several core themes, including:

- Governance and stakeholder roles in SLIP implementation.
- Financial allocation, expenditure trends, and inefficiencies.
- Institutional capacity, challenges and inefficiencies in financial oversight.
- Regional disparities in SLIP execution and outcomes.
- Parents or guardians (who have interest in the education and well-being of their children), stakeholders and management (GPSMC, PTA, SAC) involvement in school development.
- Recommendations for strengthening SLIP for sustainable impact.

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## Methodology

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The methodology employed for this study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. The research design includes:

- Document Review: Analysis of SLIP guidelines, financial reports, policy documents, and previous evaluation studies.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): Consultations with officials from DPE, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), and development partners.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Engagement with headteachers, teachers, GPSMC members, PTA representatives, and parents across multiple schools.
- Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) Surveys: Surveys conducted with school governance stakeholders and parents to assess awareness and perceptions of SLIP.
- Financial Data Analysis: Review of budget allocation and expenditure patterns across divisions to identify trends, inefficiencies, and best practices.

By integrating these methodologies, the study provides an evidence-based assessment of SLIP, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and actionable recommendations to enhance the program's impact on school governance and primary education quality in Bangladesh.

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## Key Field Findings

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### Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

SLIP governance is centered around the Government Primary School Management Committee (GPSMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), and Social Audit Committee (SAC). While these bodies play a vital role in financial oversight and decision-making, their effectiveness is often limited due to inadequate training, institutional challenges, and political interference. Stakeholder engagement varies significantly by region, with some areas demonstrating strong parental involvement while others struggle with low participation. Enhancing training programs for committee members and ensuring a transparent selection process can significantly improve governance outcomes.

### Financial Management and Expenditure Patterns

One of the most critical challenges in SLIP implementation is the delayed utilization of allocated budgets. Despite stable funding, some divisions, utilization of funds were uneven among districts. Administrative delays, procurement bottlenecks, and limited financial autonomy at the school level contribute to these inefficiencies. Implementing expenditure tracking tools and a flexible reallocation mechanism can help optimize fund utilization.

Regional disparities in fund utilization highlight variations in administrative capacity and financial literacy. While Sylhet and Rangpur performed well in financial execution, other regions such as Khulna and Rajshahi lagged. Providing targeted financial training for GPSMCs and enabling region-specific interventions can promote equitable resource distribution.

## Infrastructure and Resource Allocation

Many schools face significant infrastructure deficiencies, including inadequate classrooms, sanitation facilities, and road accessibility. Students frequently report poor learning environments, which negatively impact attendance and performance. Some student-led initiatives, such as hygiene awareness programs, have shown promise but require institutional support for long-term sustainability. Addressing these infrastructure gaps through increased budget allocations and efficient planning is crucial for fostering a conducive learning environment.

## Gender and Regional Disparities in Awareness

A gender gap persists in awareness and engagement with GPSMCs, and PTAs. Male respondents consistently report higher familiarity and confidence in their knowledge of these governance mechanisms of SLIP implementation process compared to female respondents. Regional disparities also exist, with Rajshahi and Khulna demonstrating higher awareness levels related to structures, functions and responsibilities of various relevant actors related to SLIP, while Dhaka and Mymensingh report lower familiarity with SLIP structure and implementation process. Bridging these gaps through targeted awareness campaigns and training initiatives will ensure more inclusive participation in school governance.

## Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

Students highlight the importance of co-curricular activities such as debates, poetry recitations, and cultural programs in fostering creativity and teamwork. They also express a strong preference for interactive and applied learning methods. However, high teacher-student ratios and overcrowded classrooms limit the effectiveness of these strategies. Employing Para Teachers as a temporary solution and integrating technology-based learning can enhance engagement and educational outcomes. SLIP can potentially finance such initiatives.

## Findings related to effectiveness

The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP), initiated under PEDP4, aimed to decentralize primary education planning and empower school-level stakeholders in Bangladesh to identify needs and implement targeted improvements. While SLIP introduced participatory planning and promoted local ownership, its overall effectiveness is rated as moderate due to systemic and operational barriers.

## Key Achievements

SLIP successfully enabled participatory initiatives in many schools, supporting student-centered programs such as cultural activities and hygiene awareness. However, the initiative remained largely deconcentrated rather than decentralized, with rigid bureaucratic processes and delayed fund disbursement limiting school autonomy and contextual planning.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder satisfaction varied. Some schools demonstrated active participation by parents and teachers, but overall engagement, particularly of women, remained low. School committees (GPSMCs, PTAs) often lacked sufficient training and real authority, reducing their meaningful involvement in the planning process.

## Value and Implementation

Where SLIP was well-implemented, improvements in learning environments and student participation were evident. However, many regions faced delayed utilization of funds, poor alignment of expenditures with actual needs, and weak attention to areas like disaster preparedness and inclusive education. Delays, inconsistent documentation, and last-minute spending further hampered delivery quality and efficiency.

## Impact and Limitations

SLIP helped institutionalize planning practices but did not lead to significant or measurable improvements in learning outcomes or systemic reform. Limited performance monitoring, centralized control, and inadequate capacity-building undermined the long-term impact of the initiative.

To realize its full potential, SLIP must shift toward genuine decentralization, adopt needs-based funding, and enhance training for local actors. Improved financial tracking, inclusive participation, and integration of digital monitoring tools are essential. With these strategic reforms, SLIP could evolve into a more effective, equitable, and sustainable model for school improvement in Bangladesh.

## Community participation

The effectiveness of community contribution in the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) extends well beyond financial donations, encompassing deeper motivations, relational dynamics, and institutional structures that shape meaningful engagement. While current SLIP assessments focus primarily on material support, this narrow view overlooks the transformative potential of community involvement driven by aspirations for children's education, trust in school leadership, and cultural or social incentives. Communities contribute not just through money, but also via voluntary labor, skills, advocacy, and participation in planning processes—forms of input that remain underrecognized and underutilized. However, barriers such as poor communication, elite dominance, low literacy, and lack of institutional incentives often hinder inclusive engagement. To address this, SLIP must broaden its definition of contribution, create systems to recognize and celebrate diverse forms of support, and train school leaders in community mobilization. Participatory planning, targeted inclusion strategies, and the use of success stories can further energize local involvement. Additionally, introducing matching grants or performance-based incentives could sustain and scale up participation. Ultimately, SLIP's success hinges not

just on the volume of community contributions but on understanding the motivations and conditions that drive genuine, sustained involvement—transforming schools through inclusive, empowered partnerships.

## SLIP funding

The SLIP Effectiveness Study reveals that the current uniform funding model is inadequate to meet the diverse and context-specific needs of schools, particularly those in remote, under-resourced, or disadvantaged areas. Although some progress has been made through SLIP funding in areas like minor infrastructure repairs and material procurement, critical needs in infrastructure, pedagogy, and equity remain largely unmet. The study advocates for a shift toward a needs-based, differentiated budget allocation model, considering factors such as school size, geographic hardship, poverty levels, and infrastructure urgency. A proposed tiered allocation system suggests annual funding of BDT 50,000 to BDT 250,000 per school, based on the number of students. If the number of students exceeds 1,500, the school may submit a special request to the DPE. With the recommendation of the Director General of DPE, the Secretary may approve an additional BDT 100,000, bringing the total allocation to BDT 350,000. Implementing this approach would improve equity, better address learning gaps, and foster stronger community ownership. The study concludes that while further piloting is necessary, this evidence-based funding model offers a strategic path forward for more impactful, equitable school improvement under future education sector programs.

## Policy and Operational Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of SLIP, a multi-pronged approach is necessary:

### 1. **Strengthening Governance and Stakeholder Capacity**

- Introduce structured and periodic training programs on SLIP structure and functions for stakeholders for GPSMC, PTA, and SAC members.
- Implement transparent selection processes for committee members to reduce political interference.
- Introduction of an additional committee within the SLIP implementation system that will focus on quality improvement by making necessary interventions in the domains of teaching learning, material development and learning assessments.

### 2. **Optimizing Financial Management**

- Establish real-time expenditure tracking tools to improve budget utilization.
- Adopt needs-based and performance-linked funding.
- Allow decentralized financial autonomy at the upazila level to improve responsiveness. Schools should be able to propose budget according to the school's needs even they do not always fall within the prescribed formats.

### **3. Enhancing Infrastructure and Learning Environments**

- Increase budget allocations for critical infrastructure improvements.
- Provide institutional support for student-led initiatives like hygiene awareness programs.
- In order to ensure more equitable distribution of financial support system, the allocation of SLIP budget should be done on per learner cost basis, replacing the current slabs system.

### **4. Bridging Gender and Regional Disparities**

- Conduct targeted awareness campaigns to increase female participation in governance.
- Implement localized intervention strategies in underperforming regions.

### **5. Promoting Educational Innovation and Student Engagement**

- Integrate technology into classrooms to support interactive learning.
- Employ temporary Para Teachers to reduce teacher-student ratios.

### **6. Strengthening Community and Parental Involvement**

- Encourage broader parental participation through regular meetings and community outreach programs.
- Foster public-private partnerships to mobilize additional resources for SLIP initiatives.

The study highlights the potential of SLIP to significantly improve school governance, financial efficiency, and learning outcomes. However, systemic challenges related to financial management, governance bottlenecks, and regional disparities ought to be addressed to maximize its impact. By adopting data-driven decision-making, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and implementing policy reforms, SLIP can evolve into a robust framework that ensures sustainable improvements in primary education across Bangladesh.

# Part A

## Study Context



# 1. Background

The concept of school-level planning was first introduced as **Local Level Planning (LLP)** under the **IDEAL Project**, where it was tested on a limited scale. Building on its early success, the idea was **piloted more formally during PEDP-II** to assess its applicability across varied school contexts. Following encouraging outcomes, the approach was **universalized under PEDP3** as a key strategy to promote decentralized, participatory planning in primary education. There was an emerging realization among the education policy makers and education sector practitioners that while the primary education sector has done a commendable job in creating access, quality learning outcome continued to remain elusive. The conceptualization of SLIP is basically grounded in this context. As described in sub-component 3.4 in PEDP4, the objective of SLIP is to improve the quality of the learning experience for children through strengthened school and upazila-based management and accountability. The PEDP4 document also provides two important strategies for the implementation of SLIP - implementing SLIP based on updated guidelines, and formula-based allocation of SLIP fund to all 65,566 primary schools.

An evaluation of SLIP implementation in 2015 showed that though there were some positive impacts on learning outcomes, SLIP implementation was significantly below its potential. The paucity of comprehensive and meaningful impact data in this regard led UNICEF and DPE to consider an in-depth study to gain an objective understanding about how SLIP is contributing towards access and more importantly towards improving the quality of primary education in Bangladesh. It is on this premise this SLIP study has been undertaken with PPRC awarded the assignment through a process of competitive bidding.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- Assess effectiveness of existing SLIP policy, approaches, tools, and practices in terms of quality, validity, effectiveness, and efficiency towards improving learning outcomes.
- Assess the SLIP grant process and fund utilization at school level.
- Review capacity and performance of school-level stakeholders – teachers, GPSMC, SAC, PTA - to plan, implement and monitor SLIP process and thereby assess whether decentralization of decision-making is happening, including management of funds and functions at school, sub-national and national levels.
- Review the institutional architecture of DPE and line offices at district and upazila levels including policy oversight from MoPME to identify institutional challenges, gaps and needs to be able to better support decentralized planning process and local level empowerment in SLIP implementation process with retaining core focus on “teaching and learning” and “the best interest of children”.

- Review status of SLIP module of Primary Education Management Information System (PEMIS) to generate recommendations for generating real time data on SLIP planning, implementation and monitoring progress and establish high accountability mechanisms.
- Generate recommendations for guiding the revision/strengthening of SLIP guidelines, training manuals and instruments on planning, grant allocation and implementation to achieve better community participation, decentralization and readiness to plan and implement SLIP.

## 3. Literature review

### 3.1 Theoretical underpinning for the analysis of SLIP within the context of decentralization

Decentralization in primary education envisages creation of enabling conditions for school level operators and enhancing their capacity to manage teaching learning process effectively thereby making enhanced learning outcomes possible. Analyzing school improvement plans requires a nuanced understanding of educational systems, pedagogical approaches, and the socio-economic contexts in which schools operate. Decentralization is considered as a vital element of governance and development practice, yet it's acknowledged as a complex and potentially problematic process. Despite increased attention, detailed studies backing its success or failure remain limited. Four forms of decentralization are identified: de-concentration, delegation, devolution, and privatization:

- De-concentration is the transfer of responsibilities to lower levels with limited decision-making power within ministries or organs of central government (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983). These upwardly accountable offices operate as appointed local administrative extensions of the central state. They may have some downward accountability built into their functions too; however, their primary responsibility lies with the central government (Oyugi 2000; Manor 1999; Agrawal and Ribot 1999).
- Delegation is the transfer of decision-making and management authority for specific functions to organizations not under the direct control of the central government (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983). Delegation is when public functions are transferred to lower levels of government, public corporations, or any other authorities outside the regular political-administrative structure, to implement programs on behalf of government agencies (Alex et al. 2000; Ostrom et al. 1993).
- Devolution is the strengthening or creation of autonomous, independent units as separate levels of government outside the central government's direct control (Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema, 1983).
- Privatization is the permanent transfer of power to any non-state entity, including individuals, corporations, NGOs, etc. (Oyugi, 2000; Agrawal and Ribot, 1999).

## 3.2 Insights from global context

Global experiences offer a diverse array of insights into what works and what does not in education reform efforts as summarized below:

- **Clarity of Vision and Goals:** A successful school improvement plan should have a clear vision statement and specific, measurable goals. It should articulate what the school aims to achieve and how it plans to do so. Global best practices emphasize the importance of setting ambitious yet realistic targets that align with broader educational priorities.
- **Evidence-Based Strategies:** Effective improvement plans are grounded in research and evidence-based practices. They should draw upon both local and international research to identify strategies that have been proven to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Global experiences highlight the value of data-driven decision-making and continuous monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of interventions.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the broader community, is critical for the success of any improvement plan. Involving stakeholders in the planning process fosters ownership, commitment, and accountability. Global examples showcase various models of stakeholder engagement, from school-based committees to community-led initiatives.
- **Professional Development:** Investing in teacher training and professional development is essential for building capacity and improving instructional quality. Effective improvement plans allocate resources for ongoing professional learning opportunities that are tailored to the specific needs of teachers and aligned with the goals of the school. Global experiences highlight the importance of supporting teachers in implementing new pedagogical approaches and leveraging technology in the classroom.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Addressing disparities in access to quality education and promoting inclusivity are central to any school improvement effort. Effective plans prioritize equity by targeting resources and support to underserved populations, including students from low-income backgrounds, minorities, and those with special needs. Global examples demonstrate the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices and policies that promote diversity and inclusion.
- **Sustainable Implementation:** Sustainable improvement requires long-term planning, resource allocation, and organizational capacity-building. Successful improvement plans account for the scalability and sustainability of interventions beyond the initial implementation phase. Global experiences underscore the need for political will, institutional support, and community acceptance to sustain improvement efforts over time.
- **Continuous Improvement and Adaptation:** The education landscape is constantly evolving, requiring schools to adapt and innovate to meet changing needs and challenges. Effective improvement plans embrace a culture of continuous improvement, iteration, and adaptation based on ongoing feedback and evaluation. Global examples highlight the importance of learning from both successes and failures and being responsive to emerging trends and best practices.

- While leveraging global experiences to inform decision-making and drive meaningful changes in education systems, it is important to understand and utilize the perspectives of key ground-level actors - head teachers, teachers, school management committees etc. These actors play crucial roles in shaping school dynamics and outcomes. In centralized systems, head teachers act as intermediaries between central administration and schools. Their roles span administrative, pedagogic, and strategic areas, but often, they're confined to administrative tasks, especially in developing countries. However, there's a global push for their roles to evolve in response to socio-economic and technological changes. Effective leadership is increasingly linked to school success, emphasizing the need for dynamic and multifaceted leadership qualities. The role of teachers too is undergoing reevaluation within constructivist discourse, emphasizing changes in their cognition and teaching approaches. However, resource constraints and lack of competent personnel hinder training programs. In terms of community actors, parents and communities played active roles in school management, but nationalization of education centralized control. As education management comes under public scrutiny, questions arise about how school management committees can play a key role in decentralization process by expanding their current roles and responsibilities.

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## 3.3 Cross-country experiences in school level planning

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School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are structured frameworks designed to enhance the quality of education by setting strategic goals and actions within schools. In developing countries, these plans are critical for addressing educational challenges such as resource shortages, inadequate teacher training, and low student performance. This literature review explores the implementation, challenges, and outcomes of SIPs across developing nations, highlighting key country-specific studies from Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America.

### 3.3.1 Sub-Saharan Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the adoption of SIPs has been driven largely by international donor programs and national educational reforms. Countries such as Kenya, Ghana, and Uganda have integrated SIPs into their educational policies. In Kenya, research by Wanjala (2018) highlights the positive impact of SIPs on student performance and teacher development. The study indicates that involving stakeholders, including parents and local communities, significantly improves school accountability and resource mobilization. However, challenges such as limited financial resources and inadequate training for school leaders persist. A study conducted in Ghana by Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah (2017) underscores the importance of data-driven decision-making in SIPs. Schools that regularly collected and analyzed

performance data were more successful in achieving their improvement goals. Despite this progress, the study identified poor infrastructure and inconsistent government support as barriers to effective implementation. Uganda's experience with SIPs reveals a strong emphasis on capacity building for school administrators. According to a report by Nakabugo et al. (2019), training programs for headteachers have led to better planning and execution of SIPs. However, the lack of sustained funding and monitoring mechanisms undermines long-term success.

### 3.3.2 South Asia

In South Asia, countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have adopted SIPs to tackle educational disparities and improve learning outcomes.

#### ***India***

India has implemented SIPs as part of its Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and subsequent Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan programs. These initiatives aim to universalize primary and secondary education and improve school quality. Research by Banerjee et al. (2016) indicates that well-structured SIPs in Indian schools lead to higher student attendance rates and better learning outcomes. Key success factors include teacher involvement, data-driven planning, and continuous professional development. However, bureaucratic hurdles and limited community engagement remain significant challenges. The Right to Education (RTE) Act also mandates school development plans, a form of SIP, but their effectiveness varies across states due to differences in governance and resource availability.

#### ***Pakistan***

In Pakistan, the adoption of SIPs has been part of broader educational reform efforts aimed at improving access and quality. The National Education Policy emphasizes the importance of school-based planning and management. A study by Khan and Rehman (2018) highlights that schools implementing SIPs under the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) demonstrated improved student performance and teacher accountability. The study underscores the importance of stakeholder involvement, particularly community participation, in the planning process. However, challenges such as political interference, inadequate funding, and limited training for school leaders persist. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the introduction of SIPs has been linked to better resource allocation and enhanced teacher support. Nonetheless, inconsistent policy implementation and monitoring mechanisms remain obstacles to achieving sustained improvements.

## ***Sri Lanka***

Sri Lanka has integrated SIPs as part of its education sector development framework, focusing on enhancing school management and accountability. According to Perera and Fernando (2019), SIPs have contributed to better teacher collaboration and improved student outcomes in Sri Lankan schools. The study emphasizes the importance of capacity building for school administrators and the use of performance data to guide decision-making. However, the effectiveness of SIPs is hindered by challenges such as resource constraints and disparities between urban and rural schools. The government's commitment to decentralizing educational governance has provided schools with greater autonomy to implement SIPs. Despite this progress, continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary to ensure long-term success.

## ***Nepal***

Nepal has long prioritized decentralized education governance to strengthen accountability and responsiveness at the grassroots level. In this context, the Ministry of Education institutionalized the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as a mandatory, bottom-up planning tool to enhance school effectiveness and transparency. Under Nepal's SIP model, schools are required to prepare three-year rolling plans with annual updates, developed through inclusive consultations with teachers, parents, local government representatives, and community members. The planning process integrates data on student learning outcomes, school infrastructure, and resource needs. Funding from the School Sector Development Program (SSDP) is tied to the SIP, incentivizing performance-linked planning. This approach has increased local ownership and transparency in school governance. Schools now better align resources to local priorities, improve student attendance, and strengthen teacher accountability. Marginalized groups, including women and disadvantaged communities, have gained a stronger voice in shaping education decisions.

## **3.3.4 Latin America**

In Latin America, countries such as Peru, Colombia, and Honduras have embraced SIPs as part of broader educational reforms. In Peru, the Ministry of Education's emphasis on school-based management has led to the widespread adoption of SIPs. A study by González and Vallejo (2017) found that schools with well-developed SIPs reported improved teacher collaboration and student engagement. However, disparities in resource allocation between urban and rural schools remain a critical issue.

Colombia's educational reforms have included the implementation of SIPs to address regional disparities in education quality. According to a study by Ramírez and Hurtado (2019), schools that prioritized teacher training and community involvement in their SIPs achieved better academic outcomes. Nevertheless, political instability and inconsistent policy implementation have hindered progress.

In Honduras, SIPs have been integrated into the national education strategy to improve access and quality of education. Research by Méndez and Castillo (2021) highlights the positive impact of SIPs on school infrastructure and student attendance. However, challenges such as corruption and limited financial resources continue to affect the effectiveness of these plans.

### 3.3.5 Summary of cross-country experiences

The literature reviewed indicates that SIPs have the potential to significantly improve educational outcomes in developing countries. Key success factors include stakeholder involvement, capacity building, and data-driven decision-making. However, common challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and inconsistent policy support persist. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that involves government commitment, community engagement, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. By fostering collaboration among educators, administrators, and communities, SIPs can serve as vital tools for overcoming educational challenges and achieving sustainable improvements in the quality of education across developing nations.

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## 3.4 National context

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Population and Housing Census, 2022 shows population aged 0-14 constituted 28.6 % of the total population. The number of primary schools stood at 114,539 in 2022, a drop of 13.9% over two years from 2020. Of the 114,539 schools, the number of government primary schools stands at 65,566. According to BANBEIS 2020, the total number of students in the government primary schools was 146.72 lacs out of which the number of girl students was 75.3 lacs (51.3%). Similarly, 64% of teachers in primary education were female.

Learning outcomes of children in Bangladesh has been persistently below expected level according to the series of GoB published NSA reports. According to NSA 2022, students performed high on pre-reading skills suggesting the mastery of pre-grade level concepts by a majority of the students. Bangla reading comprehension emerged as the most challenging area for students followed by vocabulary. Items assessing application and higher order thinking skills were found to be the most challenging across grades. Students in grade 3 showed similar performance on items assessing knowledge and items assessing understanding whereas students of grade 5 performed better on knowledge-based items as compared to the items assessing understanding. In mathematics, grade 3 students showed similar performance across all three content areas. These below the par learning outcomes is suggestive of the fact that the current institutional efforts are not being translated into the level of performance of school that is able to ensure the expected quality learning outcomes.

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## 3.5 Policy context

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At the core of Bangladesh's commitment to achieving universal primary education lies Article 17 of the Constitution, which explicitly underscores this national aspiration. The article mandates the establishment of a uniform, mass-oriented, and inclusive educational system, ensuring free and compulsory education for all children up to a legally determined stage. Additionally, the Constitution emphasizes that primary education must be relevant to both the learners' needs and the broader societal context. This constitutional vision has been systematically embedded into various laws, policies, strategies, and educational programs, guiding the country's education sector reforms. The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2010 reinforces these constitutional commitments by advocating for a modernized and responsive primary education system. It explicitly calls for restructuring primary education administration and management to reflect contemporary needs.

A pivotal aspect of this policy is the active involvement of local communities in school governance. One of the three key strategies for the primary education sector highlights the importance of decentralization, which is pursued through: i) strengthening school managing committees to enhance school-level decision-making ii) promoting greater participation of female guardians in teacher-parent committees and iii) encouraging deeper community engagement in the overall management of primary schools.

The policy framework aligns with the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4), a six-year initiative designed to progressively enhance the quality and inclusivity of primary education. Under the financing agreement, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) contributes 87% of the total funding, while the remaining 13% is collectively provided by Development Partners. This financial structure ensures that key educational reforms are both sustainable and result-driven. According to reports from the SLIP-UPEP Cell of the Planning and Development Division, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), this model fosters a strategic blend of government commitment and external support, thereby reinforcing the nation's trajectory toward an equitable and high-quality primary education system.

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## 3.6 SLIP context

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The purposes of SLIP include, decentralizing planning, improving quality of primary education, promoting equity, and fostering community engagement. SLIP, as a grassroots planning tool, empowers schools to address their specific developmental needs. The process is envisioned as need-driven and community-aligned, aiming to manifest the local vision for school and teaching-learning enhancements. Schools engage in identifying their needs, devising improvement strategies, and executing activities in pursuit of their envisioned progress. Guided by a framework and template, schools receive support allocations to materialize their plans. One of the important underlying premises of SLIP is not only to enhance decision-making but also to shift the focus from mere physical improvements

toward advancing teaching and learning practices and learning outcomes. An evaluation in 2015 highlighted the positive impact of SLIPs: enriched learning experiences, heightened community acceptance and trust in schools, increased enrollment and retention rates, and improved resource availability alongside enhanced local planning capabilities. Nonetheless, concerns were raised regarding the allocation of SLIP grants, considerations for geographical vulnerability, socio-economic conditions, and student learning performance. Moreover, the study identified the need to further strengthen community participation and empowerment in the planning and implementation phases. Subsequently, in 2017-2018, with support from UNICEF, the SLIP guidelines and training manual underwent revisions to better align with the contextual realities of schools and the government's thrust toward decentralized planning and management at the school level. Despite these updates and the program's ongoing implementation since 2018, there's insufficient evidence to affirm its successful achievement of empowering local communities, decentralizing planning and budgeting functions, and prioritizing children's best interests in the planning process. Concerns persist regarding a rather inflexible rule-based approach to planning, focusing excessively on grant expenditure rather than identifying key development priorities aligned with Primary School Quality Level (PSQL) indicators. Considering these observations, the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) aims to revamp the SLIP guideline and strengthen its planning and implementation processes.

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## 3.7 Institutional processes towards implementing SLIP

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SLIP is being implemented in a largely centralized institutional arrangement. DPE under Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) oversees a centrally administered system comprising more than 100 thousand schools, more than 400 thousand teachers catering to millions of children from pre-primary to grade 5. Managing such a vast system is a significant challenge. As a result, DPE initiated a process of meaningful decentralization to increase the efficacy of the system. DPE piloted School Level Planning (SLP) as Local Level Planning (LLP) in six Upazilas under the IDEAL Project and additionally, the Upazila Primary Education Plan (UPEP) was piloted under the ESTEEM Project, which concluded in 2004. Building on this experience, SLIP was expanded to 13 Upazilas under PEDP-II in 2006-2007 using parallel fund. First SLIP guideline was also developed in 2007. In PEDP-III, SLIP was operationalized across the whole country and has been so in PEDP-IV too.



# Part B

## Design, Methodology and Implementation



## 4. Study Design, Methodology and Implementation

The methodology of the SLIP Effectiveness Study was developed through a participatory and consultative design process. The design phase began with a kick-off meeting at UNICEF on March 28, 2024, followed by an inception meeting at the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) on May 13, 2024. Both meetings helped refine the research scope and methodology based on stakeholder feedback. A conceptual framework guided the research, addressing critical questions across policy, institutional, and school levels, focusing on planning, implementation, monitoring, and community participation in SLIP.

The study employed a multi-level, stratified purposive sampling strategy to ensure national representation and diversity. A total of 100 schools across 42 upazilas, 21 districts, and all 8 divisions were covered.

Stakeholders at various levels—school (headteachers, SMC, PTA, SAC, students, parents), upazila (education and accounts officers), district (education officers), DPE, ministry officials, and development partners—were included to capture a comprehensive picture.

Data collection tools included:

- **Document reviews** at school and DPE levels
- **Institutional diagnostics** that included Ministry-Upazila-School SLIP process mapping, SLIP governance and architecture, upazila-level headmasters' conclaves and school-level multi-stakeholder consultations
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** separately for SMCs, PTAs, SACs and students (classes 4 & 5)
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**
- **Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP)** surveys of management and parents.

The tools were carefully developed, pre-tested, and deployed through the Kobo Toolbox digital platform, ensuring GPS-tagged, secure, and reliable data collection. Enumerators were trained and mobilized based on a structured field plan, with clear guidelines and quality control protocols.

Table below provides a summary of the final coverage achieved across all data collection tools used in the study.

### ***Final coverage summary***

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Institutional consultations	31	555
FGD	112	1142
KAP Survey – Parents		1200
KAP Survey – School management		600
KIIs		29
<b><i>Total</i></b>		<b>3526</b>

Detailed methodology is provided in the *Annex*.

# Part C

**Study Findings -  
SLIP Governance and  
Expenditure Analysis**



## 5. SLIP governance

### 5.1 Key Divisions of DPE and Their Responsibilities

- **Planning and Development Division**

This division is responsible for preparing all forms of development plan in consultation with all the relevant divisions including SLIP budget. Once the SLIP planning is done then the budget allocation for individual schools is sent via the existing multi-layered administrative set-up.

- **Finance Division**

The Finance Division of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) plays a critical role in financial management by overseeing both the preparation and implementation of the non-development budget. Additionally, it is responsible for managing all financial activities, including issuing Government Orders (GOs) for the release of plan and development grants, ensuring the efficient allocation of resources for education initiatives.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Division**

The M&E Division is responsible for maintaining transparency and accountability in project execution by ensuring the accuracy and reliability of progress reports. The division plays a pivotal role in monitoring the effectiveness of various education programs.

### 5.2 Key Offices Involved in Financial Oversight

- **Office of the Chief Accounts Officer (CAO)**

The Chief Accounts Officer serves as the principal financial advisor to the Principal Accounting Officer (PAO) regarding accounts and financial regulations. The office is responsible for:

- Integrating monthly accounts into the Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS).
- Overseeing the endorsement of Government Orders (GOs).
- Coordinating with Upazila and District Accounts Officers to streamline financial operations.
- Education Sector Oversight at the Upazila Level.

- **Office of the Upazila/Thana Primary Education Officer**

The Upazila/Thana Primary Education Officer plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of primary and pre-primary education within their jurisdiction. The UPEO/TPEO's key responsibilities include:

- Overseeing and monitoring educational development activities at the upazila level.
- Administering SLIP (School Level Improvement Plan) fund grants, ensuring proper disbursement and utilization at the school level as a DDO.
- Financial Oversight and Coordination

- **Upazila Assistant Primary Education Officer UAPEO**

- **Office of Upazila/District Accounts Officers**

- Operating under the Controller General of Accounts, the Upazila and District Accounts Officers manage financial transactions and accounting-related activities for various government departments. Their responsibilities include:
  - Processing bills and facilitating the release of funds for government officials.
  - Conducting fund reconciliation and internal audits to uphold financial accountability.
  - Ensuring efficient fund management at the local administrative level.

Additionally, these offices work closely with higher financial authorities to ensure:

- Coordinated efforts with Upazila and District Accounts Officers, streamlining financial operations for improved efficiency.
- Monitoring revenue collection trends and expenditure patterns, taking necessary corrective actions to maintain financial stability.

- **School-Level Implementation**

Government Primary School Managing Committees (GPSMCs) play a pivoting role in executing SLIP initiatives at the school level, ensuring grassroots-level impact on education quality and resource management.

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## 5.3 SLIP Cell Organizational Structure

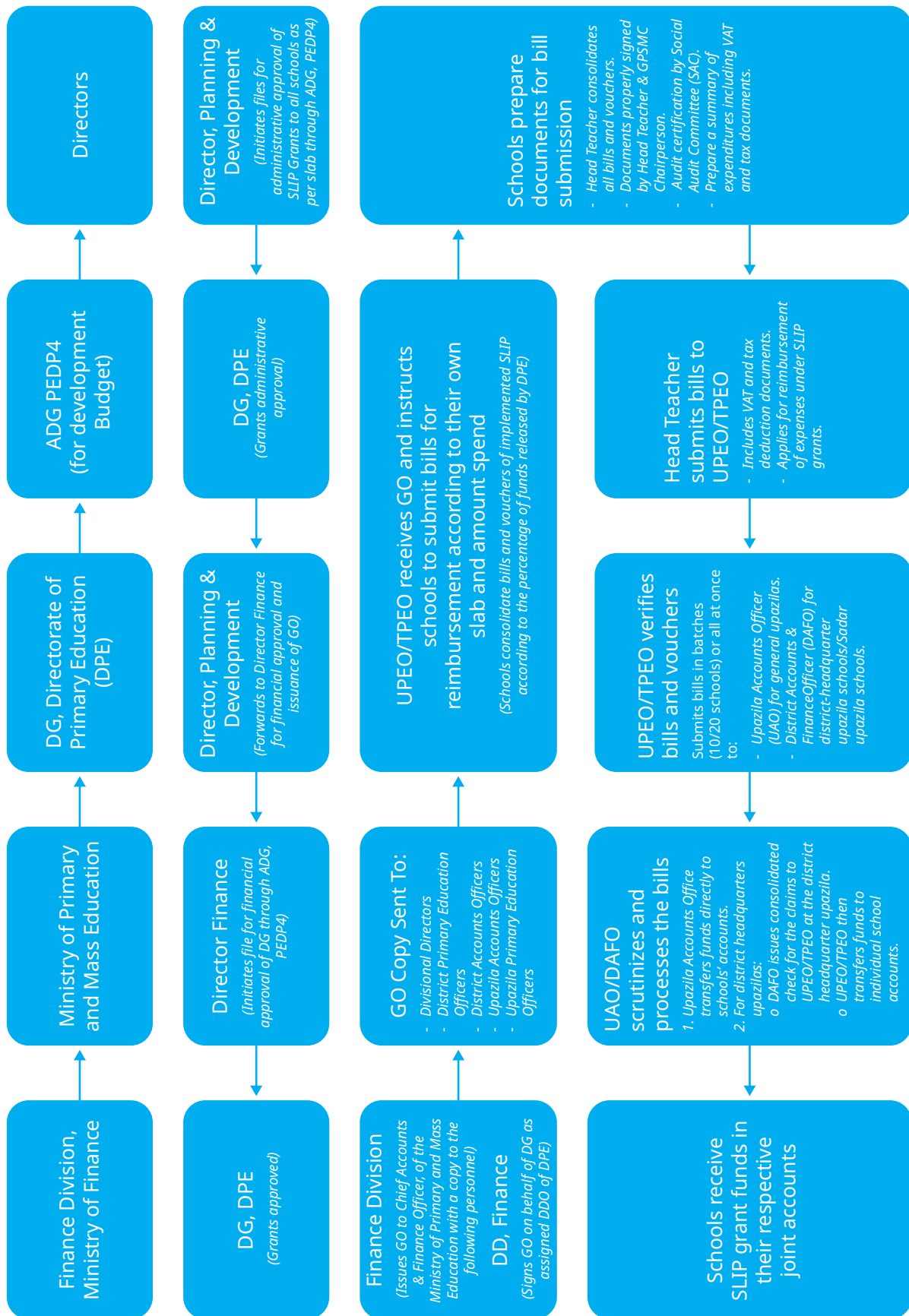
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The SLIP Cell is responsible for overseeing the planning, coordination, and monitoring of SLIP initiatives. The organizational structure includes:

- Director (Planning), DPE – Head of the SLIP-UPEP Cell
- Deputy Director, SLIP-UPEP Cell
- Assistant Director, SLIP-UPEP Cell
- Education Officer, SLIP-UPEP Cell

This structured approach ensures efficient implementation of SLIP programs, ultimately contributing to the continuous improvement of primary education across the country.

**Figure 1: Process of Approval and Disbursement of SLIP Grants to Schools**



### **Matrix 1: SLIP Governance Structure**

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
MoPME (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews and approves budget proposals. Allocates funds for development and non-development expenditures.</li> <li>• Directs all directorates to submit budget proposals. Collaborates with DPE to review, adjust, and finalize the AOP.</li> <li>• Distributes the approved AOP to all directorates.</li> </ul>
DPE (Directorate of Primary Education)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares the both development and non-development budget.</li> </ul>
Finance Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafts budget proposals through various divisions.</li> <li>• Sends instructions to line divisions to request quarterly grant releases.</li> <li>• Issues Government Orders (GO) and forwards them to CAO for endorsement, with copies sent to UEO.</li> </ul>
Accounts Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Central Accounts Office endorses the Government Order (GO) and forwards it to Upazila and District Accounts Offices.</li> <li>• Upazila and District Accounts and Finance Offices process the endorsed bills for fund release.</li> </ul>

# 6. Multi-tier SLIP implementation process

## 6.1 SLIP Budget Disbursement and Implementation Process: Flow, Functions and Systemic Challenges

### 1. **Budget Approval by Ministry of Finance**

The Finance Division of the Ministry of Finance approves the development and revenue budget for the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

### 2. **Budget Distribution by MoPME**

After receiving the approved budget, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) forwards the allocated budget—including PEDP4 and other budget lines—to the Director General (DG) of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE).

### 3. **Implementation Instruction from DPE**

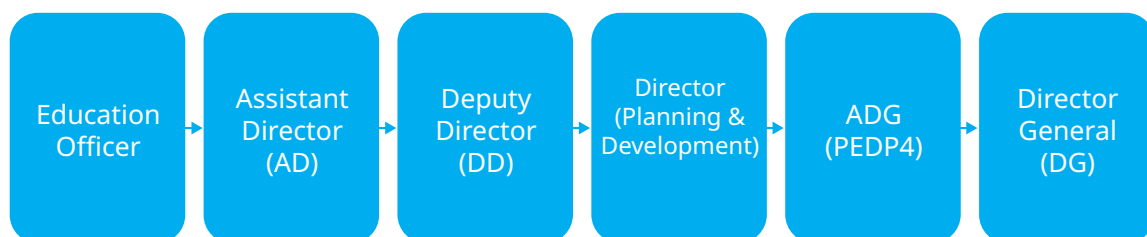
Upon receiving the budget, the Directorate of Primary Education instructs the implementation of PEDP4-related activities under the supervision of the Additional Director General (ADG), who communicates with respective Line Directors as per the approved Annual Operational Plan (AOP).

### 4. **SLIP Budget Preparation Request**

As part of this process, the Director (Planning & Development) requests presentation of school-level development budgets (SLIP) included under the AOP.

### 5. **Allocation Proposal for SLIP**

The Education Officer of the SLIP Cell prepares allocation proposals based on student enrollment and pre-set slab categories at the upazila level and submits them for administrative approval through the chain:



## 6. **Instruction for Submission to Finance Director**

After administrative approval, the Director (Planning & Development) instructs to forward the administrative approval data to the Director (Finance).

## 7. **Submission to Director (Finance)**

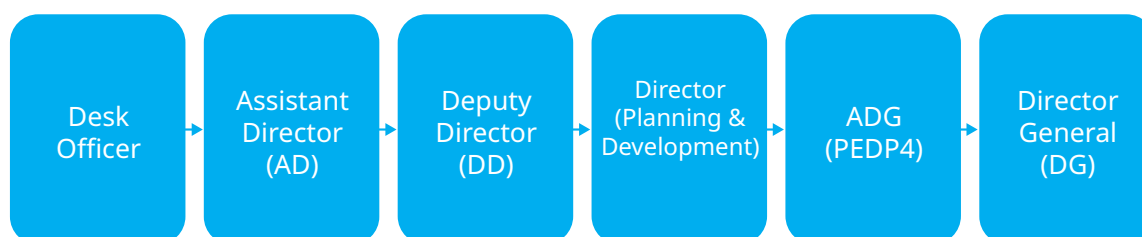
Through the same chain—EO → AD → DD → Director (P&D)—the documents are submitted to the Director (Finance).

## 8. **Financial Approval Initiation**

Upon receipt, the Director (Finance) initiates the process for financial approval and requests the file to be placed for review.

## 9. **File Movement for Financial Approval**

The Desk Officer presents the file in the following order for financial approval:



## 10. **Issuance of Government Order (GO)**

After the DG grants financial approval, the Director (Finance) issues a Government Order (GO) for the disbursement of SLIP development expenditures.

## 11. **Circulation of GO**

After receiving financial approval from the Director General, the Deputy Director (Finance) issues the Government Order (GO) as DDO addressed to the Chief Accounts and Finance Officer of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

An endorsed copy of the GO is sent to:

- Respective officers of the Directorate of Primary Education
- Divisional Deputy Directors
- District Primary Education Officers
- District Accounts Officers
- Upazila Accounts Officers
- Upazila/Thana Primary Education Officers

## **12. Instructions to Schools by UPEO**

Upon receiving the GO, the Upazila Primary Education Officer (UPEO) instructs the schools under their jurisdiction to implement the development programs under the approved SLIP using the allocated amount based on the slab.

## **13. Implementation and Documentation by Schools**

Once the head teachers receive the approved allocation, they implement the planned activities under the SLIP program using the provided funds following SLIP Guide lines.

After implementation, the program and expenditures are audited by the Social Audit Committee of the respective school.

Following the audit, the head teacher prepares a summary of all expenditures, including bill vouchers, VAT, and tax documentation, and submits them to the appropriate authority for further processing and reimbursement.

## **14. Reimbursement Request by Head Teachers**

Once approved, the head teachers submitted all these documents to the UPEO/TPEO and apply for reimbursement of the total expenses incurred under SLIP.

## **15. Bill Verification and Forwarding by UPEO**

The UPEO verifies all bills and vouchers and submits them either in batches of 10/20 schools or all at once to:

- Upazila Accounts Officer (for general upazilas)
- District Accounts & Finance Officer (for Sadar Upazila schools)

## **16. Check Issuance by Accounts Officers**

- The Upazila Accounts Office issues check to the joint signatory school accounts.
- District Accounts & Finance Office issues check to the UPEO, Sadar.
- For district headquarters upazila UPEO issues check to joint signatory school accounts.

Table 1 summarizes the systemic strengths and weaknesses in the financial governance and administrative processes of SLIP implementation framework.

**Table 1: Systemic Strengths and Weaknesses**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The multi-layered approval system ensures financial accountability and alignment with national priorities.</li> <li>• Joint signatory bank accounts enhance transparency and safeguard against unilateral fund misuse.</li> <li>• Community involvement through SLIP committees and GPSMCs reinforces grassroots accountability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bureaucratic complexity and long chain of approvals can result in significant delays.</li> <li>• The return process between finance offices and education offices often lacks real-time tracking, leading to repetitive follow-ups and resource inefficiency.</li> <li>• Manual documentation and the absence of integrated digital systems slow down fund disbursement.</li> <li>• Schools often experience cash flow interruptions, affecting the timely implementation of their improvement activities.</li> <li>• In practice, the capacity of UPEO/TPEO offices to vet and summarize bills can vary, particularly in under-resourced or overburdened upazilas.</li> </ul>

## 6.2 SLIP and decentralization: Key lessons learned for the existing SLIP governance mechanism

The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) initiative is designed as an effort toward decentralization in primary education governance. However, the evidence suggests that SLIP operates in a deconcentrated rather than a truly decentralized space. While some authorities have been shifted to schools and local administrative units, the central government retains significant control over planning, budgeting, and implementation. This structural limitation highlights the need for further delegation of authority and responsibilities to schools to ensure sustainable quality improvements in primary education.

- **Centralized Control Over SLIP Governance**

Despite SLIP's emphasis on school-level improvements, the governance structure in which it operates remains highly centralized. Several key divisions and offices demonstrate the centralization of authority:

- The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) retain the highest level of decision-making authority, reviewing and approving budget proposals for both development and non-development expenditures.

- The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) prepares and manages the non-development budget, ensuring alignment with national educational priorities.
- The Planning & Development (P&D) Division is responsible for preparing the development budget for SLIP, demonstrating that financial planning remains largely centralized.

- **SLIP as a Deconcentrated Initiative**

The existing framework demonstrates that SLIP functions within a deconcentrated governance system rather than a fully decentralized one. The distinction between these two concepts is critical which has been provided earlier (i. Deconcentration refers to the transfer of responsibilities to lower administrative levels while retaining decision-making authority at the center; and ii. Decentralization involves a genuine transfer of decision-making power to local entities, granting them autonomy over planning, budgeting, and execution).

In its current form, SLIP exhibits characteristics of deconcentration:

- Schools receive funds and operational responsibilities, but major decisions regarding budget conception, approval, and allocation remain centralized.
- Local offices, such as the UPEO and district accounts offices, act as intermediaries rather than autonomous decision-makers.
- The financial approval process requires multiple layers of endorsement, reinforcing bureaucratic control rather than school-level autonomy.

While SLIP aims to foster school-level improvements, it remains constrained by a centralized governance structure, operating more as a deconcentrated initiative than a decentralized one. Most key decisions—ranging from budget formulation to fund allocation and monitoring—are retained by central authorities. To truly empower schools and improve the sustainability of primary education quality, SLIP ought to transition towards a more decentralized model where schools and local administrative units have greater autonomy over financial and operational decision-making. This shift would align SLIP with international ‘best practices’ in decentralized education governance, fostering more responsive and effective school management. This is a matter for further exploration.

# 7. SLIP Expenditure Analysis

## 7.1 Local resource mobilization

Table 2 presents a breakdown of local resource mobilization towards SLIP expenditures across divisions in Bangladesh.

**Table 2: Local resource mobilization towards SLIP expenditure: Review of School Level Data**

Division	Slab No.	Govt. Budget (BDT)	Community Contribution (BDT)	Total SLIP Budget (BDT)	Government (%)	Community (%)
Barishal	1	1,435,000	10,000	1,445,000	99.31	0.69
	2	3,690,000	127,000	3,817,000	96.67	3.33
	3	2,755,000	-	2,755,000	100.00	-
Chattogram	1	3,035,000	-	3,035,000	100.00	-
	2	6,700,000	83,000	6,783,000	98.77	1.22
	3	6,175,000	10,000	6,185,000	99.84	0.16
Dhaka	1	3,400,000	45,000	3,445,000	98.69	1.31
	2	7,425,000	40,000	7,465,000	99.46	0.54
	3	5,850,000	-	5,850,000	100.00	-
Khulna	1	2,885,000	18,000	2,903,000	99.38	0.62
	2	6,065,000	-	6,065,000	100.00	-
	3	4,715,000	-	4,715,000	100.00	-
Mymensingh	1	2,365,000	50,000	2,415,000	97.93	2.07
	2	5,075,000	-	5,075,000	100.00	-
	3	4,505,000	-	4,505,000	100.00	-
Rajshahi	1	2,645,000	18,000	2,663,000	99.32	0.68
	2	4,445,000	-	4,445,000	100.00	-
	3	4,280,000	-	4,280,000	100.00	-

Division	Slab No.	Govt. Budget (BDT)	Community Contribution (BDT)	Total SLIP Budget (BDT)	Government (%)	Community (%)
Rangpur	1	3,105,000	4,000	3,109,000	99.87	0.13
	2	5,465,000	-	5,465,000	100.00	-
	3	4,565,000	-	4,565,000	100.00	-
Sylhet	1	2,590,000	5,000	2,595,000	99.81	0.19
	2	4,985,000	15,000	5,000,000	99.70	0.30
	3	3,685,000	-	3,685,000	100.00	-

### Local resource mobilization

**Government Contribution:** In all divisions, the government's share of the SLIP budget is overwhelmingly dominant, generally above 99%, with many slabs showing 100% government funding.

**Community Contribution:** Contribution from the community is present but minimal, varying between 0.16% and 3.33%, with Barishal and Mymensingh showing slightly higher community involvement in some slabs.

## 7.2 Expenditure against allocation

Table 3 illustrates the budget allocations and actual expenditures for schools across multiple divisions in Bangladesh (combined figures for 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024).

**Table 3: Comparative division-wise status of SLIP allocations and expenditures**

Division	Total Allocations (BDT)	Total Expenditures (BDT)	Execution Rate (%)
Rangpur	13,139,000	12,876,220	98.0%
Rajshahi	11,388,000	10,989,420	96.5%
Khulna	13,683,000	1,323,146	96.7%
Chattogram	16,003,000	15,954,991	99.7%
Barishal	8,017,000	8,000,966	99.8%

Division	Total Allocations (BDT)	Total Expenditures (BDT)	Execution Rate (%)
Sylhet	11,280,000	11,280,000	100.0%
Mymensingh	11,995,000	11,527,195	96.1%
Dhaka	12,905,000	12,117,795	93.9%

#### *Total Budget Allocations & Expenditures per Division*

*N.B. – Actually all the divisions have utilized 100% of the funds, the difference is due to omissions in the reporting.*

#### • **Slab no-1: Allocation & Usage Analysis**

In Slab no-1, the allocations and expenditures across various schools show some distinct patterns:

- Budget Consistency: Many of the schools in this slab have consistent budgets year over year (e.g., In Khulna (Shatkhira), schools like Gazna Government Primary School (GPS) of Kalarowa Upazila, etc. had the same budget allocation for all three years), but there were a few instances where allocations fluctuated, which was due to the variations in community contribution.
- Discrepancies in Budget vs Expenditure:
  - Rangpur (Pirganj) – Panbazar GPS shows a scenario where the budget allocation remained constant throughout the three years (2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024), with matching expenditure trends.
  - Barishal (Barishal) – Poysar Hat GPS in Aguljhara Upazila received a SLIP allocation of BDT 70,000 each year over the last three years (2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024). In addition, the school received BDT 15,000 from the community each year during the same period. However, the expense statements provided show expenditures of BDT 69,700, 70,000, and 70,000 for the respective years. No expense vouchers were found for the community contributions.
- Total Budget & Expenditure Overview:

The total budget for Slab no-1 shows variations, but Khulna and Chottogram are consistently allocated larger amounts, while others like Rajshahi and Rangpur have smaller allocations.

#### • **Slab no-2: Allocation & Usage Analysis**

In Slab no-2, several schools report aligned or consistent budgets, while some show expenditure patterns deviating from allocations:

- Rangpur (Kurigram) consistently showed an alignment between allocated budget and expenditures, e.g., Palashbari Pocchimpara GPS always had its full allocation used.

- Discrepancies - Chottogram (Rangamati) – the Raikhali Refugeepara School had a large fluctuation, which was due to the variations in community contribution. However, this large gap between community contributions over the years needs to be further investigated. The budget allocation was BDT 135,000 in 2022-2023 while it was BDT 99,880 in 2021-2022, but the school was consistent in utilizing the funds.

- **Slab no-3: Allocation & Usage Analysis**

In Slab no-3, the overall allocation vs. usage patterns presented a mixed picture:

*Consistency:*

- Schools like Chottogram (Rangamati) - Bono Rupa GPS have perfect alignment between the budget and actual expenditure across all three years (BDT 85,000 allocated and spent).

*Fluctuating Allocations:*

- The total budget for Haluaghat Uttar Model GPS of Haluaghat Upazila, in Mymensingh, fluctuates slightly over the years (BDT 95,000 in 2021-2022, BDT 95,100 in 2022-2023, and BDT 82,000 in 2023-2024), but expenditure generally remained consistent and aligned with the allocated amounts. The fluctuations were due to the variations in community contributions.

## Key Observations and Analytical Insights

- **Fluctuating Budget and Expenditure Patterns**

- Budget allocations have varied over the years, with some divisions seeing significant increases followed by reductions, such as Chottogram (Rangamati), Raikhali Refugeepara GPS of Kaptai Upazila, which experienced a budget surge from 99,880 in 2021-22 to 135,000 in 2022-23, followed by a decline to 95,400 in 2023-24. The reason behind the fluctuation is due to the different amount of community contributions which are added with the SLIP grant with DPE.

- **Regions with High and Efficient Fund Utilization**

- Rangpur (98.6%) demonstrated exceptional budget execution, ensuring that allocated resources were fully utilized.
- Dhaka (96.9%) and Mymensingh (95.4%) also showcased efficient fund usage, contrasting with regions that faced spending inefficiencies.

- **Stable Budget and Expenditure Trends**

- Some locations, such as Rajshahi (Bagmara), Khulna (Satkhira and Kulaura), and Rangpur Sadar (Dakkhin Mominpur), maintain consistent budget allocations and expenditures over the years.
- This stability suggests well-structured financial management in these regions.

## ***Future Directions for Improved Budget Execution and Financial Management***

The analysis of SLIP budget and expenditure trends underscores the importance of efficient fund utilization, strategic budget planning, and transparent financial management in education development. While some divisions demonstrate optimal fund usage, others face challenges related to delayed utilization, fluctuations (due to varying community contributions), and misallocation. By implementing enhanced monitoring mechanisms, improving stakeholder engagement, and ensuring flexible fund reallocation, future SLIP budgeting can achieve greater financial discipline, maximizing its impact on school improvement and student outcomes. To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of SLIP budget allocation and expenditure, the following strategic steps should be considered:

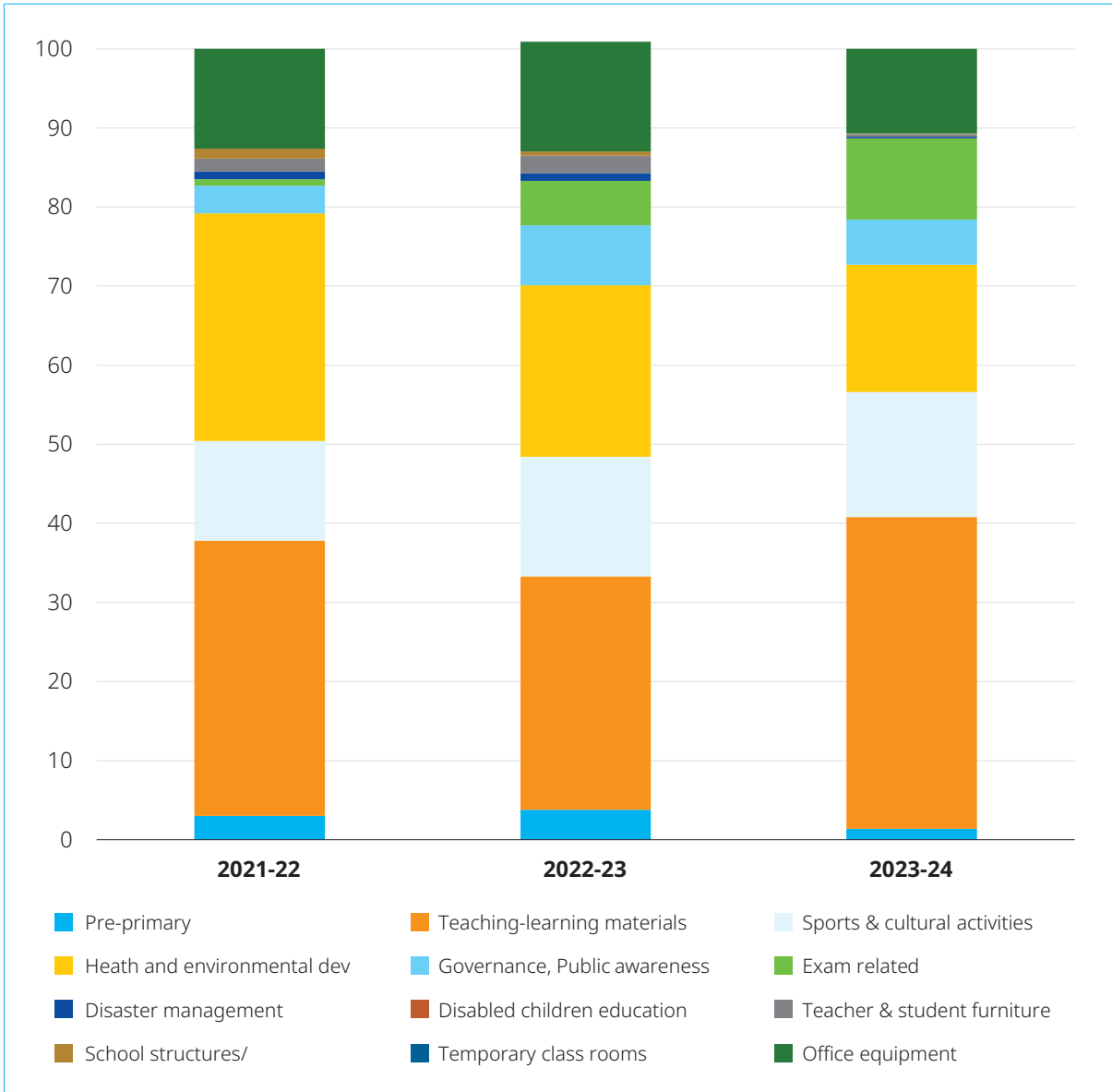
- **Strengthening Budget Planning and Monitoring**
  - Implement real-time budget tracking mechanisms to identify and address delayed utilization early.
  - Conduct regular financial audits and expenditure reviews to ensure funds are being used for their intended purposes.
- **Addressing Underspending and Unutilized Funds**
  - Introduce a flexible reallocation mechanism to redistribute unused funds from low-spending regions to those with urgent financial needs.
  - Ensure timely fund disbursement to avoid administrative delays that hinder execution.
- **Capacity Building for Efficient Fund Utilization**
  - Provide training programs for school management committees (SLIP committees) and financial officers to improve budget planning and execution skills.
  - Promote data-driven decision-making by leveraging financial reports to inform future budget allocations.
- **Enhancing Transparency and Stakeholder Involvement**
  - Encourage community participation in budget discussions to ensure funds are allocated based on actual school needs.
  - Introduce public expenditure tracking platforms to allow stakeholders to monitor fund utilization.
- **Optimizing Budget Allocation Strategies**
  - Align funding with regional performance metrics, ensuring that areas with proven budget efficiency receive adequate financial support.
  - Conduct needs-based assessments to allocate resources where they are most required, preventing excessive budget fluctuations (due to the variations in community contribution).

# 7.3 School-level item-wise SLIP expenditures

There were 11 listed items on which SLIP funds were to be utilized. Mid-stream, another item – exams related – was added to the list. An important finding of the study is the weaknesses in maintaining the documentation of these expenditures. Such weaknesses are the result of a combination of factors which include the **policy approach of not providing any advance payment forcing headmasters to 'manage' the expenditures for subsequent reimbursement**, lack of training on maintaining expenditure documentation, imposition of varying item-wise VAT rates etc.

For the purposes of the study, expenditure documentation could be retrieved from 59 of the 100 schools surveyed. Figure 1 and Table 4 describe item-wise SLIP expenditures for the years 2021-22 to 2023-24.

**Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of SLIP Expenditure by Category, 2021-22 to 2023-24**



**Table 4: Item-wise Planned Expenditure during 2021-2024**

Item wise Planned Expenditure	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	%		
Pre-primary	3.6	3.0	1.4
Teaching Learning Equipment	36.7	33.1	32.4
Sports & Cultural activities	16.5	15.7	16.7
Health & Environment development	24.3	20.8	17.7
Governance, Public Relations and Awareness	4.5	7.5	6.8
Examination related	0.6	6.5	12.6
Disaster management	1.0	0.2	0.2
Teachers & student furniture	1.4	1.0	0.9
School structure/ Temporary School built	1.1	0.7	0.8
Office equipment & Others	10.3	11.4	10.5

The three highest SLIP expenditure items are teaching/learning equipment, health and environmental development, and sports & cultural activities. Governance & Awareness, Office Equipment, and Examination-related costs are also considerable.

Item-wise trend analysis is summarized in the Matrix below:

**Matrix 2: Analysis and Observations of the SLIP Expenditure Items**

SLIP expenditure item	Analysis and observations
Pre-primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget allocations are relatively low and inconsistent.</li> <li>Not all divisions (e.g., Sylhet in 2022–23 and Khulna in 2023–24) reported allocations.</li> <li>Suggests insufficient focus on foundational early education.</li> <li>Budget allocation from DPE is not equal.</li> </ul>
Teaching Learning material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant and consistent investment indicates strong focus on infrastructure and material support for teaching.</li> </ul>

SLIP expenditure item	Analysis and observations
Sports & Cultural Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget gradually increases, suggesting growing recognition of holistic education.</li> <li>Large allocations in the surveyed schools in Rangpur, Sylhet, and Rajshahi.</li> </ul>
Health & Environment Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong emphasis overall; especially high in surveyed schools in Rajshahi, Khulna, and Rangpur.</li> <li>This aligns well with SDG-related school health and WASH goals.</li> <li>But surveyed schools in Barishal and Sylhet's low allocations raise concerns about parity.</li> </ul>
Governance, Public Relations & Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget increases in later years.</li> <li>Notably high in Rangpur and Khulna, suggesting targeted community engagement.</li> <li>Still zero allocations in several cells, implying lack of nationwide strategy.</li> </ul>
Examination-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expenditure spikes drastically in 2023–24 (~3.9 crore BDT total), with surveyed schools in Rangpur, Rajshahi, and Mymensingh leading.</li> <li>This sudden jump was likely due to DPE's decision of not to take any financial contributions from the parents.</li> </ul>
Disaster Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very low and inconsistent, despite Bangladesh's vulnerability to natural disasters.</li> <li>Stronger and systematic funding is urgently required.</li> </ul>
Disability Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 500 BDT in Chattogram in 2023–24.</li> <li>No other allocations—gross neglect of inclusive education goals.</li> </ul>
Teachers & Student Furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sporadic and non-continuous funding. For example, Dhaka only had funds in 2021–22.</li> <li>Lack of consistency suggests poor long-term planning or tracking of basic infrastructure needs</li> </ul>
Temporary School Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only surveyed schools in Rajshahi and Rangpur show some expenditures with zero in most divisions.</li> <li>It indicates that temporary schooling infrastructure is not a priority, even though floods and relocations may require it.</li> </ul>
Office Equipment & Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High and steady across years and divisions.</li> <li>Likely supports administrative upgrades, but its share (~10% of total) warrants closer audit to avoid inefficiencies.</li> </ul>

## 7.4 Conclusions

Some larger insights can also be drawn:

- **Shift in Priorities:** A major shift is evident from pre-primary and environmental health to examination systems and governance.
- **Equity Concerns:** The decline in disaster management and furniture-related spending may negatively affect underserved schools.
- **Strategic Implication:** The emphasis on assessments and teaching-learning materials suggests a more performance-oriented approach, but risks underfunding enabling environments (health, early learning, infrastructure).
- **Sustainability Question:** Declining investment in foundational and environmental aspects may have long-term repercussions for quality and inclusive education.

While the overall SLIP (or related) expenditure framework reflects an effort to support multiple facets of school-level development, the data reveals strategic inconsistency, equity issues, and a persistent neglect of inclusive and disaster-resilient education. Strengthening financial planning, monitoring, and prioritization - especially in underfunded and underserved areas - is critical for achieving equitable, quality education outcomes nationwide.

The effectiveness of School Level Improvement Plans (SLIP) hinges on a well-structured, transparent, and inclusive approach to school development. The discussions highlight several critical dimensions—financial accountability, student engagement, governance, and student welfare—all of which must work in harmony to achieve meaningful educational progress.

A strategic financial management system is essential to ensure that allocated budgets are used efficiently and transparently. Strengthening audit mechanisms, implementing real-time expenditure tracking, and involving local stakeholders in financial oversight can significantly reduce fund mismanagement. Similarly, a need-based budgeting approach that aligns procurement decisions with learning priorities will ensure that resources contribute directly to student outcomes.

Addressing student attendance and engagement remains a crucial challenge, especially in the post-COVID era. Schools must move beyond passive attendance monitoring and adopt proactive strategies such as home visits, parental engagement programs, and student incentives. By integrating data-driven attendance tracking with targeted interventions, schools can foster a more inclusive and responsive learning environment.

Administrative efficiency and decision-making processes require further reinforcement through capacity-building initiatives. Training SLIP committees in project planning and financial oversight, ensuring regular and transparent PTA meetings, and maintaining

structured follow-ups will create a governance model that supports sustainability. Encouraging democratic participation in school elections and SLIP decision-making further enhances institutional accountability.

Furthermore, student welfare and social integration must be embedded into SLIP planning. Prioritizing the most underprivileged students through timely distribution of learning materials, uniforms, and hygiene programs will help bridge educational inequalities. Schools should also actively promote cultural and national events, using these platforms to strengthen social cohesion and national identity among students. Documenting the impact of these activities through structured reporting will enhance their long-term effectiveness.

Ultimately, the success of SLIP implementation depends on a multi-stakeholder approach that fosters transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. Regular reviews, community participation, and structured follow-ups will ensure that SLIP serves as a dynamic tool for sustainable educational development. By refining these strategies, schools can create an environment where financial prudence, student engagement, and administrative excellence work collectively to improve learning outcomes and institutional growth.



# Part D

Study Findings -  
Qualitative Insights  
from KIIs and FGDs



# 8. Insights from KIIs

## 8.1 Insights from DPE

DPE interviewees recognized that the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) stands as a vital operational tool within the framework of PEDP4 (Primary Education Development Program Phase 4) centered on five key areas: decentralization, resource allocation, capacity building, community engagement and monitoring and evaluation.

DPE officials noted several success areas:

- **Empowerment and Autonomy:** By granting schools control over planning and fund utilization, SLIP has promoted local ownership. Schools have independently addressed priorities such as sanitation, infrastructure repair, and basic learning resources, contributing to increased responsiveness.
- **Improved Learning Environment:** Through SLIP funding, many schools have renovated classrooms, purchased educational materials, and upgraded facilities. These enhancements have improved student attendance, engagement, and retention, especially in under-resourced areas.
- **Community Participation and Local Accountability:** The activation of GPSMCs under SLIP has led to greater transparency in school governance. Parent involvement has fostered a sense of responsibility and oversight, helping ensure that school needs reflect community priorities.
- **Leadership Development:** Training under SLIP has enhanced the administrative and financial skills of headteachers and committee members. Where leadership is proactive, schools have seen measurable improvement in planning and delivery.
- **Responsiveness to Local Needs:** SLIP's structure allows for tailored interventions, helping schools respond to localized challenges—whether high dropout rates, poor attendance, or low learning outcomes.

However, there was recognition that despite these gains, several systemic and structural constraints continue to hinder SLIP's broader effectiveness. DPE officials identified a set of enablers and barriers to strengthening the SLIP process:

- Enablers
  - Training & Orientation: Equips headteachers, teachers, GPSMCs, PTA, Social Audit Committee and Education Officers with necessary skills.
  - Strong Local Leadership: Committed UPEOs and headteachers drive progress.
  - Community Involvement: Parental engagement significantly boosts outcomes.

- Monitoring & Support: District-level (DPEO, ADPEO) and Upazila-level (TPEO/UPEO, TAPEO/UAPEO) oversight ensures accountability and proper execution. In this regard, the role of UPETCs could be further re-configured to strengthen the SLIP implementation process.
- Central Guidance: PEDP4's alignment with national goals guides local actions effectively.
- Barriers
  - Skill Deficits: Many actors lack expertise in planning and budgeting.
  - Weak Supervision: Inadequate support from UAPEOs undermines quality.
  - Tokenism: GPSMCs sometimes endorse plans without genuine input.
  - Bureaucracy: Delays in fund release hinder timely responsiveness.
  - Over standardization: Preset templates stifle local creativity and innovation.

DPE officials also highlighted some good practices which merit replication:

- Matching Funds: Communities contributed financially in regions such as Khulna and Rajshahi.
- In-Kind Support: Local contributions, such as labor and materials, were seen in Barishal and Mymensingh.
- Fundraising: Local events helped support school library initiatives.
- Diaspora Support: Alumni funded key resources, like solar panels, in some areas.
- SMC Participation Variability: Urban GPSMCs tend to co-develop SLIPs with more involvement, while rural GPSMCs face limited engagement due to lower capacity and awareness.
- Learning Walls in Chandpur: Aids informal education.
- Mini Libraries in Sylhet and Rajshahi: Improves literacy.
- School Gardens: Fosters sustainability and hands-on learning.
- Low-Cost Tech: Projectors support multi-grade teaching.
- Continuous classroom assessment and record keeping in Rajshahi

DPE officials also underscored some governance and decision-making dynamics:

- **Headteacher:** High influence, leads planning.
- **GPSMC Members:** Medium-high power, approve plans.
- **Assistant Teachers:** Low-medium power, occasionally consulted.
- **Parents/Community:** Low power, marginal involvement.
- **Upazila Primary Education Officer:** High indirect influence, reviews plans.

## 8.2 Insights from field-level officials: UPEOs and UAPEOs

- **SLIP Evaluation and Approval**

The SLIP process operates within a structured framework that aligns with governmental educational policies. The pre-condition for approval of the SLIP plan submitted by schools is that the proposed plan must be within the scope of the guidelines. The upazila office does not have the authority to modify the proposed SLIP plan. This is to ensure validation for the authority to plan and allocate resources according to the collective desire of the stakeholders at school level.

- **Fund Management and Disbursement**

One of the most important sticking points is the teachers have to resort to personal resources to initiate activities, with reimbursement following approval. This has put an unfair burden on the school administration more specifically on the teachers, since this requires them to spend money from their personal account. This has resulted in causing hardships for the teachers, particularly the head teachers and consequent inefficiencies in the SLIP implementation process.

- **Monitoring Mechanisms**

Despite laid out measures in policy documents, transparency can be undermined due to overlapping responsibilities between GPSMC and Social Audit Committee (SAC) members. Monitoring is periodically done by the upazila administration and within the schools the monitoring is done by both GPSMC and SAC. However, in this case also, the most critical link in making SLIP monitoring effective is the head teachers.

- **Training and Capacity Building**

A critical barrier to effective SLIP implementation is the lack of updated training for key stakeholders. Many headteachers, assistant teachers, PTA, SAC, and GPSMC members have not received relevant training in years. The sporadic nature of training - such as limited sessions held in 2016 - further exacerbates this issue. While SLIP implementation guidebooks are distributed to the schools, concerned stakeholders usually do not make individual efforts to read and understand the guidebooks unless specially motivated by head teachers.

- **Stakeholder Awareness**

There is a notable lack of awareness among stakeholders, including parents and community members, about SLIP's guidelines and objectives. Teachers and committee members often require additional support to navigate the complexities of planning and implementation.

- **Collaboration between school and upazila education officials**

Active collaboration among Upazila Primary Education officers, UAPEOs, and schools has emerged as a key factor in SLIP's effectiveness. Stakeholder meetings and community assemblies facilitate the resolution of challenges and refinement of

strategies. However, the effectiveness of SLIP process is apparently contingent upon the interpersonal relationship and power dynamics among stakeholders within schools and the relationship between schools and upazila administration. Therefore, the effectiveness of the collaborative processes vary from school to school and upazila to upazila.

- **GPSMC scenario**

Recently the GPSMC has been abolished and has been replaced by the Adhoue a four-member committee comprising of UAPEOs, head teachers, High School assistant teachers and donor members. While new GPSMCs are yet to be installed. Having stated that the study team has been informed that the SMCs in the Chittagong Hill Tracts have been fully installed and currently in operation. It is, however, too early to comment on this since this process is still evolving.

- **Upazila level officials identified a number of challenges in SLIP Implementation:**

- ***Structural and Procedural Issues:*** The capacity of GPSMC and SAC committees is often insufficient to support effective SLIP implementation. A number of reasons are behind this, for instance the head teacher might be newly introduced to the SLIP process, as a result it takes time to get skilled in SLIP implementation, as result the process suffers. It is observed that often the supporting committees like SAC and PTAs are not active; the head teacher might decide to ignore the longer path of collective consultations for preparing SLIP plan and decide to submit SLIP plan on their own. Regular meetings are infrequent, as committee members receive no honorariums or allowances. While political interference has diminished, its historical impact continues to hinder operations.
- ***Budgetary Constraints:*** Inadequate budgets pose a significant limitation according to the stakeholders, particularly for larger schools. Fixed purchasing limits and uneven fund distribution further exacerbate resource disparities, leaving many schools unable to address fundamental needs. For instance, many schools are in need for infrastructure development like construction of boundaries for the safety of students, adding new classrooms, major repair and maintenance of school facilities like wash blocks and toilets among others. However, the SLIP implementation team do not have any jurisdiction over these stated issues with higher cost tag. The stakeholders at the school feel that there should be mechanisms in place whereby they are allocated additional resources for being able to make decisions on the stated issues. Moreover, recently schools have been barred from taking additional money from the parents to organize annual exams. As a result, they have to allocate money for the same purpose from SLIP budget thereby compromising the effectiveness of SLIP implementation.
- ***Community Involvement:*** Across the schools generally community participation remains minimal. Parents, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and other local stakeholders often lack awareness of SLIP's objectives, resulting in limited collaboration and ownership. Since the schools are run by the government there is a lack of the sense of ownership among the community.

## 8.3 Insights from Development Partners

Development Partners (DPs) provided critical insights into a range of policy, institutional, and organizational challenges related to the implementation of the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP). They emphasized persistent issues such as the complexities surrounding advance payments and the procedural burden of VAT registration, both of which have hindered timely fund utilization at school level. DPs also highlighted capacity constraints among school-level actors, particularly in terms of financial management and strategic planning, which limit the effectiveness of SLIP execution. Concerns were raised about inadequate community participation, with some communities remaining disengaged or underrepresented in decision-making processes. While acknowledging SLIP's potential contribution to quality education, DPs pointed out risks associated with unethical practices among some Government Primary School Management Committee (GPSMC) members and noted instances where SLIP funds were diverted to purposes not aligned with SLIP objectives. They further identified limitations in the current degree of decentralization, which restricts local ownership and flexibility in addressing school-specific needs. Overall, the views of DPs generally align with those of other stakeholders, reflecting a shared understanding of both the promise and the practical challenges of SLIP implementation.

While DPs recognize SLIP as a promising policy innovation, their observations suggest that the program's full potential is yet to be realized due to a set of procedural, institutional, and governance-related challenges. Together with the document analysis of the Annual Fiduciary Report 2021-22 and the KIIs with selected DPs, the following insights emerged.

- **The need for strengthening monitoring**

Monitoring plays a critical role in ensuring the effective and transparent implementation of public procurement processes, as evidenced by the findings of the Annual Fiduciary Review of the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4). It helps identify delays in project execution, assesses compliance with procurement regulations, and detects inefficiencies such as the absence of liquidated damages despite significant delays in contract completion. The review highlighted that although procurement procedures were generally followed, many contracts suffered from poor documentation, inadequate contract management, and insufficient training among staff—issues that may go unnoticed without systematic monitoring. Moreover, regular performance measurement and post-procurement reviews provide accountability, enhance competition, improve planning and execution, and ultimately safeguard public funds by minimizing corruption and waste. Thus, institutionalizing robust monitoring systems is essential for maintaining the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of large-scale development programs like PEDP4.

- **Navigating Procedural Complexities and Administrative Delays**

One area that DPs have highlighted is the set of procedural complexities that often affect the disbursement and effective use of SLIP funds. Requirements related to advance payments, VAT registration, and adherence to procurement protocols, although important for financial discipline, have at times led to delays in fund release. These delays, particularly when funds arrive late in the school year, can limit schools' ability to plan and implement initiatives in a timely and meaningful manner. Rather than seeing these challenges solely as obstacles, DPs suggest that simplifying

administrative procedures—without compromising transparency and accountability—could significantly enhance SLIP’s effectiveness. For example, streamlining approval processes, offering better orientation on procurement rules, and digitizing fund tracking could make it easier for schools to meet compliance requirements while focusing on their core mission of educational improvement. DPs recommend adopting a more predictable and timely funding calendar, along with clear communication channels, to empower school leaders to engage in forward-thinking, participatory planning.

- **Strengthening School-Level Capacity for Better Outcomes**

DPs have also underscored the importance of building the capacity of those directly responsible for SLIP implementation at the grassroots level. While SLIP encourages local ownership and decision-making, many school actors - such as headteachers, GPSMC members, and community leaders - face challenges in areas like financial management, planning, documentation, and reporting. Rather than pointing to deficiencies, DPs emphasize the need for more responsive and context-specific capacity-building strategies. General workshops, while helpful, may not fully equip school actors to navigate complex procedures or make data-informed decisions. Instead, DPs advocate for hands-on, localized mentoring and support. Embedding capacity development within regular supervision visits and providing on-demand digital resources such as mobile apps and interactive learning platforms, could create ongoing learning opportunities for school leaders.

This approach would not only enhance skills but also boost the confidence of local stakeholders, enabling them to make better-informed and more effective decisions. Furthermore, simplifying budget templates and offering checklists or step-by-step guides could support more accurate planning and fund utilization at the school level.

- **Deepening Community Engagement and Strengthening Governance**

The SLIP framework places strong emphasis on community participation through mechanisms like GPSMCs, Social Audit Committees (SACs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and other school-based governance bodies. DPs appreciate this inclusive approach, noting its alignment with international ‘good practices’. However, they also observe that in some instances, community engagement remains limited or symbolic. In many schools, SACs and PTAs are either inactive or not formally recognized, and their involvement is often limited to approving decisions rather than shaping them. DPs believe revitalizing community institutions through awareness campaigns, participatory planning methods, and clear role definitions could create a stronger sense of ownership. Rather than viewing community participation as a compliance task, DPs encourage treating it as a developmental goal in its own right - one that fosters accountability, trust, and collaboration between schools and communities. Training SACs and PTAs to interpret budgets, assess learning outcomes, and provide feedback can further enhance their role in supporting school improvement.

- **Promoting Ethical Practices and Financial Discipline**

DPs have acknowledged the need to strengthen financial accountability at the school level to safeguard the integrity and impact of SLIP. While many schools demonstrate commendable efforts in managing funds responsibly, there have been instances where documentation was incomplete or funds were used for routine expenses not aligned with SLIP’s core objectives. Rather than attributing these lapses to intent, DPs recognize

that such challenges often stem from a lack of training, clarity, and institutional support. They suggest strengthening internal controls through simple, transparent mechanisms that help schools manage funds more effectively. Introducing standard financial reporting formats, ensuring timely audits, and using digital platforms for real-time monitoring can collectively foster a culture of accountability. Importantly, DPs believe that reinforcing ethical practices does not require punitive measures alone. Positive incentives - such as recognition awards for transparent financial management or public reporting of best-performing schools - can motivate better compliance and create a ripple effect of good governance practices.

- **Clarifying Roles and Improving Documentation**

Clear role delineation and proper documentation are essential to ensure smooth implementation of SLIP activities. DPs have noted that in some regions, schools lack fundamental tools such as SLIP Responsibility Distribution Charts and Fund Registers. These tools are essential not only for transparency but also for helping school stakeholders understand their respective responsibilities and coordinate their efforts. To address this, DPs recommend that key operational documents be standardized and integrated into school-level planning and inspection processes. Providing templates, conducting refresher trainings, and linking documentation quality to performance evaluations can improve consistency and accountability. Furthermore, encouraging a culture of documentation not as a bureaucratic burden but as a learning and management tool can contribute to more effective program delivery.

- **Realizing the Vision of Decentralization**

The core strength of SLIP lies in its decentralization philosophy - empowering schools to assess their needs, plan accordingly, and implement context-specific interventions. However, DPs observe that this autonomy is sometimes curtailed by rigid central directives and limited flexibility in decision-making. As a result, local stakeholders may feel constrained and less motivated to adapt interventions to their unique challenges and opportunities. DPs suggest that for decentralization to be meaningful, schools must be given the authority, tools, and support to act as change agents. This includes flexible budget ceilings, simplified planning templates, and performance-based incentives. Successful innovations at the local level should be documented, celebrated, and scaled up as part of a learning-oriented system. Allowing for responsible experimentation within defined policy parameters can foster innovation and responsiveness at the grassroots level.

- **Shared Understanding and Collective Action**

The perspectives of DPs are echoed by many other education stakeholders across the country, including school leaders, teachers, parents, and district education officials. There is a shared recognition that SLIP offers a strong foundation for inclusive school improvement but requires strategic adjustments to achieve its intended outcomes. The convergence of feedback from diverse actors' points to the importance of coordinated policy action, cross-sector collaboration, and political commitment to sustain momentum. DPs are optimistic that with the right mix of policy reforms, capacity development, and institutional strengthening, the challenges currently faced can be transformed into opportunities for impactful change.

- **Recommendations and Strategic Way Forward**

Building on their observations and experience, DPs propose the following forward-looking actions to enhance SLIP implementation:

- **Capacity Development:** Establish ongoing, hands-on training and mentoring programs for school-level stakeholders, using both face-to-face and digital platforms.
- **Accountability and Oversight:** Integrate financial and procedural compliance metrics into routine school inspections and provide positive reinforcement for good practices.
- **Community Empowerment:** Support active community engagement through participatory tools, awareness campaigns, and clear governance guidelines.
- **Technology Use:** Leverage technology to create dashboards for real-time monitoring, facilitate e-reporting, and encourage feedback from beneficiaries.
- **Policy Flexibility:** Promote adaptive planning by granting schools reasonable autonomy within a results-based framework, encouraging innovative local solutions.

# 9. Insights from FGDs

## 9.1 Insights from GPSMCs

- **Engagement with Local government & NGOs and other stakeholders:** Stakeholders, including local government representatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were acknowledged as essential partners in the SLIP effort. Participants highlighted the positive impact of NGOs like Room to Read and BRAC as well as other educational institutions. The discussion underscored the need for greater collaboration between NGOs, local government, and the GPSMC to enhance educational outcomes.
- **Budget and Resource Allocation:** Participants noted that the current budget allocation is insufficient to meet the needs of the students. Essential expenses, such as exam fees, classroom supplies, and materials, often consume the available funds. Additional costs, including VAT and transportation, further reduce the usable budget. Despite these limitations, the allocated funds have positively impacted student participation and performance by eliminating exam fees and providing essential materials. However, to address the school's growing needs, participants recommended increasing the budget to BDT 250,000 - BDT 300,000. They also emphasized the importance of allocating funds for meetings, orientation sessions, and the recruitment of temporary teachers.
- **Challenges in Implementation:** Several challenges hinder the effective implementation of SLIP. Resource constraints were highlighted as a significant barrier, restricting the ability to address infrastructure needs, provide student materials, and support extracurricular activities. Participants also identified participation barriers, with stakeholders often refraining from attending meetings due to a lack of incentives or awareness.
- **Formation and Structure of GPSMC:** The committee typically includes four parents, the headteacher as the member secretary, and representatives from the local union parishad and high school and light highest donor. Key concerns include the selection of members who can actively contribute and dedicate time to GPSMC activities. Participants also emphasized the need for better orientation and training to ensure that members can effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities.
- **Understanding of SLIP and Awareness:** Participants demonstrated varying levels of awareness about SLIP. While most members were familiar with its general objectives, they lacked detailed knowledge about government policies and guidelines. The acting headteacher acknowledged receiving a directive for SLIP implementation but admitted to gaps in understanding due to frequent changes in leadership.
- **Planning and Implementation:** SLIP plans are created annually, with budget allocations disbursed in two phases. Participants suggested revising plans every six months to better align with evolving needs and resource utilization. However, limited budget allocations hinder comprehensive improvements, particularly in infrastructure and resource provision.

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## 9.2 Insights from PTAs

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- **Formation and Selection Processes:** PTAs are supposed to be established through parent assemblies. In most cases, the actual process tends to be informal.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** PTAs are involved in academic monitoring, admission assistance, school beautification and attendance oversight.
- **Parental Engagement and Inclusivity:** Marginalized families often remain underrepresented. Recommendations include expanding outreach programs to ensure diverse parental involvement and cultivating a culture of equity in decision-making.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** A recurring theme is the lack of training which limits their effectiveness. While members are generally aware of their roles, knowledge gaps persist, especially regarding SLIP implementation. Structured training programs can empower members with skills in school management, educational planning, and resource mobilization.
- **Addressing Region-Specific Needs:** Regional disparities require tailored approaches to SLIP and PTA initiatives. Some 'good practice' instances were cited: collaboration with NGOs, model PTAs in some locations.

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## 9.3 Insights from SACs

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- **Challenges Hindering SAC Committee Effectiveness:** Despite their crucial role, SAC committees face significant operational challenges. A notable issue is the lack of training and orientation for new members, leading to gaps in their operational efficiency. Without proper capacity-building programs, inexperienced members struggle to handle financial monitoring, project evaluation, and reporting tasks effectively. Additionally, the absence of experienced members from previous committees exacerbates operational knowledge deficits, making it difficult to execute key functions. Another major challenge involves political interference in committee operations. Members often face external pressure that compromises decision-making and disrupts SLIP project implementation. This interference undermines objective governance and limits the effectiveness of educational initiatives.

## 9.4 Insights from Students

- **Positive Experiences in School:** Students frequently praised extracurricular activities such as sports, debates, poetry recitations, and cultural programs. These initiatives foster teamwork, creativity, and school pride, contributing to a holistic educational experience. Additionally, the supportive and approachable nature of teachers was highlighted. Clear and patient instruction, particularly in subjects like English, Math, Science, and Bengali, created an engaging and motivating classroom environment. Topics such as practical grammar lessons, the solar system, and fractions were cited as particularly enjoyable and educational.
- **Suggestions for Academic Enrichment and Resource Allocation:** Students emphasized the need for expanded learning resources, including libraries stocked with storybooks, magazines, and other reading materials. Proposals also included debate competitions, multimedia classrooms, and educational tours to encourage critical thinking and real-world learning. To diversify extracurricular offerings, students suggested hiring music instructors, organizing inter-school competitions, and hosting creative workshops.
- **Infrastructure Challenges and Development:** Inadequate infrastructure remains a pressing concern. Students reported issues such as deteriorating classrooms, insufficient furniture, and the lack of boundary walls. Specific priorities included constructing separate toilets for students and teachers, renovating classrooms, and developing roads to improve access during rainy seasons. Addressing these deficiencies is critical to creating a safe and conducive learning environment.
- **Health and Hygiene Initiatives:** Innovative programs like student-led health teams, or “mini-doctors,” were commended for promoting hygiene awareness and leadership skills. However, sanitation infrastructure remains inadequate, with students advocating for clean washrooms, safe drinking water, and accessible hygiene facilities.
- **Student Involvement and Aspirations:** Students expressed interest in formalizing their involvement in school development initiatives through councils or committees. Education was viewed as a pathway to personal growth and community contribution, with aspirations for careers in medicine, engineering, and teaching reflecting a strong sense of civic responsibility.

## **Case Study 1:**

### **Nepal – School Improvement Plan (SIP) under School Sector Development Plan (SSDP)**

#### **Background:**

Nepal introduced the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as part of its broader decentralization and community-managed school reforms. The initiative gained traction under the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) (2009–2016) and was institutionalized further through the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016–2023), supported by the Government of Nepal, development partners (e.g., World Bank, UNICEF, JICA), and local communities.

#### **Key Features of Nepal's SIP:**

- **Mandatory Planning Tool:** All public schools in Nepal are required to prepare a SIP as a precondition to receiving government grants.
- **Five-Year Plan with Annual Updates:** The SIP has a five-year vision with yearly implementation and budget plans, known as the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP).
- **Participatory Process:** Developed through consultations with teachers, parents, School Management Committees (SMCs), and local government representatives.
- **School Autonomy:** Schools have significant decision-making power on planning, budgeting, and implementation based on local needs.
- **Alignment with SSDP Goals:** SIPs are guided by national priorities, such as improving learning outcomes, equity in education, and school infrastructure development.

#### **SIP Planning Process in Nepal:**

Situation Analysis:

- Schools conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).
- Data reviewed: student enrollment, learning outcomes, teacher availability, infrastructure status.

- Goal Setting and Prioritization:
- Based on analysis, schools set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
- Priorities include improving literacy, reducing dropout rates, and enhancing gender equity.

### ***Plan Formulation:***

Activities, budgets, timelines, and responsibilities are defined.

Linkages are made with resources from central and local governments.

Approval and Integration:

- SIP is submitted to the local government for approval.
- Approved SIPs are integrated into the local education development plans and budgets.
- Implementation and Monitoring:
- Schools execute planned

## **Case Study 2:**

### **School Improvement in Kenya**

#### **1. Aga Khan Education Services – Mombasa School Improvement Project (MSIP)**

**Location:** *Aga Khan Schools, Mombasa, Kenya*

The Mombasa School Improvement Project (MSIP), supported by the Aga Khan Foundation, exemplifies a successful, structured model of school-based planning. It brought together school management, teachers, community leaders, and local authorities to collaboratively address quality gaps. Through integrated planning, data-informed decision-making, and stakeholder participation, the initiative achieved sustained improvements in teaching quality, school governance, and infrastructure. MSIP stands out as a replicable model of durable transformation driven by inclusive, evidence-based processes.

#### **2. Kiereni Secondary School**

**Location:** *Chuka, Tharaka-Nithi County, Kenya*

Founded in 1987 by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in partnership with the local Mugwe community, Kiereni Secondary School has grown from an initial enrollment of just 160 students to nearly 600. Originally established as a low-cost, community-driven institution, the school has since implemented strategic improvement plans that include clear development targets, infrastructure expansion, staffing upgrades, and active community leadership through a Board of Management and a Parent-Teacher Committee. These initiatives reflect a classic SLIP-style approach—anchored in needs assessment, community-engaged planning, local resource mobilization, and structured oversight—leading to steady academic progress and facility enhancement.

#### **Why these matter:**

**MSIP (Aga Khan, Mombasa):** Represents a structured case study of SLIP in action—showing how integrated planning, data use, and stakeholder collaboration can yield durable school transformation.

**Kiereni Secondary School:** Exemplifies a grass-roots SLIP success story, built on community ownership and a formal governance framework to support ongoing development.

### **Case Study 3:**

## **Holistic School-Based Learning Reforms in Tepur Government Primary School, Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

### **Background:**

Government Primary School No. 12 in Tepur, Puthia, Rajshahi, had long faced challenges in ensuring inclusive, quality education and active parental engagement. Since 2015, under the leadership of ADPEO Ms. Nur Akhtar Jannatul Ferdous, the school embarked on a transformative journey to address both academic and socio-emotional learning gaps. The school prioritized inclusive practices, values-based learning, and community involvement as key levers of change to ensure all students benefit from a joyful and meaningful learning experience.

### **Good Practice:**

The school introduced a multi-pronged set of initiatives aligned with SLIP objectives:

- **Child-Centered Learning through Visioning and Expression:** Students' aspirations and personal realities are expressed through creative writing and drawing activities. These outputs help identify struggling learners who are then supported during their free hours. Additionally, regular 5–10-minute formative assessments are conducted twice a week, with guardians' signatures recorded to maintain engagement and transparency.
- **Mother Forum (Initiated in 2018):** A voluntary group of mothers from each class was formed to identify student challenges, assist underprivileged learners, and improve punctuality and attendance. Their involvement has reinforced trust and parent-school collaboration, creating a community-led support mechanism.
- **Value-Based Weekly Assemblies:** Weekly school assemblies feature songs, rhymes, and recitations that promote ethical behavior and discipline. These gatherings foster a culture of collective accountability and personal responsibility, contributing to improved behavioral and academic outcomes between 2015–2020.
- **Student Council Engagement:** The student council leads several initiatives such as campus beautification and plant care. The "Little Doctor" team promotes hygiene practices (temperature checks, handwashing) while the "Wall Magazine" group publishes posters that instill moral values like respect, responsibility, and diligence.

These integrated practices form a holistic model of learning that goes beyond academics to include leadership, hygiene, empathy, and civic responsibility.

***Tangible Outcomes:***

- Noticeable improvements in both student attendance and academic achievement.
- Greater student confidence, leadership development, and behavioral improvement.
- Enhanced parent-school relationships, particularly through the Mother Forum.
- Near-universal student adherence to school uniform and cleanliness drives.
- Stronger sense of ownership among students and teachers in school upkeep and discipline.
- These outcomes have been recognized locally as evidence of effective school-based innovation within the SLIP framework.

***Scalability:***

The Tepur model demonstrates the potential of low-cost, community-driven reforms in improving school quality and learner well-being. With minimal resources but high levels of motivation and coordination, similar schools across Bangladesh could replicate this approach. Integrating creative assessments, parental involvement forums, and student-led initiatives into SLIP implementation guidelines could substantially enhance learning environments nationwide. This aligns with PEDP4's goals of participatory and inclusive school management.

# Part E

Study Findings -  
Knowledge, Attitude  
and Practice (KAP)  
Assessment of Parents  
and School Management



# 10. Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice assessment of Parents

KAP questionnaire was administered to 1200 parents, 12 from each of the selected 100 sample schools. Selected parents were 2 covering students from each grade including pre-primary. Selected parents were chosen based on their availability to respond to the survey.

## 10.1 Knowledge assessment

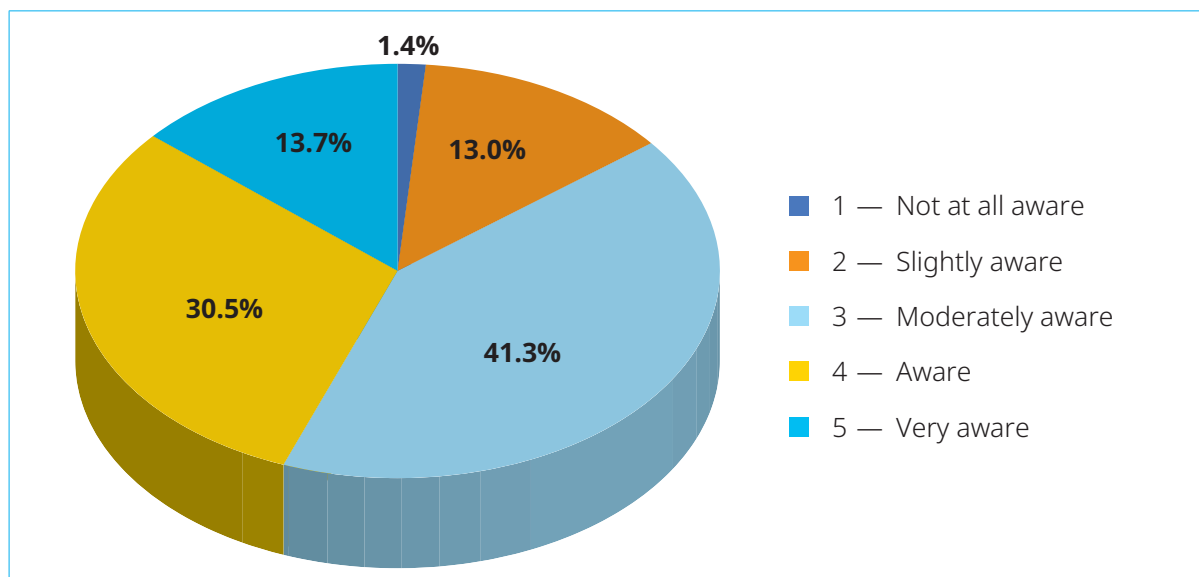
### 10.1.1 Knowledge about SLIP

Less than half (47.6%) of the respondents are aware of SLIP, indicating a significant knowledge gap at the community level. Despite various awareness campaigns, SLIP remains unfamiliar to the majority of guardians, highlighting the need for more localized or household-level outreach strategies.

**47.6%** of the respondent parents are aware of SLIP

In terms of the depth of knowledge about SLIP among those who are aware of SLIP, a supplementary question was asked with answers recorded on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest. Results are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 3: Level of awareness of SLIP: Likert scale**



A majority of the respondents who are aware of SLIP rate their knowledge at a moderate to good level (scales 3–4), suggesting that once individuals are aware of SLIP, they tend to have a decent understanding. However, only 13.7% consider themselves highly knowledgeable (scale 5), indicating room for deeper capacity building and training efforts.

There is a strong consensus on SLIP’s positive objectives, especially regarding enhancing the teaching-learning environment and preparing development plans. However, infrastructure improvement is the least recognized aspect (only 41.0%), suggesting that stakeholders may not clearly associate SLIP with tangible facility upgrades or that such improvements are less visible (Table 5).

**Table 5: Understanding of SLIP Objectives (% Yes Response) for SMCs**

SLIP Objective	“Yes” Response (%)
Improves teaching–learning environment	92.8%
Prepares development plans for quality education	89.7%
Creates child-friendly environment & interest in education	87.9%
Engages students, teachers, parents & community	81.3%
Increases enrollment from catchment area	80.6%
Increases school funding	78.9%
Develops teachers’ skills	71.6%
Improves school infrastructure	41.0%

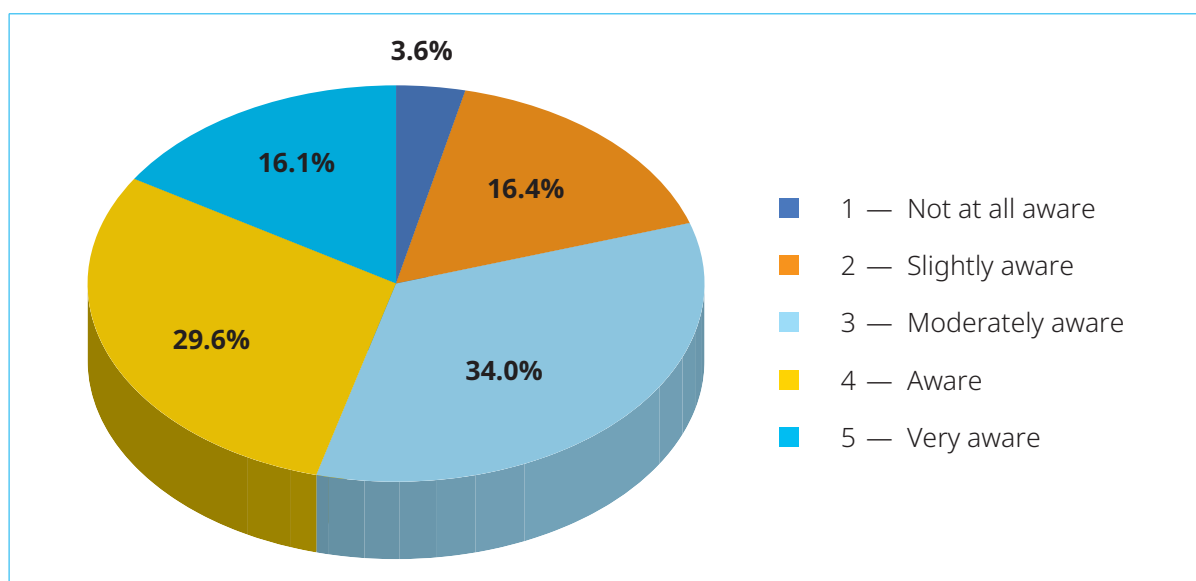
### 10.1.2 Knowledge about GPSMC

Awareness of GPSMC is significantly higher than SLIP, indicating better penetration of this governance body in public consciousness. This may be due to the GPSMC’s more direct and ongoing engagement with guardians, such as during student admissions or school activities.

**72.2%** of the respondent parents are aware of GPSMC

A large portion of respondents who are aware of GPSMC rate their knowledge of the GPSMC as moderate to high (scales 3–5: Figure 4), suggesting a generally informed community. A reasonable majority of ‘yes’ respondents – 72.2% - correctly identify the number of GSMC members (Figure 3).

**Figure 4: Level of awareness of GPSMC among 'yes' respondents: Likert scale**



The strongest perception of GPSMC roles is in monitoring learning outcomes (31.38%) and managing school affairs (24.0%) – Table 6. The relatively low awareness of their role in teacher recruitment and SLIP approval could indicate these tasks are performed with less transparency or are not communicated effectively to the community. The “don’t do much” response underscores the need for visible, community-facing action by GPSMCs.

**Table 6: Understanding of SLIP Objectives (% Yes Response)**

Activity	“Yes” Response (%)
Monitoring learning outcomes	31.4%
Assisting in school management	24.0%
Raising funds for development	16.9%
Perception that they “don’t do much”	12.0%
Providing disaster assistance	6.5%
Approving SLIP plans	4.1%
Teacher recruitment	4.0%
Other	1.1%

### 10.1.3 Knowledge about PTA

Guardian awareness about PTA is lower than both SLIP and SMC, with fewer than half of the respondents knowing about its existence. This highlights a major communication or structural gap in PTA functionality at the school level.

**41.3%** of the respondent parents are aware about PTA

Of those who are aware of PTA, a supplementary question was asked about which role of the PTA they were aware of. The most widely recognized roles of the PTA include conducting meetings and maintaining the school environment (Table 7). However, their broader functions—such as training assistance or dropout prevention—are less known, indicating that PTA activities may not be well-documented or widely publicized at the community level.

**Table 7: PTA Activities (% Yes Response)**

Activity	"Yes" Response (%)
Conducting parent/community meetings	27.7%
Maintaining the learning environment	22.9%
Assisting in school area surveys	19.7%
Preventing student dropouts	18.8%
Raising development funds	7.5%
Assisting in cluster training	2.6%

### 10.1.4 Knowledge of School Facilities

In terms of awareness about school facilities, the highest awareness is on sports and basic amenities like water and sanitation (Table 8). However, very few respondents know about more advanced facilities like computer labs or libraries, indicating a lack of visibility, usage, or even existence of these resources in some schools. Community sensitization about available school resources could improve utilization.

**Table 8: Knowledge of School Facilities (% Yes Response)**

Facility	"Yes" Response (%)
Opportunities for sports	26.1%
Water supply	24.6%
Sanitary facilities	23.4%
Co-curricular activities	13.5%
Library	5.1%
Computer lab	4.1%
Other	2.4%
Don't know	0.9%

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## 10.2 Attitude: Parental Readiness to Engage in Improving the Quality of Education

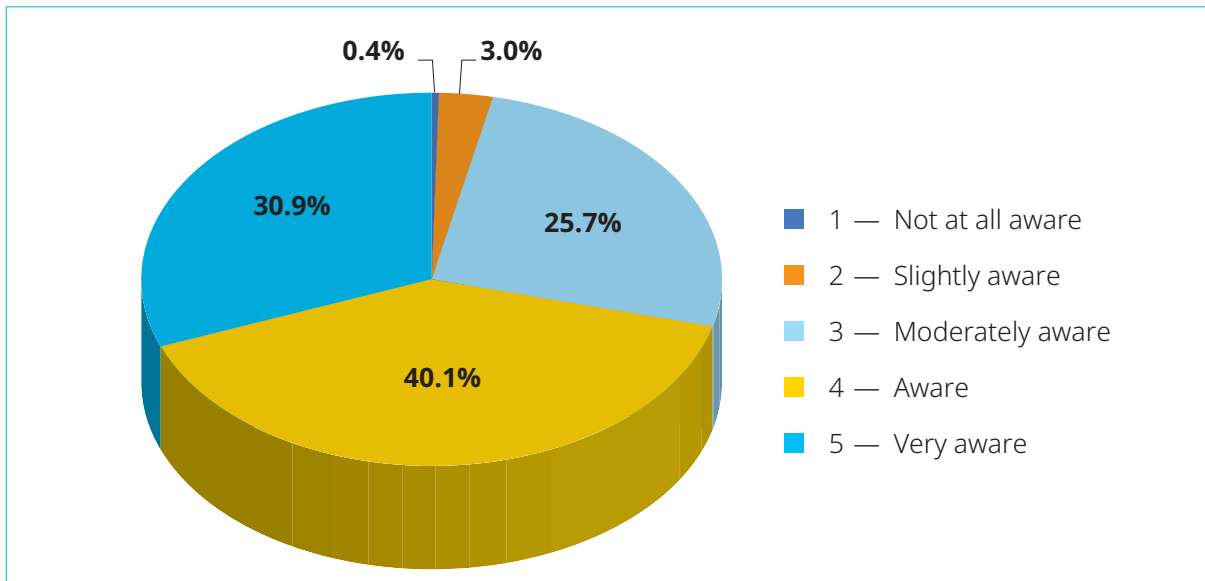
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A majority of respondents (87.7%) express interest in contributing to the improvement of education quality at their children's schools. This suggests strong latent potential among parents to support school improvement initiatives. However, 12.3% are not interested, which may reflect barriers such as time constraints, lack of confidence, or insufficient information about how to get involved.

**87.7%** of the respondent parents expressed interest in being involved in improving the education quality.

Most interested parents report a high degree of readiness to engage with over 70% rating their interest at scale 4 or 5 (Figure 4). This indicates not just willingness but also enthusiasm among parents to be active contributors to school quality, suggesting that schools can tap into this readiness with appropriately designed participation mechanisms.

**Figure 5: Readiness to Engage in Improving Education Quality: Likert scale**



Preferred modes of parental engagement include regularly checking on their child's academic progress (42.71%) and participating in school activities (32.08%) (Table 9). Participation in PTA is acknowledged by only 13.67%, suggesting either a lack of awareness or low confidence in impact of PTA activities. A relatively small portion (7.72%) are willing to support financially.

**Table 9: Preferred Modes of Parental Involvement**

Mode	Yes (%)
Inquire about child's studies	42.7%
Participate in school activities	32.1%
Join PTA	13.7%
Donate money	7.7%
Other	0.4%
Not interested	3.4%

## 10.3 Practice: Parental Involvement in Education and School Activities

### 10.3.1 Parents' Involvement in Child's Education and School Activities

Parents may be aware of or interested in the quality education agenda but are they engaged in practice? Table 10 describes parental responses to the question on the latter. Parents are most commonly involved in terms of inquiring about their child's progress directly from teachers (25.0%) About a fifth – 18.7% - provide support in checking child's studies at home while an additional 8.3% personally sit with their child on their studies. 16.4% mentioned their 'practice' in ensuring child's regular attendance. Only 7% mentioned no involvement at all.

**Table 10: Parental Involvement in Child's Education**

Type of Involvement	Response % (multiple responses)
Inquiring about child's studies from teacher	25.0%
Checking child's studies at home	18.7%
Ensuring child's regular school attendance	16.4%
Personally reading and engaging in child's studies	8.3%
Arranging private tuition	12.3%
Talking with other parents	9.5%
No involvement	6.9%
Other	3.0%

### 10.3.2 Private Tuition

A majority of parents (58.1%) arrange private tuition for their children, showing dependence on external academic support. This reflects both a demand for academic excellence and perhaps perceived inadequacy in regular school teaching. The large proportion of tuition-free students also underscores variability in parental capacity or belief in its necessity.

**58.1%** of the parents arrange private tuition for their children

The most common approach is comprehensive tutoring across all subjects (44.0%), highlighting holistic academic concerns among parents. Math (27.0%) and English (17.9%) receive focused attention, likely due to their perceived difficulty and weight in academic performance. Tuition in Bangla and other subjects is relatively rare (Table 11).

**Table 11: Subjects Covered in Tuition**

Subject	Response %
Mathematics	27.0%
English	17.9%
Bangla	6.2%
All subjects	44.0%
Other	5.0%

The main driver for tuition is academic excellence (73.4% total)—either to improve results or to help children excel. A smaller group (13.3%) believes school teaching is insufficient, while social influence (8.97%) also plays a role. These findings reflect high educational aspirations and some gaps in classroom learning effectiveness (Table 12).

**Table 12: Reasons for Arranging Tuition**

Reason	Response (%)
To ensure better academic results	39.5%
To help the child excel academically	33.8%
Because school teaching is inadequate	13.3%
Peer pressure/seeing others arrange tuition	9.0%
Other	4.4%

### 10.3.3 Expenditure on Education

Parents spend an average of BDT 1,550 per month per child, indicating a significant financial commitment to education. This may include tuition fees, tiffin, materials, and transport. Variability in spending is likely tied to household income and decisions on private tuition.

### 10.3.4 Tiffin Arrangement

Most students bring food from home (44.7%), reflecting parental concern for nutrition or cost-saving. A significant group lacks a fixed arrangement (34.4%), which may indicate irregular routines or lack of resources. Only one-fifth purchase tiffin regularly, hinting at affordability or availability issues (Table 13).

**Table 13: Tiffin Arrangement for Children**

Tiffin Arrangement	Response (%)
Bring tiffin from home	44.7%
Buy tiffin from school/local shop	21.0%
No fixed tiffin arrangement	34.4%

## 10.4 Key Insights and Recommendations

### Key Insights

- High informal engagement: Parents are more engaged in informal ways like talking to teachers and helping with homework than in structured forums like PTA or GPSMC.
- Dependence on private tuition: A majority rely on private tutoring, especially in key subjects, suggesting gaps in classroom delivery.
- Financial commitment is substantial: Parents make noteworthy financial investments in education, with notable variability.
- SLIP participation is promising: Widespread planning-level engagement offers a foundation to strengthen institutional participation.

### Recommendations

- Strengthen Formal Participation Channels: Schools should actively recruit and orient parents into GPSMC, PTA, and SLIP committees.
- Enhance Academic Support at School: By offering remedial and after-school classes, reliance on tuition could be reduced.
- Provide Affordable Nutrition Solutions: Develop subsidized tiffin programs for students without consistent lunch arrangements.
- Convert SLIP Planning into Action: Encourage parents already involved in SLIP planning to take up roles in implementation and monitoring.
- Offer Financial Aid or Scholarships: Recognizing the average expenditure, support mechanisms should be designed for lower-income families to reduce inequality.

## 10.5 Disaggregated Analysis of Parental Engagement with Schooling

This section explores how parental characteristics, such as sex, age, education, income levels, and primary livelihood, are associated with key dimensions of engagement in children's education.

Table 14 shows that awareness of SLIP is higher among male parents (51.6%) than female parents (43.8%). Awareness also differs by age group, with the highest reported among parents aged 36–59 (49.8%), followed by those aged 60 and above (45.8%) and the 19–35 age group (44.3%). In terms of income quintile, highest level of awareness was found in the top income quintile (52.3%) and the lowest in Quintile 3 (38.9%). Differences are also observed across occupations, with self-employed individuals (71.4%) and professionals (58.8%) reporting the highest levels of awareness. In terms of education, 60.4% of graduates are aware of SLIP while awareness drops to 39.1% among those with below primary education and to 19.1% among those with no formal education.

**Table 14: Percentage of Parents Who Know About SLIP**

Variable	Category	% who knows about SLIP	Total Sample for each category
<b>Sex</b>	Male	51.6%	397
	Female	43.8%	809
<b>Age</b>	19-35	44.3%	740
	36-59	49.8%	442
	>=60	45.8%	24
<b>Income Quintile</b>	Quintile 1	48.2%	382
	Quintile 2	45.2%	115
	Quintile 3	38.9%	303
	Quintile 4	48.4%	192
	Quintile 5	52.3%	214
<b>Education</b>	Below Primary	39.1%	253
	Secondary	44.1%	657
	Graduates	60.4%	275
	No Formal Education	19.1%	21

Variable	Category	% who knows about SLIP	Total Sample for each category
<b>Main Income Source of Household</b>	Agriculture	52.1%	244
	Labor	33.1%	172
	Rickshaw/Van Pulling	42.6%	54
	Business	45.9%	307
	Service	50.7%	229
	Professional	58.8%	17
	Remittance	38.4%	99
	Rental	50.0%	2
	Assistance	0.0%	0
	Self-employed	71.4%	49
	Artisan	66.7%	6
	Other	30.4%	23

Awareness of SMCs is generally low across all groups (Table 15). Awareness is slightly higher among male parents (44.1%) compared to female parents (38.4%). By age group, parents aged 36–59 report the highest awareness (44.1%). Awareness by income quintile shows a highly uneven pattern. The highest awareness is found in Quintile 3 (37.3%) but Quintile 1 (3.8%) and Quintile 5 (6.1%) report very low levels of awareness. In terms of education, parents with secondary education (21.3%) and graduates (24.9%) show greater awareness than those with below primary education (5.2%). None of the parents with no formal education reported awareness of SMCs. Across income sources, awareness is very limited. Parents engaged in agriculture (2.4%), labor (5.6%), business (2.7%), and self-employment (2.5%) report low levels.

**Table 15: Percentage of Parents Who Know About SMC**

Variable	Category	% who knows about SMC	Total Sample for each category
<b>Sex</b>	Male	44.1%	397
	Female	38.4%	809
<b>Age</b>	19-35	38.7%	495
	36-59	44.1%	336
	>=60	20.8%	13

Variable	Category	% who knows about SMC	Total Sample for each category
<b>Income Quintile</b>	Quintile 1	3.8%	382
	Quintile 2	23.6%	115
	Quintile 3	37.3%	303
	Quintile 4	29.3%	192
	Quintile 5	6.1%	214
<b>Education</b>	Below Primary	5.2%	253
	Secondary	21.3%	657
	Graduates	24.9%	275
	No Formal Education	0.0%	21
<b>Main Income Source</b>	Agriculture	2.4%	244
	Labor	5.6%	172
	Rickshaw/Van Pulling	5.7%	54
	Business	2.7%	307
	Service	3.4%	229
	Professional	0.0%	17
	Remittance	9.4%	99
	Rental	0.0%	2
	Assistance	0.0%	0
	Self-employed	2.5%	49
	Artisan	0.0%	6
	Other	15.4%	23

Awareness of PTAs follows a similar pattern to that of SLIP but is slightly lower overall, while both are considerably higher than awareness of GPSMCs, which remains low across most demographic and socioeconomic groups. Table 16 shows male parents report greater awareness (44.1%) than female parents (38.4%). Awareness by income quintile shows a generally upward trend with income, starting at 40.3% in Quintile 1 and rising to 49.5% in Quintile 5. However, Quintile 2 (31.3%) and Quintile 3 (35.0%) show slightly lower levels, suggesting that awareness is not uniformly distributed across income brackets. In terms of education, Graduates report the highest PTA awareness (58.2%), followed by those with secondary education (37.0%) and below primary (32.0%). Parents with no formal education

show very limited awareness (9.5%). In terms of occupation, the highest levels of awareness are found among self-employed individuals (61.2%), professionals (58.8%), and service holders (47.6%).

**Table 16: Percentage of Parents Who Know About PTA**

Variable	Category	% who knows about PTA	Total Sample for each category
<b>Sex</b>	Male	44.1%	397
	Female	38.4%	809
<b>Age</b>	19-35	38.7%	740
	36-59	44.1%	442
	>=60	20.8%	24
<b>Income Quintile</b>	Quintile 1	40.3%	382
	Quintile 2	31.3%	115
	Quintile 3	35.0%	303
	Quintile 4	43.8%	192
	Quintile 5	49.5%	214
<b>Education</b>	Below Primary	32.0%	253
	Secondary	37.0%	657
	Graduates	58.2%	275
	No Formal Education	9.5%	21
	Agriculture	38.5%	244
	Labor	33.1%	172
	Rickshaw/Van Pulling	27.8%	54
	Business	40.7%	307
<b>Main Income Source</b>	Service	47.6%	229
	Professional	58.8%	17
	Remittance	34.3%	99
	Rental	50.0%	2
	Assistance	25.0%	4
	Self-employed	61.2%	49
	Artisan	50.0%	6
	Other	30.4%	23

Interest in improving education quality is high across all categories (Table 17). Male parents report higher interest (94.0%) compared to female parents (82.6%). Age-wise, interest peaks among the 36–59 age group (89.6%), followed by those aged 60 and above (87.5%) and the 19–35 group (84.3%), indicating that middle-aged parents are the most engaged. Interest remains consistently high across all income quintiles, ranging from 85.1% in the lowest to 87.5% in Quintile 4. Education level, however, does influence the degree of interest. Graduates show the strongest interest (93.8%), compared to 85.8% for those with secondary education and 79.5% for those with below primary education. Even among parents with no formal education, interest remains high (85.7%), indicating that willingness to support education quality is not limited by literacy. In terms of occupation, parents engaged in service (90.4%), agriculture (89.3%), and self-employment (89.8%) report the highest levels of interest.

**Table 17: Percentage of Parents Who Are Interested in Improving Education Quality**

Variable	Category	% Interested in Improving Education Quality	Total Sample for each category
<b>Sex</b>	Male	94.0%	397
	Female	82.6%	809
<b>Age</b>	19-35	84.3%	740
	36-59	89.6%	442
	>=60	87.5%	24
<b>Income Quintile</b>	Quintile 1	85.1%	382
	Quintile 2	87.0%	115
	Quintile 3	86.5%	303
	Quintile 4	87.5%	192
	Quintile 5	86.9%	214
<b>Education</b>	Below Primary	79.5%	253
	Secondary	85.8%	657
	Graduates	93.8%	275
	No Formal Education	85.7%	21

Variable	Category	% Interested in Improving Education Quality	Total Sample for each category
<b>Main Income Source</b>	Agriculture	89.3%	244
	Labor	80.2%	172
	Rickshaw/Van Pulling	83.3%	54
	Business	86.0%	307
	Service	90.4%	229
	Professional	82.4%	17
	Remittance	80.8%	99
	Rental	100.0%	2
	Assistance	100.0%	4
	Self-employed	89.8%	49
	Artisan	66.7%	6
	Other	91.3%	23

Table 18 presents the percentage of parents who report sending their children to private tuition across different sociodemographic and economic characteristics of the parents. Male parents are more likely to send their children to private tuition (62.5%) compared to female parents (53.7%). By age, the highest proportion is observed among parents aged 60 and above (70.8%), though the sample size is small. Parents aged 36–59 show a slightly higher engagement (58.8%) than those aged 19–35 (54.7%). Across income quintiles, the differences are less consistent. The highest proportion is seen in Quintile 3 (63.0%), while both the lowest (54.7%) and highest (53.7%) quintiles report lower levels. Educational background shows a reverse trend - parents with lower levels of formal education are more likely to send their children to tuition. In terms of income sources, households involved in remittance (64.7%), business (60.6%), and agriculture (58.6%) report higher use of private tuition. In contrast, service holders (44.5%) and professionals (47.1%) report lower usage.

**Table 18: Percentage of Parents Who Send Their Children for Private Tuition**

Variable	Category	% Sending Children to Private Tuition	Total Sample for each category
<b>Sex</b>	Male	62.5%	397
	Female	53.7%	809
<b>Age</b>	19-35	54.7%	740
	36-59	58.8%	442
	>=60	70.8%	24
<b>Income Quintile</b>	Quintile 1	54.7%	382
	Quintile 2	58.3%	115
	Quintile 3	63.0%	303
	Quintile 4	52.1%	192
	Quintile 5	53.7%	214
<b>Education</b>	Below Primary	69.6%	253
	Secondary	59.7%	657
	Graduates	37.8%	275
	No Formal Education	47.6%	21
<b>Main Income Source</b>	Agriculture	58.6%	244
	Labor	58.7%	172
	Rickshaw/Van Pulling	55.6%	54
	Business	60.6%	307
	Service	44.5%	229
	Professional	47.1%	17
	Remittance	64.7%	99
	Rental	0.0%	2
	Assistance	50.0%	4
	Self-employed	59.2%	49
	Artisan	66.7%	6
	Other	56.5%	23

# Part F

## Perspectives of Policy-Relevant Constituencies



# 11. Insights from Head Teachers' Conclave

The Head Teachers' Conclave provided valuable insights into the effective implementation and challenges of SLIP. One key theme was the importance of demand-driven development, with an emphasis on avoiding externally imposed plans. Regular feedback mechanisms, particularly Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings in Rangpur Sadar Upazila, were highlighted as essential forums for exchanging feedback on SLIP-related activities. These meetings encourage parents to share observations on school improvements, discuss challenges, and propose solutions to enhance academic performance and infrastructure.

Mobilizing local resources emerged as a critical factor in supporting school development projects. Participants noted that PTA members in Rangpur Sadar Upazila actively mobilize resources from parents, community representatives, and local benefactors. This collaborative effort helps secure additional support in the form of materials and funds, supplementing government allocations.

In Puthia Upazila, Rajshahi, a noteworthy instance was the formation of an ad hoc implementation committee involving PTA members, GPSMC, SAC, and teachers. This joint responsibility ensured transparency and accountability in the planning, budgeting, and execution of SLIP projects. The collaborative approach extended to monitoring financial transparency, where PTA members, alongside GPSMC and SAC committees, verified that procurement and expenditure aligned with market rates and quality standards.

The Head Teachers' Conclave underscored the transformative potential of SLIP in improving primary education. Despite persistent challenges such as limited resources, delayed funds, and stakeholder inconsistencies, the program has demonstrated significant progress through collaborative efforts and innovative practices. Addressing gaps in training, transparency, and resource allocation will be critical to sustaining and enhancing these improvements. The integration of community-driven approaches ensures a sustainable pathway for the future, fostering a collective commitment to advancing educational standards.

The Head Teachers' Conclave provides a structured examination of the critical elements involved in the implementation of School Level Improvement Plans (SLIP). This expanded analysis categorizes insights into seven key domains: Understanding of SLIP, Roles in Planning and Development, Challenges in SLIP Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms, Stakeholder Engagement, Resource Management, Impact of SLIP Implementation, and Future Directions for Improvement.

A number of priority areas were identified for further attention:

- **Understanding of SLIP:** The head teachers strongly felt that SLIP stands as a transformative strategy in education aimed at enhancing the quality of learning experiences and ensuring schools become inclusive, safe, and joyful spaces for students. The plan underscores the mobilization of local resources and the engagement of

various stakeholders, creating a platform for sustainable educational development. By addressing learning gaps and reducing dropout rates, SLIP plays a fundamental role in establishing a robust educational foundation.

- **Roles in Planning and Development:** Headteachers are pivotal in SLIP's planning and development phases. Their responsibilities include assessing school-specific needs, prioritizing developmental activities, and spearheading collaborative discussions with teachers and stakeholders. These engagements foster transparency and accountability in formulating actionable plans. Effective utilization of committees such as the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Government Primary School Management Committee (GPSMC), and Social Audit Committees (SAC) further strengthens coordination. The integration of modern technology has emerged as a critical tool, transforming traditional educational settings into more student-friendly and efficient environments.
- **Challenges in SLIP Implementation:** Implementation of SLIP faces a range of structural, procedural, and stakeholder-related challenges. *Structurally*, difficulties in forming SLIP teams and limited financial allocations constrain progress. Delays in fund disbursement, coupled with procedural requirements, often compel headteachers to use personal finances, placing an unfair burden on educators, which is further aggravated by VAT and tax deductions that reduce available funds. *Stakeholder engagement* also poses challenges, including inconsistent support from SMC members, divergent mindsets among stakeholders, and internal conflicts within committees that hinder coordination. Moreover, externally imposed plans from influential individuals often prove impractical and misaligned with local needs. On the operational side, the absence of clear quality assessment mechanisms and centralized decision-making create bottlenecks. *Non-transparent procurement practices* and fiscal year misalignments further delay implementation. Despite visible enthusiasm among educators and stakeholders, the cumulative effect of these financial, procedural, and institutional barriers frequently prevents SLIP initiatives from achieving their intended outcomes.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:** Monitoring and evaluation are essential for SLIP's success. Education Officers, Assistant Education Officers, and committees such as GPSMC and SAC play integral roles in overseeing SLIP activities. Monitoring and evaluation are critical elements that can ensure effectiveness of SLIP implementation through maintaining transparency and accountability.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of SLIP's success. Community leaders, alumni, financially stable individuals, and education enthusiasts are invited to contribute to school development initiatives. Guardians and local representatives also play pivotal roles, particularly in addressing resource and infrastructure needs. These collaborative efforts foster a sense of collective responsibility, promoting long-term support for school improvements. Resource Management Resource management for the implementation of the School-Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) involves contributions from multiple sources. Government allocations under the SLIP program provide the foundational funding. However, additional support from socially established community members, local representatives, and alumni plays a crucial role in bridging resource gaps. Guardians and other stakeholders also contribute, creating a collaborative funding approach that strengthens project execution. Despite this promising strategy, contributions beyond the Department of Primary Education (DPE) allocations remain limited, with only a few honorable exceptions.

- **Outcomes of SLIP Implementation:** SLIP generated improved facilities and infrastructure have created cleaner and more conducive environments for learning. The program has also introduced greater transparency and accountability in financial management and procurement processes. Infrastructure developments have further improved the overall functionality and aesthetic appeal of school environments, making them more attractive and effective spaces for learning.
- **Social Impacts:** SLIP has fostered a culture of social responsibility among stakeholders, encouraging a community-driven approach to school development.

## 12. Insights from multi-stakeholder consultations

The multistakeholder consultations conducted provided a comprehensive understanding of the implementation, challenges, and potential improvements of the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP). These discussions brought together school administrators, teachers, parents, local dignitaries, and committee members, offering diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of SLIP.

A major focus of the consultations was the structure and governance of SLIP teams. At the core of SLIP execution is a structured framework, led by the Head Teacher in collaboration with Government Primary School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). These teams are tasked with planning and executing school improvement projects, yet gaps in training and orientation have hindered effective implementation. The absence of structured capacity-building programs has left administrators and teachers struggling to navigate procedural complexities, limiting the impact of SLIP initiatives.

Resource planning and allocation remain significant challenges. While SLIP provides a structured approach to fund management, deductions for VAT and taxes often create confusion regarding the actual amount available for schools. This financial ambiguity leads to tension among stakeholders, particularly when administrators and teachers are compelled to use personal funds to bridge delays in disbursement. Moreover, rigid procurement protocols restrict flexibility, making it difficult to adjust spending based on the evolving needs of the schools.

The engagement of stakeholders plays a crucial role in the success of SLIP. Committees such as the SMC, PTA, and Social Accountability Committees (SAC) contribute to procurement monitoring and school priority setting. However, participation disparities exist, with financially stable families and local elites being more actively involved, while underprivileged parents require greater awareness and encouragement to engage meaningfully. Building a stronger sense of community ownership is essential to fostering sustained involvement.

The consultations also shed light on strategies to improve educational quality. Teachers advocated for the integration of technology into classrooms, with multimedia tools and interactive learning approaches being identified as effective methods to enhance student engagement. Hands-on learning activities, such as practical exercises in geography lessons, were noted for their ability to improve comprehension. Additionally, extracurricular activities, including music and physical education, were emphasized as critical components of a well-rounded education. However, overcrowded classrooms and a high student-teacher ratio continue to limit the effectiveness of these initiatives. To address this, employing Para Teachers under SLIP was suggested as a temporary solution, along with flexible school hours to improve student focus and nutrition.

Parental involvement emerged as a vital factor in student success. Regular parent-teacher meetings and mothers' gatherings have fostered stronger school-family relationships. Despite these efforts, socioeconomic barriers continue to limit participation among economically disadvantaged families. Encouraging greater parental awareness and reinstating contributions, such as examination fees, could enhance engagement and

support school development efforts. Local contributions from alumni and community members were also identified as essential for sustaining school improvement initiatives.

Innovation in teaching and learning remains a priority for stakeholders. Digital classrooms and multimedia tools have proven effective in enhancing student retention and interest. Recreational learning methods, such as entertainment-based lessons, were identified as valuable strategies to reduce learning fatigue and foster enthusiasm. Additionally, the provision of supplementary materials, including storybooks and art supplies, was recommended to enhance creativity and ensure a more comprehensive learning experience.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education was also a key discussion point. Schools adhered to strict health guidelines, including mask mandates and regular handwashing, ensuring a safe learning environment. Teachers played a critical role in maintaining these protocols, demonstrating the importance of strong leadership in times of crisis. The pandemic underscored the need for adaptability and resilience in educational planning and implementation.

Several recommendations were put forward to enhance SLIP implementation and ensure sustainable educational development. Providing advance disbursement of SLIP funds would facilitate better planning and project execution, while exempting SLIP allocations from tax deductions would maximize available resources. Expanding infrastructure and recruiting additional teachers were emphasized as necessary measures to accommodate increasing student populations. The appointment of support staff, such as peons or ayahs, was recommended to assist with school operations. Moreover, SLIP funds should cover essential educational supplies, including school uniforms and student meals, to address disparities in resource availability. Ensuring access to safe drinking water, free from iron and arsenic contamination, was also highlighted as a priority. Finally, comprehensive training programs for all SLIP stakeholders were strongly advocated to enhance their capacity in planning and execution.

The consultations underscored both the progress and challenges in SLIP implementation. While financial and administrative constraints persist, the commitment of school administrators, teachers, and parents to improving educational outcomes remains evident. Addressing these challenges through structural reforms, improved financial management, and stronger community engagement will be crucial in transforming SLIP into a more effective and inclusive tool for sustainable school development.

Key policy and operational issues highlighted in the multi-stakeholder consultations are summarized below:

- Transparent and effective GPSMC selection
- Transparent and effective PTA selection
- Greater awareness of SLIP vision and modalities
- Flexible SLIP planning process
- Meaningful community engagement
- Reforming SLIP payment procedures and rethinking inclusion of VAT
- Better use of technology and greater attention to extra-curricular activities

# 13. Learning workshop with national and field level education administrators

The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) is a critical policy initiative aimed at improving primary education through decentralized decision-making, resource allocation, and community engagement. This synthesis examines the challenges, best practices, and recommendations provided by various groups in a recent workshop with regional Level Officers, focusing on policy, planning, implementation, capacity building, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.

The effectiveness of SLIP depends on improved policy implementation, stakeholder participation, and transparent fund management. The recommendations outlined above, if implemented, can significantly strengthen SLIP's contribution to primary education, ensuring inclusive, efficient, and sustainable school development. Future reforms should focus on decentralization, capacity building, financial accountability, and digital monitoring to maximize impact.

The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) serves as a crucial policy initiative designed to enhance primary education by decentralizing decision-making, optimizing resource allocation, and fostering community engagement. This analysis provides an in-depth exploration of the major themes identified during a workshop with Sub-National Level Officers, focusing on policy, planning, implementation, capacity building, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.

SLIP policy and its associated guidelines face significant challenges that hinder their effectiveness. The lack of local fund collection mechanisms, combined with high VAT and tax rates on necessary items, poses a substantial financial burden. Financial exploitation by School Management Committees (SMCs) and local influencers further exacerbates resource mismanagement, with SLIP funds often being misused for non-essential expenses such as question papers and guided books. Additionally, the absence of provisions for infrastructure development and unethical practices within accounting offices' highlight the need for financial reforms. To counter these issues, experts suggest standardizing VAT rates, ensuring that SLIP funds can be allocated for emergency infrastructure development, and directing these funds into the Head Teachers' official account to prevent misuse. Stricter oversight and pre-service teacher training programs are also recommended to enhance the overall efficiency of SLIP.

The planning and preparation phase of SLIP is marred by inadequate stakeholder participation, low attendance in SMC meetings, and the repetitive nature of SLIP plans with minimal modifications. Training programs for SLIP implementation are often insufficient, leading to ineffective execution. Furthermore, the inequitable allocation of government and social engagement funds creates disparities in school development. To address these shortcomings, recommendations include incentivizing schools to mobilize additional local resources, ensuring active participation of Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEOs),


and disbursing SLIP funds in advance. Removing IT deductions from SLIP allocations and establishing alumni committees to engage communities can also foster improved planning. Transparency measures, such as displaying donor names on SLIP-funded projects, are suggested to encourage greater accountability.

SLIP implementation suffers from bureaucratic delays in fund disbursement, lack of demand-driven planning, weak coordination among SLIP team members, and inconsistent planning for students with disabilities and marginalized groups. Additionally, limited community involvement in resource mobilization hinders the overall effectiveness of the program. To improve implementation, timely disbursement of funds should be ensured, and demand-based planning should be strengthened. Structured implementation frameworks can enhance accountability, while allowing advance payments for critical projects can prevent operational delays. Financial transparency must be enforced to eliminate fund misallocation, and community leaders should be trained in resource mobilization. Moreover, the inclusion of specific provisions for students with disabilities within SLIP planning is essential to ensure inclusive education.

Capacity building within SLIP is undermined by insufficient training, lack of awareness among school stakeholders, and corrupt practices such as bribery in fund transfers. Misuse of SLIP funds for unrelated expenses, including pre-primary education and assessments, diverts resources away from essential school improvements. Poor quality infrastructure due to budget constraints further weakens the impact of SLIP. Addressing these concerns requires conducting informational meetings with SAC committees, transferring funds into joint accounts managed by the Head Teacher and a senior assistant teacher, and allocating funds in advance to avoid project delays. Additionally, prohibiting the use of SLIP funds for assessments and pre-primary education, enhancing monitoring mechanisms to prevent corruption, and ensuring the use of quality materials in infrastructure development are recommended. Establishing special funds for WASH facilities and clean water access can also contribute to improved school environments.

Monitoring and evaluation of SLIP are hampered by the absence of standardized assessment tools, weak involvement of SAC in monitoring activities, and inadequate supervision from Upazila Education Officers. School staff often face pressure to spend funds outside the designated SLIP plans, compromising financial integrity. To address these issues, SWOT analyses should be conducted with input from all stakeholders, and SLIP plans should be approved only after thorough verification by Upazila Primary Education Officers. The distribution of implementation responsibilities among teaching committees and the strengthening of SAC monitoring committees can enhance oversight. Establishing clear accountability frameworks for all financial transactions and increasing supervision from sub-district education officers are also recommended. The development of a digital progress verification tool within SLIP applications can further improve monitoring efficiency.

Stakeholder engagement and community involvement are critical to the success of SLIP but face multiple challenges, including limited community ownership of school development initiatives, lack of awareness among SAC committees regarding their responsibilities, and inconsistent participation of education officers in planning processes. The absence of digital tools for monitoring stakeholder involvement further impedes transparency and accountability. Solutions include revising SLIP slabs to accommodate schools with classes beyond grade five, increasing transparency through stakeholder meetings and digital tracking, and mandating monthly inspections by UPEOs focused on SLIP implementation.



Expanding awareness programs to improve SAC engagement and enhancing the SLIP digital application with quarterly monitoring tools can ensure greater participation and oversight.

Education experts and DPE Directors emphasize the need for enhanced transparency and decentralization to bring government education initiatives closer to communities. Strengthening community engagement is essential to counter declining participation, and a shift from SLIP to a more comprehensive School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP) is proposed. Reforms in teacher-to-student ratios can optimize resource allocation, while the introduction of religious teachers may help address dropout rates linked to madrasa migration. Establishing clear guidelines for SLIP fund usage and allocation durations, developing a contingency SLIP fund at the district level for urgent school needs, and adopting equity-based fund allocations rather than rigid SLIP slabs are recommended strategies for improving SLIP effectiveness.

In conclusion, the success of SLIP hinges on the refinement of policy implementation, increased stakeholder participation, and transparent fund management. The outlined recommendations, if executed effectively, can significantly enhance SLIP's contribution to primary education, ensuring a more inclusive, efficient, and sustainable approach to school development. Future reforms should emphasize decentralization, capacity building, financial accountability, and digital monitoring to maximize the program's impact and long-term success.

# 14. Reflections on Effectiveness of SLIP Implementation, Community Participation and SLIP funding

The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) under the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) has emerged as a strategically important mechanism in reshaping how schools are governed and developed in Bangladesh. SLIP has redefined the role of community institutions such as Government Primary School Management Committees (GPSMCs), enhanced local ownership of education reform, and introduced a decentralized, need-based planning model to drive school-level improvements. Its strategic significance is underscored by three core areas that mark a departure from previous centralized planning approaches: community empowerment, decentralization, and localized capacity building.

- **Revitalizing Government Primary School Management Committees (GPSMCs): A Community Shift Triggered by SLIP**

For decades, Government Primary School Management Committees in Bangladesh remained largely symbolic, often dominated by passive participation, administrative inefficiency, and low accountability. Their roles were unclear, and their influence over school planning, development, and oversight was minimal. SLIP brought a paradigm shift by providing a structured framework and funding mechanism through which GPSMCs could plan, implement, and monitor school-level development activities.

This model not only formalized the role of the community in school management but also created a sense of responsibility and ownership. The annual planning cycle, with its focus on participatory decision-making, enabled GSMCs to identify local needs, allocate SLIP funds accordingly, and track progress in a systematic manner. As a result, many GPSMCs reported increased confidence, enhanced communication with teachers and parents, and proactive engagement in issues like infrastructure improvement, student attendance, and minor maintenance.

Strategically, SLIP served as a catalyst to transform dormant SMCs into functioning local education governance bodies. It reinforced the importance of community involvement and provided a platform through which parents, teachers, and local leaders could jointly shape the school environment. In essence, SLIP bridged the long-standing gap between schools and their communities, making the governance of education more democratic, transparent, and responsive.

- **Enhancing Quality of Teaching and Learning through SLIP: A New Strategic Horizon**

While SLIP's impact has been most visible in infrastructure and administrative improvements, its potential to improve the core teaching-learning process remains underutilized. As per the SLIP Effectiveness Report, many plans still prioritize physical improvements—such as benches, toilets, or boundary walls—while initiatives aimed directly at learning enhancement receive comparatively less attention.

To harness its full strategic potential, SLIP needs to pivot more intentionally toward quality-centric planning. This would involve including activities aimed at pedagogical innovation, remedial education, inclusive teaching practices, and community-supported learning interventions. Schools could, for example, use SLIP resources to organize reading festivals, support slow learners, introduce peer tutoring systems, or procure low-cost teaching aids.

Strategically, positioning SLIP as a tool not just for operational fixes but for learning transformation aligns it more closely with the broader objectives of PEDP4 and SDG 4. It would also help to reduce the quality divide between schools in urban and remote areas. For this to occur, guidelines and training for SMCs must highlight how quality outcomes can be addressed through SLIP and how the community can become active supporters of pedagogical change.

Furthermore, linking SLIP planning with data from National Student Assessment (NSA), and classroom observation tools can help schools design targeted interventions that address actual learning gaps. This data-driven approach would elevate SLIP from a budgeting tool to a strategic instrument for academic improvement.

- **Strengthening SLIP through Functional Decentralization**

SLIP's success is closely tied to how effectively decisions are made and support is delivered at the subnational level. At present, many aspects of SLIP implementation—such as budget release, approval processes, and technical oversight—are still controlled by the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) at the central level. This creates delays, restricts contextual flexibility, and weakens responsiveness to local conditions.

The strategic expansion of SLIP would require further decentralization of functions and authority from the DPE headquarters to divisional and district education offices. This functional decentralization would empower local offices to oversee SLIP processes, resolve implementation bottlenecks, and provide real-time support to schools. For instance, Divisional Primary Education Officers (DPEOs) could be entrusted with approving SLIP plans within defined budget ceilings, reducing dependence on Dhaka-based offices.

By enabling local administrative units to play a more active role, the SLIP system would become more agile and context-sensitive. It would allow for differentiated strategies for urban, rural, and geographically challenged schools. Moreover, divisional oversight can lead to better cross-school learning, where successful SLIP interventions in one school or Upazila can be scaled up more quickly in others.

Decentralization also aligns with the broader reform goals of PEDP4, which seeks to empower subnational units to implement education plans with greater autonomy and accountability. A more devolved SLIP system could, therefore, serve as a demonstration model for broader decentralization in the primary education sector.

- **Empowering SLIP to Address Local Training Needs: Building Sustainable Capacity through URC Collaboration**

Another major strategic opportunity lies in linking SLIP planning with school-based training and capacity development. Currently, training for GPSMCs and teachers is largely planned and executed by central or district-level authorities, often in a one-size-fits-all manner. This top-down approach fails to address the unique challenges of individual schools.

Allowing SLIP to identify and address its own training needs—whether for the GPSMC, teachers, or even parents—can significantly enhance its impact. For example, schools could use SLIP funds to organize workshops on inclusive education, classroom management, disaster preparedness, or student discipline. More importantly, this training could be conducted in collaboration with the Upazila Resource Centers (URCs), which are strategically positioned to support decentralized training delivery.

URCs can provide technical expertise, training facilitators, and follow-up monitoring. By anchoring capacity-building initiatives within the SLIP framework, schools not only get tailor-made solutions but also build sustainable local capacity. This would reduce dependency on centrally designed training programs and ensure that capacity development becomes a continuous, responsive, and locally-driven process.

Strategically, this linkage could be institutionalized through revised SLIP guidelines, mandating collaboration with URCs and allowing a portion of SLIP funds to be allocated for capacity-building activities. This would foster a culture of ongoing learning and professional development at the school level, making SLIP a comprehensive tool for both planning and capacity enhancement.

The strategic significance of SLIP lies not merely in its function as a funding mechanism but in its transformative role in reimagining school governance, decentralizing decision-making, and promoting community-led improvement. By revitalizing GPSMCs, refocusing on quality learning, deepening decentralization, and empowering localized capacity-building, SLIP holds the potential to become a cornerstone of school reform in Bangladesh.

To unlock this potential, however, SLIP must be reconceptualized as a dynamic, multi-dimensional strategy rather than a static planning template. With clear policy support, institutional flexibility, and active collaboration with decentralized units like URCs and divisional offices, SLIP can evolve into a powerful driver of equitable and quality primary education. As Bangladesh strives to meet its national education goals and global commitments, strengthening the strategic foundation of SLIP will be key to achieving sustainable and inclusive educational development.

- **Achievement of Project Goals**

SLIP was designed as a decentralized tool for school-level planning, aiming to empower schools. In Bangladesh to independently identify needs and execute improvement initiatives through participatory and need-based planning. The overarching goal was to improve learning outcomes and the quality of education. In terms of effectiveness, the project achieved partial success. There is strong evidence that SLIP contributed to localized decision-making and modest improvements in school infrastructure, teaching materials, and student engagement (e.g., debates, hygiene programs). According to expenditure analysis, a significant portion of funds was directed toward teaching-learning materials and student activities, directly supporting quality enhancement objectives.

However, systemic limitations hinder full goal realization. A critical concern is the misalignment between SLIP's original objectives and actual implementation. The persistence of a deconcentrated rather than fully decentralized structure led to delays, rigid fund allocation processes, and limited school autonomy. Despite guideline revisions in 2017–2018, there is still insufficient empowerment of local actors to prioritize development needs beyond pre-determined expenditure categories.

- **Achievement of Project Goals**

The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP), as articulated under the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4), is designed to decentralize planning, enhance local accountability, and improve educational outcomes through school-level empowerment. Its objectives are ambitious and align with global trends toward bottom-up education reforms.

**Successes:** The study found SLIP's greatest strengths in fostering participatory planning. In a number of schools, especially in high-performing divisions like Barishal and Rangpur, SLIP enabled headteachers and GPSMCs to identify and prioritize development needs. Schools have used funds for acquiring teaching-learning materials, supporting cultural and sports activities, and improving WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities. These reflect SLIP's alignment with its intended outcomes.

**Challenges:** However, SLIP continues to function within a highly centralized framework. Most budget decisions pass through multi-layered approvals involving DPE, Finance Division, and the Accounts Office.

- **Stakeholder perception on the effectiveness of SLIP implementation**

Stakeholder satisfaction is a vital indicator of a program's legitimacy and sustainability. The SLIP effectiveness study employed Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys to assess this criterion.

- **Parents and Communities:** Survey data show a moderate level of parental awareness, with higher engagement in a few districts like Rangpur and Rajshahi. However, Dhaka and Mymensingh lag significantly. Gender disparities persist—female guardians are less represented in SMCs and PTAs and report lower confidence in contributing to decision-making.

- **School Committees:** Members of SMCs, SACs, and PTAs highlight a lack of orientation and training. Some report being “informed but not involved,” suggesting symbolic rather than substantive participation. Tokenism, coupled with limited access to planning data, reduces ownership.
- **Field-Level Officials and DPE Representatives:** Officials recognize SLIP’s potential but cite implementation hurdles, especially due to the absence of real-time monitoring tools and lack of autonomy at the Upazila level.

According to stakeholders the overall SLIP implementation effectiveness is moderate. Many stakeholders acknowledge SLIP’s intention but are somewhat disappointed by procedural delays, weak follow-up, and unclear mandates. Satisfaction could be increased by stronger engagement, clearer roles, and sustained capacity development.

## • Delivery of Value

Evaluating SLIP’s value delivery means assessing whether the initiative contributes to national education goals, including equity, quality, and inclusivity.

**Value Added:** SLIP’s value is evident in multiple areas:

- **Improved Learning Environments:** Schools invested in sports, co-curricular activities, and hygiene facilities, which improved attendance and learning conditions.
- **Accountability Structures:** SLIP introduced accountability mechanisms at the grassroots through GPSMC and SAC engagements.

**Value Limitations:** However, value delivery varies significantly. In some regions, funds are spent on office furniture or non-learning priorities. The lack of needs-based planning results in expenditures misaligned with educational goals. Disaster resilience and disability inclusion are notably underfunded, raising questions about long-term sustainability.

In summary, SLIP provides real value where implemented with integrity and capacity. A national framework for monitoring outputs and outcomes would enhance value delivery.

## • Adherence to Scope and Objectives

SLIP’s scope includes decentralization, participatory planning, and efficient fund utilization based on school-specific priorities.

**Adherence Observed:** The SLIP study confirms implementation in all 8 divisions, covering over 100 schools. Tools like SLIP templates and participatory meetings were used in most locations. Parents and community members participated in plan formulation.

**Gaps and Deviations:** In practice, many schools followed a compliance-oriented approach. Plans were often prepared to meet deadlines rather than to reflect genuine priorities. Several schools reused previous year’s SLIPs with minor edits. Poor alignment between SLIP activities and Primary School Quality Level (PSQL) indicators further reveals a disconnect between goals and actual implementation.

Thus, while SLIP’s scope was respected in form, it was not always fulfilled in spirit. This undermines the transformative potential of the initiative.

- **Quality of Deliverables**

Deliverables of SLIP include school improvement plans, upgraded infrastructure, financial documentation, and training.

**High-Quality Outputs:** In well-supported regions, schools developed comprehensive plans with student-centric activities. Tangible improvements in learning environments were documented—renovated classrooms, new libraries, and digital content access.

**Challenges in Quality:** However, only 59 of 100 schools submitted complete financial documentation. Many lacked itemized expense records. Discrepancies were observed between reported and actual expenditures. Deliverables like teacher training and parent orientation sessions were frequently skipped due to time and resource constraints.

The quality of SLIP deliverables is thus highly variable. Ensuring adherence to minimum quality standards through third-party verification or peer review mechanisms is recommended.

- **Timeliness and Budget Adherence**

**Timeliness:** Delays are a recurring issue. The multi-step approval process—from the Education Officer to the Director General—often takes months. In many cases, schools received funds near the fiscal year’s end, leaving little time for proper implementation.

**Budget Adherence:** Rangpur and Barishal show near-perfect budget execution rates, while Dhaka and Rajshahi fall below 95%. Some schools reported zero expenditure due to delayed fund releases. Lack of advance disbursement mechanisms forced headteachers to cover costs from personal funds, impacting morale and transparency.

Furthermore, funds allocated under slab models may not reflect actual school needs. As a result, schools struggle with both underspending and overspending, leading to inefficiencies and audit risks. A transition to a per-learner allocation model and quarterly disbursement cycle could mitigate these issues.

- **Effectiveness of budget utilization**

**Effectiveness of budget utilization** in the context of SLIP is best measured by correlating fund usage with improvements in infrastructure, pedagogy, attendance, and learning outcomes.

**Effective Budget Utilization Areas:** Investments in learning materials, sanitation, and sports have improved student engagement. In schools with active SACs and parental participation, student attendance and retention have increased. These gains indicate positive returns on relatively modest investments.

**Challenges:** Several schools received substantial funds but failed to show meaningful improvements. Poor recordkeeping, vague goals, and lack of specific mention of outcome indicators make it difficult to assess ROI systematically.

SLIP planning should explicitly mention measurable outcomes such as student achievement, retention, and teacher performance.

- **Overall Project Success**

SLIP has successfully laid the foundation for school-based planning and community accountability in Bangladesh's primary education sector.

**Strategic Gains:**

- Created an ecosystem for school-level decision-making.
- Increased awareness about the importance of participatory governance.

**Remaining Challenges:**

- Incomplete decentralization.
- Low or slow fund utilization in certain divisions.
- Weak documentation and audit readiness.

SLIP's implementation effectiveness varies significantly across operational, outcome, and impact dimensions. Operational bottlenecks and centralized governance limit flexibility and responsiveness. Outcome-level gains are visible in community participation and infrastructure enhancement but are marred by disparities and weak accountability. The long-term impact remains constrained by minimal institutional reform and lack of linkage to student achievement. To enhance effectiveness, reforms must focus on devolving authority, strengthening capacity, ensuring financial equity, and linking SLIP planning directly to measurable educational outcomes. SLIP's success can be considered moderate, with significant room for policy, operational, and institutional improvement.

- **Community engagement**

- ***Enhancing Community Contribution in SLIP - Beyond Financial Metrics:***

Community participation is a central tenet of the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP), aimed at fostering ownership, accountability, and sustainability in school development. However, the SLIP effectiveness study's current framing of community contribution largely focuses on quantifying financial inputs or material donations. While such data is essential, it represents only one dimension of community engagement. To develop a more holistic understanding and generate actionable recommendations, it is imperative to examine why communities engage, what motivates or hinders participation, and how SLIP structures can better leverage these motivations for long-term impact.

- ***Reframing Community Contribution: From Transactional to Transformational:***

The dominant emphasis on the monetary value of community contributions—amounts donated, goods provided, infrastructure supported—risks portraying participation as a transaction. This limited lens obscures the intrinsic motivations, relational dynamics, and contextual factors that underlie effective and sustained community involvement in schools. Transformational participation—rooted in shared values, aspirations, and trust—goes far beyond financial inputs and is vital for SLIP's long-term success.

Field observations and stakeholder interviews, when reframed with a motivation-focused lens, reveal that communities often engage due to:

- ◆ ***Aspirations for Children's Education and Mobility:*** Many guardians and community members see education as the primary pathway out of poverty and social stagnation. Their participation in SLIP activities often stems from a desire to improve educational opportunities for their children and future generations.
  - ◆ ***Social Recognition and Status:*** Active contributors to school development often gain social capital within the village or union. Being recognized as an education advocate or donor enhances status, especially for local elites or businesspersons.
  - ◆ ***Trust and Relationships with School Leadership:*** Schools with proactive and transparent Head Teachers (HTs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) attract more voluntary contributions. Where school authorities maintain accountability and communicate results, communities are more inclined to participate.
  - ◆ ***Religious, Moral, or Cultural Obligations:*** In many rural contexts, charitable contributions to community institutions—including schools—are linked to religious or cultural values that emphasize collective responsibility and altruism.
  - ◆ ***Reciprocity and Inclusion:*** When SLIP processes visibly include community voices—through open meetings, participatory planning, and inclusive implementation—community members perceive their involvement as meaningful, leading to deeper engagement.
- ***Barriers to Community Participation:***

While many communities are willing to contribute, several factors limit their capacity or motivation to engage with SLIP:

- ◆ **Lack of Clarity or Communication:** In some schools, the SLIP process is inadequately explained, leading to confusion about how community members can contribute or participate meaningfully. SLIPs often remain technical documents rather than community tools.
- ◆ **Elite Capture and Exclusion:** In several cases, contributions come from a narrow segment of local elites, while poorer families or marginalized groups are excluded from decision-making processes. This reinforces power imbalances and undermines inclusive participation.
- ◆ **Perceived Misuse or Mismanagement of Funds:** If SLIP funds or contributions are not transparently managed, communities lose trust and withdraw from active participation.
- ◆ **Low Literacy and Awareness:** Guardians with limited education often feel disempowered to engage in school affairs, believing they have little to contribute beyond financial support.
- ◆ **Absence of Institutional Incentives:** Current SLIP guidelines and reporting formats do not formally recognize or incentivize non-material forms of participation—such as volunteer time, mentoring, community mobilization, or advocacy.

■ **Leveraging Motivations through SLIP Design and Implementation:**

To maximize community contribution beyond financial inputs, SLIP must evolve to better align with local motivations, address barriers, and create enabling structures. Key recommendations include:

- ◆ **Redefine and Broaden the Concept of Community Contribution:** SLIP documentation and monitoring frameworks should explicitly recognize diverse forms of community input—time, labor, advocacy, in-kind support, event organization, and knowledge sharing. A revised categorization could include:
  - **Financial contributions:** In-kind support (e.g., furniture, construction materials)
  - **Voluntary labor (e.g., school maintenance, painting):**
    - ◇ Skill-based contributions (e.g., legal advice, IT support, tutoring)
    - ◇ Participation in planning, monitoring, or training sessions
- ◆ **Institutionalize Recognition and Appreciation Mechanisms:** Public recognition of contributors—during school events, through wall displays, or certificates—can significantly boost motivation. Simple measures such as community honor boards or acknowledgment in SLIP reports create social value and incentivize continued support.
- ◆ **Strengthen Participatory Planning and Decision-Making:** SLIP preparation should include structured forums where community members—not just SMCs or PTAs—can propose priorities, share local knowledge, and align plans with collective needs. Effective participation hinges on inclusive and transparent processes.
- ◆ **Train School Leaders in Community Mobilization:** Capacity-building for HTs and SMC members should include modules on stakeholder engagement, trust-building, and participatory planning. Leaders who actively solicit and value community input foster higher engagement and accountability.
- ◆ **Document and Share Local Success Stories:** SLIP implementation can benefit from a repository of case studies showcasing innovative forms of community contribution—such as parent-run literacy programs or youth-led clean-up drives. Highlighting such models can inspire replication and broaden the imagination of what is possible.
- ◆ **Use Data to Target Underrepresented Groups:** Disaggregated data on community participation (by gender, caste, income group) should be collected to ensure inclusiveness. Specific strategies can then be developed to engage marginalized groups, including flexible meeting schedules, use of local languages, or female-friendly participation methods.
- ◆ **Introduce Matching Grants or Performance-Based Incentives:** To encourage sustained contributions, SLIP could explore matching schemes where community inputs are partially matched by government or NGO resources. Additionally, schools demonstrating strong community mobilization could be eligible for performance incentives or additional resource envelopes.

Community contribution to SLIP must be seen as a dynamic, multifaceted process shaped by aspirations, relationships, and institutional arrangements. Moving beyond narrow financial metrics to recognize motivations, barriers, and enabling conditions is essential for strengthening local ownership and sustainability. By embracing a broader and more nuanced approach to community engagement, SLIP can deepen its transformative potential, align more closely with local realities, and build a more inclusive and participatory foundation for school improvement.

Ultimately, the success of SLIP depends not only on how much communities give but why and how they choose to engage. Recognizing and leveraging these motivations is key to unlocking the full promise of decentralized, community-driven school development.

- **SLIP funding: Insights on SLIP Fund Adequacy and Suggestions for Needs-Based Budget Allocation:**

The SLIP Effectiveness Study clearly indicates that the current level of funding is insufficient to meet the diverse and context-specific needs of schools, particularly in under-resourced or geographically challenged regions. While the current SLIP allocation has supported some progress—such as minor infrastructure repairs, small-scale instructional material procurement, and modest community engagement—the scale of these interventions remains limited.

- Evidence of Inadequacy from the Study

The study highlights multiple areas where the current budget is failing to deliver significant or sustainable impact:

- ◆ Infrastructure needs (e.g., classroom repairs, boundary walls, latrines) are often only partially addressed.
- ◆ Pedagogical support (e.g., teacher training, instructional aids) is underfunded, despite being a high priority in many school contexts.
- ◆ Equity issues, especially in char, hill tract, and hard-to-reach areas, are exacerbated by uniform funding, which does not reflect regional or school-specific challenges.

- Rationale for a Needs-Based Budget Model

The study recommends a differentiated SLIP allocation framework that takes into account:

- ◆ School size and student enrolment
- ◆ Geographic hardship or accessibility
- ◆ Poverty levels and community contributions
- ◆ Urgency of infrastructure and instructional needs

This model aligns with global best practices in school financing, which favor contextual and needs-responsive funding over flat or uniform allocations.

The SLIP study provides strong justification for graduated, needs-based SLIP funding. Piloting and costing exercises could refine this model and make it financially viable within PEDP5 or subsequent education sector plans.

# Part G

## Conclusion and Recommendations



# 15. Conclusions

This research journey has been both extensive and multidimensional, incorporating a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to capture the perspectives of various stakeholders, including Government Primary school management committees (GPSMCs), parent-teacher associations (PTAs), Social Audit Committees (SACs), education administrators, teachers, and parents. By employing key informant interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, and institutional consultations, the study has provided a comprehensive understanding of how SLIP functions in practice and the factors that influence its outcomes.

This study was driven by the need to assess the effectiveness of SLIP in improving school governance, financial management, stakeholder participation, and overall educational outcomes. The findings highlight both progress and persistent gaps, such as budget utilization inefficiencies, disparities in stakeholder awareness, and administrative constraints that limit the full potential of SLIP. By examining the nature of implementation, governance challenges, and financial bottlenecks, the study has uncovered structural and operational issues that need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of SLIP.

A critical aspect of this research has been the focus on decentralization and its role in strengthening school-level decision-making. The study reveals that while SLIP has created a structured mechanism for school development planning, its impact is hindered by institutional delays, limited autonomy at the school level, and insufficient capacity-building efforts for key stakeholders. Furthermore, gender and regional disparities in knowledge and participation indicate the need for more inclusive engagement strategies to ensure equitable access to information and decision-making processes.

The insights gathered throughout this study reinforce the importance of refining financial oversight mechanisms, enhancing community engagement, fostering greater transparency, and adopting region-specific strategies to tailor SLIP implementation to local needs. By addressing these issues systematically, SLIP can evolve into a more robust and responsive framework that effectively contributes to school development and improved learning outcomes in Bangladesh.

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## 15.1 Operational Insights

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**Implementation Constraints and Capacity Gaps:** The School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) under the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) has significantly shifted the focus toward decentralized planning and school-level empowerment in Bangladesh. However, operational constraints, particularly in terms of capacity, have hindered its full potential. While there is an appreciation for SLIP's goals, key stakeholders like headteachers, Government Primary School Management Committees (GPSMCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and Social Audit Committees (SACs) often lack the necessary skills to manage decentralized planning effectively. The SLIP guidelines, though comprehensive, are not adequately adapted for practical application at the grassroots level, resulting in a compliance-driven approach rather than a strategic, context-sensitive one. Training programs remain sporadic and theoretical, failing to build the problem-solving skills necessary for managing SLIP activities.

**Planning and Execution Disconnect** A key issue with SLIP is the gap between planning and execution. Planning processes are often based on checklists or templates that fail to consider the unique needs of each school. This results in standardized, ineffective plans that do not address local challenges. Moreover, execution suffers because the plans often lack flexibility and do not account for evolving school conditions, undermining the decentralized planning's potential to adapt dynamically.

**Delayed Fund Disbursement and Procedural Complexity:** The delayed release of funds and the complex bureaucratic procedures involved in fund utilization further hinder SLIP implementation. Funds often arrive too late in the academic year, leaving insufficient time for schools to execute plans effectively. The procedural burden, particularly for headteachers, also detracts from their capacity to focus on educational reforms. Simplifying financial processes and synchronizing fund disbursement with the academic calendar is crucial to addressing these operational bottlenecks.

**Community Participation and Ownership:** While SLIP emphasizes community involvement, the actual engagement of local stakeholders in decision-making processes remains limited. Community participation is often symbolic rather than substantive, and decision-making is predominantly top-down. A shift in approach is necessary to foster genuine community ownership. This requires empowering local actors, especially marginalized groups, and promoting transparency in fund allocation and school activities.

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## 15.2 Policy Insights

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**Centralized Guidelines vs. Local Autonomy:** Despite SLIP's decentralized vision, the centralized operational guidelines reduce local autonomy and discourage innovation. Schools are often bound by rigid templates and budget ceilings, leaving little room for contextual adaptation. For SLIP to live up to its decentralization ideals, policy frameworks must be more flexible, allowing schools to customize plans and experiment with innovative solutions tailored to local needs.

**Inadequate Integration with Broader Educational Goals:** SLIP activities are often disconnected from broader national educational priorities, such as foundational literacy, ICT integration, and inclusive education. Integrating SLIP with national goals and providing schools with guiding indicators could help ensure that school-level plans are more aligned with national education priorities. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks should evolve to measure outcomes like learning improvement and inclusivity, rather than merely focusing on fund utilization.

**Institutional Ambiguity and Role Clarity:** The roles and responsibilities of different institutional tiers—school, upazila, district, and national—are often unclear and fragmented, leading to inefficiency. Upazila Education Offices are overburdened with administrative tasks and lack the resources to provide proactive support. Clarifying institutional roles and enhancing inter-tier coordination would improve SLIP's effectiveness.

**Sustainability and Scaling Challenges:** Although some schools have demonstrated innovative practices through SLIP, such as community-supported libraries or girl-friendly sanitation, these practices remain isolated. A system to document, disseminate, and scale these innovations is necessary to maximize the impact of SLIP. Additionally, the flat-rate

funding model does not account for the diverse needs of schools, limiting the effectiveness of SLIP interventions. Adaptive resourcing and performance-driven funding could address this issue.

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## 15.3 Aspirational Issues

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***Empowerment and Motivation of School-Level Actors:*** While the promise of increased autonomy under SLIP initially motivated school actors, sustaining this enthusiasm has proven difficult. The lack of regular capacity-building programs and the bureaucratic nature of the system have reduced intrinsic motivation among stakeholders. There is a need for ongoing mentoring and performance-linked incentives to keep school leaders and community members engaged and motivated.

***Vision for Decentralized School Governance:*** SLIP aims to foster a participatory school governance model driven by local communities, but in practice, decision-making remains top-down. Empowering local stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups, and ensuring their meaningful involvement in school governance can strengthen community ownership and improve educational outcomes.

***Space for Local Innovation:*** While some innovative practices have emerged in isolated instances, the lack of institutional mechanisms to capture and scale these innovations limits SLIP's potential as a platform for continuous improvement. Creating a structured approach to document and share best practices can enable schools to learn from each other and foster innovation across the system.

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## 15.4 Effectiveness Assessment Issues

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***Lack of Systematic Monitoring and Feedback Loops:*** Current monitoring efforts under SLIP focus primarily on financial compliance rather than assessing the effectiveness of implemented activities. A more robust, outcome-oriented monitoring framework is needed to measure the impact of SLIP initiatives on student learning and community engagement.

***Disconnect Between SLIP and School Performance Data:*** SLIP planning is not integrated with performance data such as student attendance or learning outcomes. Integrating performance data into SLIP planning would help schools make evidence-based decisions and target interventions where they are most needed.

***Inadequate Use of Evidence in Planning:*** SLIP plans often lack a data-driven approach, relying on anecdotal evidence rather than conducting thorough needs assessments. Schools need support in using data to prioritize interventions and allocate resources effectively. Providing training in data literacy would empower school leaders to make informed decisions.

***Evaluation of SLIP Effectiveness:*** Rigorous evaluations of SLIP's effectiveness are lacking. Comprehensive evaluations employing both quantitative and qualitative methods can provide valuable insights into what works and why. Sharing these findings with stakeholders will foster transparency and inform future improvements.

# 16. Recommendations

Improving the effectiveness of the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach that aligns with broader goals of educational equity, innovation, and local empowerment. Enhancing financial management, deepening accountability, strengthening governance, and fostering school-level innovation are key pillars to ensure that SLIP fulfills its transformative potential.

## 16.1 Enhancing Financial Effectiveness

To strengthen the financial efficacy of SLIP, a shift from flat or uniform funding to a needs-based budgeting approach is essential. This involves conducting school-level diagnostics to identify context-specific priorities and challenges—such as student population size, infrastructural deficits, or local socio-economic conditions—before allocating funds. A dynamic allocation mechanism can ensure that resources are distributed equitably and efficiently, directly responding to the needs on the ground.

Periodic financial reviews and audits, ideally conducted in collaboration with community stakeholders, can improve transparency and allow mid-course corrections to ensure optimal resource utilization. Furthermore, recalibrating SLIP fund sizes using per-learner costing models can bring consistency and fairness in budget planning. Schools with higher enrollment and greater needs should receive proportionately higher funds to close resource gaps and support inclusive growth.

Also, **community contributions** should be **separately accounted for** to reduce total VAT amount.

***A particularly urgent low hanging reform fruit to consider is to do away with the reimbursable principle in schools incurring SLIP expenditures and introduce some form of advance payment.***

## 16.2 Reinforcing Accountability

Accountability within SLIP implementation must evolve beyond basic compliance with guidelines to a results-driven framework focused on tangible educational outcomes. School performance under SLIP should be measured using key indicators such as student learning gains, attendance rates, teacher performance, and gender and equity metrics. These outcome-based measures will incentivize more meaningful engagement with SLIP goals and discourage superficial implementation.

Global evidence supports this direction. For instance, Colombia's experience with School Improvement Plans (SIPs) shows that schools which prioritized teacher training and community involvement in their planning and implementation processes achieved better

academic outcomes (Ramírez & Hurtado, 2019). This underscores the value of combining local ownership with capacity-building efforts to generate real change in educational quality.

To support this transition, digital tools such as mobile-based applications, real-time dashboards, and school-level data systems can enable timely monitoring of SLIP activities. Participatory audits, involving parents, community members, and students, can further enhance transparency and trust in how funds are being used and whether planned activities are being executed effectively.

Furthermore, the suspicion and misunderstanding created among the stakeholders regarding VAT deduction should be clarified to the stakeholders during the SLIP planning phase.

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## 16.3 Strengthening Governance and Autonomy

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Robust school-level governance is fundamental to SLIP success. The roles of School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and School Approval Committees (SACs) must be revitalized through systemic reform. This includes establishing clear, transparent, and non-partisan processes for member selection, which can restore legitimacy and reduce political interference in school affairs.

Regular, tiered capacity-building programs and refresher training are essential to equip committee members with the knowledge and skills required to effectively plan, manage, and oversee SLIP implementation. Additionally, institutional autonomy must be enhanced by granting schools and their governance bodies greater authority over planning, procurement, and staffing decisions—within a clearly defined framework of accountability and oversight.

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## 16.4 Improving Infrastructure and Learning Environments

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Inadequate school infrastructure continues to be a major barrier to learning and inclusion, particularly for girls and children with disabilities. To address this, SLIP should be supported by a dedicated infrastructure fund targeted at basic but critical improvements such as classroom renovations, boundary walls, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, and gender-sensitive spaces.

SLIP implementation should also mobilize local resources by tapping into alumni networks, local businesses, NGOs, and community-based organizations. Their contributions—financial or in-kind—can supplement government funds and support long-term maintenance and upgrades. Schools should be encouraged to develop small-scale infrastructure development plans that reflect the voices and needs of their communities.

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## 16.5 Advancing Student Engagement and Innovation

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To make learning more engaging and student-centered, SLIP must prioritize activities that encourage student participation, creativity, and innovation. Schools can use SLIP funds to organize student clubs, science fairs, debates, cultural events, and ICT-based learning programs that not only foster curiosity and critical thinking but also improve academic outcomes.

The recruitment of para-teachers or community-based educators can help reduce the student-teacher ratio, particularly in overcrowded classrooms or underserved areas. SLIP should support student-led learning projects, such as peer tutoring, school gardens, or community service initiatives, which empower students and build a sense of ownership and responsibility toward their school environment.

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## 16.6 Preparing for Future Disruptions

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The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for education systems to be resilient and responsive to emergencies. SLIP should therefore integrate emergency preparedness protocols into its planning framework. These might include contingency plans for school closures, distribution of learning materials during disruptions, and development of remote learning capabilities using radio, television, or mobile platforms.

Schools should build partnerships with local disaster management groups, health departments, and civil society organizations to ensure a coordinated response during crises. Capacity-building programs for teachers and community members on emergency response planning should be institutionalized within the SLIP training modules.

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## 16.7 Additional specific recommendations under various general themes

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### 1. Rationale for a Needs-Based Budget Model

The study recommends a differentiated SLIP allocation framework that takes into account:

- School size and student enrolment
- Geographic hardship or accessibility
- Poverty levels and community contributions
- Urgency of infrastructure and instructional needs

This model aligns with global best practices in school financing, which favor contextual and needs-responsive funding over flat or uniform allocations.

**Suggested Budget Range Based on Study Findings**

While the study does not provide a fixed budget model, it does offer comparative and qualitative data that support the formulation of a proposed funding range. Based on the triangulated field evidence and SLIP utilization data, the following graduated funding scale is recommended.

**All the schools will receive BDT 50,000 irrespective of the number of students in the school, and for each learner, BDT 500 budget will be allotted.**

An indicative guideline is shown in the table below (Table 18). The proposed percentages can be changed according to the specific needs of a particular school.

**Table 18: Proposed SLIP Budget Allocation by Component and Managing Authority for Lowest SLAB**

Component Details	Amount (BDT)	% of Total
<b>A. School-Level Budget -</b>		
Summative Assessment 3 terms × 50 students × 25 BDT (printing Q&A sheets)	5,625	7.5
Formative Assessment Survey tools, gap tracking, taking remedial and re-evaluation measures to ensure learning	10,500	14
Student Diaries (150 total) 3 subjects × 50 students × 50 BDT	11,250	15
Teaching Aids & Learning Materials Development (5,000 BDT) + Stationery, tools (6,000 BDT)	15,000	20
Cleanliness & Hygiene Soap, Cleaning Tools, Bins, etc.	7,500	10
Community Engagement & Governance Admission Campaign, mother assemblies, SLIP/SMC/PTA meetings	9,750	13
Minor Repairs & Contingency Small-scale Repairs, Maintenance of Equipment, Miscellaneous	7,125	9.5
Sub-total - School-Managed Budget	<b>66,750</b>	<b>89</b>

Component Details	Amount (BDT)	% of Total
<b>B. Cluster Office-Held Budget</b>		
Best 3 Teachers per Sub-cluster (1,000-1,500 × 3) Performance-based memento for top-performing teachers (Math, Bangla, English)	1,500	2
Grade 1 Admission Incentive Based on improved enrollment rate	2,250	3
Grade 5 Completion Incentive Based on final year student retention and completion	2,250	3
Support for CWD/Remote Area Children Inclusion support for char/haor/hilly area students	2,250	3
Subtotal - Cluster-Managed Budget (To be disbursed post- evaluation)	<b>8,250</b>	<b>11</b>
Total	<b>75,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

*N.B.1 – The above budget has been prepared for schools falling in the minimum slab. If this proposal is approved, then the budget for the rest of the slabs will be increased proportionately. If the examination expenses are borne by the guardian, then this budget will be transferred to procurement for other need-based purposes.*

*N.B.2 – There will be a provision of at least 20% matching fund for community contribution.*

## 2. Improve Analytical Clarity of SLIP's Effectiveness

### *Generic Recommendation:*

Distinguish between what aspects of SLIP are working well and what areas require change.

### *Specific Recommendations:*

- Develop a standardized effectiveness matrix for SLIP projects that includes performance indicators like student attendance, learning outcomes, and community involvement to assess what works.
- Conduct comparative case studies between high-performing and low-performing schools to document specific factors behind effective SLIP implementation.

### **3. Enhance Community Participation Beyond Financial Contribution**

#### *Generic Recommendation:*

Expand focus beyond financial input to understand community motivation and engagement.

#### *Specific Recommendations:*

- a) Introduce recognition mechanisms (e.g., “Best Community Participation Award”) at the upazila level to incentivize active involvement in SLIP.
- b) Conduct participatory workshops with School Management Committees (SMCs), guardians, and community leaders to co-design SLIP projects, thereby increasing ownership and motivation.
- c) The previous practice of parents’ contributing for the examinations should be reinstated in order to ensure their active interest and awareness in children’s learning outcomes.

### **4. Identify and Promote Good Practices and Scalable Models**

#### *Generic Recommendation:*

Include analysis of successful SLIP models for replication.

#### *Specific Recommendations:*

- a) Create a “SLIP Success Stories” compendium and distribute it to all schools and education offices for peer learning.
- b) Establish a pilot program to replicate successful SLIP initiatives in underperforming schools with similar contexts, backed by technical support and mentoring.







# 1. KII Stakeholders

## **MOPME**

Mosa. Nurjahan Khatun, Additional Secretary, Development

Md. Matiur Rahaman JS, MoPME

## **DPE**

- i) Abu Noor Md. Shamsuzzaman, DG, DPE
- ii) Mohammad Atiqur Rahaman, ADG, PEDP4
- iii) Md. Mizanul Haq, Director, Planning and Development (P&D)
- iv) Md. Mizanul Haq, Director Finance
- v) Md. Luthfur Rahman, Director (IMD)
- vi) Shahinur Shaheen Khan, Director, Admin
- vii) MD. Emamul Islam, Director (C.C) (Training)
- viii) Md. Mahbubur Rahman Billah, Director (C.C) (Monitoring and Evaluation)
- ix) Md. Forhad Alam DD PED4
- x) Md. Rakib Uddin, DD Planning Division
- xi) Mohammad Ali Reza, Divisional Deputy Director, Primary Education, Dhaka Division
- xii) Md. Abdul Aziz, District Primary Education Officer, Dhaka
- xiii) Md. Ershad Uddin Ahmed, AD, Planning Division
- xiv) Md. Ziaul Haque Sikder, Education Officer SLIP Cell and Focal Point
- xv) Niranjan Kumar Roy, District Primary Education Officer, Dhaka
- xvi) 5 Upazila Primary Education Officers
- xvii) 5 Members, SLIP committee

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### 3. Research design and methodology

#### i. Conceptual framework

Figure 1 describes the conceptual framework which guided the research design:

**Figure A1: Conceptual Framework**

2-way flow of reporting, communication and decision making	Hierarchy of decision-making process	Critical questions to be considered
	Policy domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a policy?</li> <li>• Is it effective? How is the planning of SLIP done?</li> <li>• Are the guidelines too rigid or too flexible? Are there norms for SLIP distribution? Are they fair?</li> <li>• Are they followed?</li> <li>• Is the processing of SLIP at DPE smooth and robust?</li> </ul>
	Institutional set up from DPE to Upazila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who does what and is it working?</li> <li>• Is it serving its purpose?</li> <li>• (Will contain a short process of mapping of SLIP)</li> </ul>
	School level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are schools empowered enough? Have headteachers and others been trained on SLIP implementation?</li> <li>• Is there a robust monitoring and accountability mechanism?</li> <li>• Do school receive the funds on time?</li> <li>• Does the guideline allow schools to have choices?</li> <li>• Is there any strong social audit? On average, how much of the funding is used for school facility improvement and how much on other learning activities?</li> <li>• Do the stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, and the community) understand and duly participate in the planning and implementation process?</li> </ul>

## ii. Research coverage

Three objectives were in consideration to establish the research coverage for the study:

- ensure a national scope
- ensure capture of key diversity concerns – geographic spread, rural-urban, hard-to-reach areas, school size, and
- ensure an effective mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

To address the above objectives, a multi-level stratified purposive sampling approach was adopted to establish the research coverage of the Effectiveness Study as described in Matrix A1:

### **Matrix A1: Division, district, upazila and school-wise distribution of sample coverage**

Step	Procedure	Coverage
Step 1	To ensure national scope of the Study, all 8 divisions of the country are selected	8 Divisions
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From each of the 5 larger divisions – Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur, 3 districts each</li> <li>• From the remaining smaller divisions of Sylhet, Mymensingh and Barishal, 2 districts each</li> </ul>	21 districts
Step 3	2 upazilas each per selected districts ensuring diversity concerns	42 upazilas
Step 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 schools each in 26 selected upazilas</li> <li>• 3 schools each in remaining 16 upazilas</li> <li>• Choice of schools will take into consideration diversity of schools in terms of SLIP slabs</li> </ul>	100 schools

Matrix A2 describes the stakeholder categories included in the research coverage:

### **Matrix A2: Stakeholder categories**

Level	Stakeholder category
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head teacher</li> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• SMC Chair</li> <li>• SMC Member</li> <li>• PTA Guardian member</li> <li>• SAC</li> <li>• Student (Class 4 &amp; 5)</li> <li>• Parents of students from each class</li> </ul>

Level	Stakeholder category
Upazila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upazila Primary Education Officer</li> <li>• Assistant Upazila Primary Education Officer</li> <li>• Upazila Accounts Officer</li> <li>• URC Instructor</li> <li>• UNO</li> <li>• Upazila Education Committee</li> </ul>
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Primary Education officer</li> <li>• ADPEO</li> <li>• District Accounts Officer</li> </ul>
DPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DG</li> <li>• ADG – PEDP4</li> <li>• Director, Planning &amp; Development</li> <li>• Director, Policy &amp; Operations</li> <li>• Director, Finance</li> <li>• Director, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</li> <li>• Director, IMD/ Sr. System Analysis</li> <li>• SLIP cell, Planning &amp; Development Division</li> </ul>
Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary, MOPME</li> <li>• Additional Secretary (Development)</li> <li>• Any other relevant representation from MOPME</li> </ul>
Development Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key DPs active in Primary Education Subsector reform (e.g. World Bank, ADB, EU, JICA, UNESCO, FCDO)</li> <li>• CAMPE</li> </ul>

### iii. Methodology matrix

Matrix 3 describes the tools used, the levels at which particular tool were used, the stakeholder categories/focus of the tools and the respective coverage. The development of the tools, in particular for FGD, KII and KAP survey conducted through an in-depth consultation and design process.

**Matrix A3: Tools and stakeholders' coverage at various levels**

Tool	Level	Stakeholder/Focus	Coverage
<b>Documents review</b>	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLIP allocation and expenditure documents</li> <li>• SLIP Committee meeting minutes</li> <li>• SAC Committee documents</li> </ul>	100 schools
	DPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLIP related all relevant operational documents, including organogram and/ or JD of SLIP cell of DPE Planning &amp; Development Division, School Management Committees (SMC), Social Audit Committees (SAC), Parent-Teacher Association</li> <li>• Previous study reports done on SLIP</li> <li>• Lessons, if any, on school improvement plans and decentralised planning processes</li> </ul>	DPE
<b>Institutional diagnostics</b>	Ministry- Upazila- School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLIP implementation process mapping</li> </ul>	
	Upazila- School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and implementation architecture mapping</li> </ul>	
	DPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inception workshop</li> <li>• Results Sharing workshop</li> </ul>	
	Upazila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Teachers consultations at upazila level</li> </ul>	8 (8x30=240 participants)
	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-stakeholder workshop – stakeholders chosen as per SLIP guideline (15)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 school-level workshops – 1 in each district</li> <li>• Choice of schools for the workshops will take into consideration SLIP slabs</li> <li>• Total participants: 21x15=315</li> </ul>

Tool	Level	Stakeholder/Focus	Coverage
<b>FGD</b>	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMC (overseeing both SLIP Plan Development and SLIP implementation) (11 members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 schools</li> <li>Total 50 FGDs with (50x11=550 participants)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAC Committee (5 members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 schools</li> <li>Total 25 FGDs with 25x5=125 participants</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PTA (11 members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 schools</li> <li>Total 25 FGDs (25x11=275)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students (classes (4 &amp; 5))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 schools, 1 in each district taking into consideration diversity issues (8 students in each FGD)</li> <li>21 FGDs (21x8=192)</li> </ul>
<b>KAP Survey</b>	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demand-side stakeholders i.e. parents (12 per school, 2 from each grade including pre-primary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 schools</li> <li>Total parents covered 100x12=1152</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply-side stakeholders: 6 (Head Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Female teacher, SMC Chair, PTA Chair. Donor member)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 schools</li> <li>Total covered: 100x6=600</li> </ul>
<b>KIIs</b>	MOPME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secretary</li> <li>Additional Secretary (Development)</li> </ul>	2
	DPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DG</li> <li>ADG, PEDP4</li> <li>Dy Director, PED4</li> <li>Director, Planning &amp; Dev</li> <li>Director, Finance</li> <li>Director, Training</li> <li>Director, Policy &amp; Ops</li> <li>Director, Monitoring</li> <li>Director, IMD</li> <li>DD, SLIP Implementation, Planning &amp; Development Division</li> <li>Education Officer, SLIP Cell</li> <li>DD, Dhaka Division</li> <li>DPEO, Dhaka</li> </ul>	12
	Policy level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External experts</li> </ul>	5
	Field level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UEO, AUEO</li> </ul>	8

#### **iv. Coverage Summary**

Matrix A4 provides a summary of the final coverage achieved across all data collection tools used in the study.

**Matrix A4: Final coverage summary**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Institutional consultations	31	555
FGD	112	1142
KAP Survey – Parents		1200
KAP Survey – School management		600
KIIs		29
<i>Total</i>		<b>3526</b>

## **4. Revised SLIP Guideline**

The Effectiveness Study is intended to inform the revision of current SLIP Guideline. The methodological process to arrive at the Revised SLIP Guideline is described in the matrix below:

**Matrix A5: Methodological process to arrive at the Revised SLIP Guideline**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1	Dissemination Workshop of Effectiveness Study Report
2	Road-map for revision of SLIP Guideline
3	Draft Revised Guideline
4	District-level Validation Workshops on Draft Guideline with representation from district, upazila and school levels
5	Draft Final Revised Guideline
6	Final Review Workshop with DPE and UNICEF
7	Finalization of Revised Guideline and handover

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## 5. Data Collection

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### 5.1 Document review

The study conducted documents review which provided firsthand ideas about how SLIP is being implemented. This formed the base for further analysis.

- **Program Documentation Review:** This phase involved the examination of official program documents, including project proposals, implementation plans, and reports produced by DPE related to SLIP. These documents provided insight into the program's initial design, objectives, intended beneficiaries, and planned activities.
- **Data and Reports Analysis:** The desk review involved analysis of the secondary data collected during the SLIP implementation. This included evaluating progress reports, monitoring and evaluating data, and any other statistical information available.
- **Policy and Guideline Assessment:** The review included an assessment of relevant policies, guidelines, and regulations governing the program.
- **Financial Documentation Examination:** The desk review involved the scrutiny of financial records, SLIP budget allocations, and expenditure reports to assess the program's financial management and utilization of resources.
- **Comparative Analysis:** A comparative analysis was conducted to compare the program's actual achievements with the stated objectives and targets. This enabled in evaluating of the SLIP's effectiveness and identifying any gaps or areas for improvement.
- **Review of External Evaluations:** External evaluations or assessments of the SLIP initiative were reviewed to gain an external perspective on the program's performance.

### 5.2 Digital collection of primary data

Tools were created within the Kobo Toolbox application for Android, accessible at <https://www.kobotoolbox.org/>, utilizing the pre-designed questionnaire. The survey conducted through a modern, smart-device-based data collection tool. The system automatically recorded the geographical coordinates (GPS coordinates) of respondents, ensuring transparency in data collection methods. Additionally, Kobo Toolbox is committed to safeguarding user data and employs industry-standard best practices, both technically and administratively, to prevent unauthorized access to user data. To mitigate data loss risks, the system conducted frequent system and incremental backups, with data stored securely in encrypted form across multiple locations.

### **5.3 Orientating the enumerators on guideline of field plan**

Once the checklists and questionnaires were finalized, a guideline was developed to instruct the enumerators and supervisors on conducting quantitative surveys, Key Informant Interviews (KII), case studies, and physical observations.

### **5.4 Recruitment and Training**

A field research team consisting of 16 enumerators were assembled, chosen for their were experience in gathering data for similar projects, and they were provided with necessary training.

### **5.5 Field Mobilization and Pre-testing**

During the field mobilization process, a thorough timetable specifying dates and times were determined. This schedule was communicated to the local authorities and clients in advance for carrying out the interviews.



