

## **1.0 SRSP Education Programme**

SRSP's education programme is broadly based on service delivery. SRSP has demonstrated a model based on the concept of community based schools for adoption by the provincial government education department. The community schools programme conceptualized in 1996 and started in 1997 under SAP-PDP I for a period of two years to fill in the gaps especially education for girls in selected rural areas of NWFP. Under this programme SRSP, initially in Kohat and Mansehra, established 30 community primary schools in the areas that have either no schools, or where girls have practically no opportunities to get education. After a period of two years further funding materialized in the shape of Learning for Life (LFL), a UK based NGO. The reason for additional funding was that it felt that the impact of education could not be gauged in such a limited period.

The effort is to improve upon the functioning of primary schools in the province by addressing the prevalent shortcomings and inadequacies faced by the state run school system. SRSP education programme has addressed the problem of those children who had very little access or no access to education institutions. It believes that education is the fundamental right of girls and there is a genuine need to educate the communities on child rights with special focus on the importance and value of girls' education.

## **2.0 Three phases of Education programme**

SRSP Education Programme can broadly be categorized in to three major phases:

**Phase I:** Community Based Schools Programme

**Phase II:** Establishing and strengthening relationship with UNICEF

**Phase III:** From Non Formal to Formal Education Programme

The case study is focusing the collaboration between public bodies, community based organization and Sarhad Rural Support Programme so efforts and activities under phase II and III would be discussed in detail.

## **3.0 Establishing/Strengthening relationships UNICEF**

### **a) Early interventions under SRSP/UNICEF All Children in School**

SRSP has been running an interesting project 'All Children in School' with UNICEF for promotion of child education in selected districts (Kohat, Hungu and Haripur) of NWFP. Under the project, it has been working in close collaboration with UNICEF, District Education Department and communities following a three pronged approach:

- i) Mobilizing Parent Teacher Associations in improving the schools and enrolment.
- ii) Investments in training/capacity building of PTAs through DED and bringing in innovations generating critical thinking
- iii) Revival/constitution/Strengthening of District Education Committees to plan, implement and monitor the progress on Quality Education for All.

### **b) Improving development effectiveness**

In 2003, SRSP in partnership with UNICEF in Upper Dir, strengthened its focus on development effectiveness through renewed focus of its project portfolio, creating and strengthening greater partnerships with key stakeholders, applying lessons learned from its initial work with UNICEF and intensifying focus on results.

Under this partnership with financial & technical assistance from UNICEF, the project activities have been initiated in 9 selected union councils of District Upper Dir. These union councils were selected in consultation with District Education Department and District Government. The focus under the partnership is at:

- a) Establishing 27 Community Based Schools focusing girl child in nine selected union councils
- b) Capacity building of Community Based and Government schools' teachers and Parent Teachers Association
- c) improving/rehabilitation of Water Environment & Sanitation (WES) facilities in government girls' primary schools
- d) Constitution of volunteer network forums
- e) Continued support to 21 out of 60 CBS established by Dir-Kohistan Project
- f) Linkages and networking

Social mobilization is the centerpiece of the project strategy for establishing community based schools, though the capacity building and improving/rehabilitation of WES activities is mainly been done with District Education Department directly. Extensive dialogues, in case of CBS, at UC level are carried. To monitor the progress at union council level, Volunteer Network Forum (VNF) comprising Union Nazim/Naib Nazim, community members, Khateeb, government servants, students, media person etc. are formed. Agreement on project terms of partnership is solicited in open community dialogues.

SRSP/UNICEF project characteristics/roles and responsibilities in partnership with district education department and communities in upper dir have been elaborated in the table below:

**Table-01**

Sarhad Rural Support Programmes	District Education Department	Volunteer Network Forum	Parent Teachers Associations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social/Resource Mobilization</li> <li>• Feasibilities of Community Based schools</li> <li>• Provision of play ground facilities (swings, slides, see-saw etc)</li> <li>• Provision of school consumables</li> <li>• Linkages of PTAs/Teachers with District Education Department</li> <li>• Basic Training to CBS teachers</li> <li>• Ensure quality education</li> <li>• Identification/Feasibilities / regular field visits for WES activities</li> <li>• Coordination/linkages with all the relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• Policy advocacy at provincial level.</li> <li>• Sharing &amp; Dissemination of project information at district/UNICEF and provincial level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and nominate teachers for VNF</li> <li>• Verification of CBS schools.</li> <li>• Recruiting CBS teachers</li> <li>• Monitor the CBS activities</li> <li>• Conduct annual exams of CBS</li> <li>• Identify and nominate teachers of primary schools for capacity building</li> <li>• Verify activities of CBS and ensure payments to PTAs.</li> <li>• Active participation in PTAs and VNF meetings.</li> <li>• Identify government girls' schools for WES activities.</li> <li>• Monitor and verify WES activities</li> <li>• Financial allocations of the funds provided by UNICEF.</li> <li>• Deliver trainings for the teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising to promote girls education</li> <li>• Selection of appropriate sites for CBS</li> <li>• Identify schools needs, communicate to relevant departments and help solving it.</li> <li>• Monitor UC progress on EFA</li> <li>• Assist and support SRSP/UNICEF and District Education department to improve quality of education, increase enrollment and decrease drop out.</li> <li>• Mobilize PTAs and communities to enroll out of school children.</li> <li>• Regular follow up on decisions taken in VNF meetings</li> <li>• Fund raising for CBS for its sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring minimum of 50 students in CBS</li> <li>• Enroll out of school children</li> <li>• Provision of appropriate teaching place/one or two room building</li> <li>• Ensure safety of teachers and CBS</li> <li>• Initiation of school develop funds</li> <li>• Ensure quality education, attendance of teachers and students</li> <li>• PTA regular meetings and record keeping</li> <li>• Liaison with District Education department to solve CBS problems</li> <li>• Raise 20% share for initiating WES activities</li> <li>• Take strategic steps for CBS sustainability after with drawl of projects</li> <li>• Monitor the financial matters of CBS</li> </ul>

### **Box-01 SRSP Education Strategy: A strategic shift**

SRSP strategic focus in education took a vital turn, when it decided to expand from non formal education to formal education as well in March, 2003. To do so, it developed a model taking in to account the macro performance of the prevalent education system. The model tries to explain why many parents prefer their children to work rather than getting proper organized skills. Such skills could be availed by getting professional education enabling them to secure well paid jobs and tapping various opportunities.

SRSP, relating their experience with the wider education paradigm, has taken major initiatives attempting in exploring and developing linkages between the two systems-formal and non formal education systems. The focus here is at contributing in addressing the two major problems i.e. access for children to schooling and performance of present education system. Addressing these two major issues is the first step towards the goal of quality education for all.

The strategy underpins the following broader areas:

- a) Linkages between the existing community's based schools of SRSP and Government schools.
- b) Development of School development plans in schools improvement and activities aiming at improving quality of education.
- c) Facilitation in District level education development planning.
- d) Registration of COs as Citizen Community Boards and filling in the planning, organizational and implementation gaps.
- e) Channelizing micro-credit towards promotion of education.

These strategic parameter works on micro level with individuals and organized communities as it focuses to work with district government level to develop macro level plans

#### **4.0 Expanding the education base from “Non Formal to Formal Education”**

The new education strategy devotes considerable effort to clarify the outcomes that SRSP supports to achieve education aims. The new strategy as explained in Box 1 sets out few priority areas: continuous efforts to improve the teaching & learning processes and including the excluded through its CBS programme, filling in the planning/organizational and implementation gaps through formation of CCBs and facilitation in district level education development planning through development & implementation of District Education Plans.

SRSP education strategy underscores the growing realization that the entities involved in education have a wide range of comparative advantages and strengths such as: strong presence on ground, good local knowledge and cultural understanding, special expertise, the political power to bring about the change and the capacity to mobilize the resources including finance. The implications for SRSP are two fold. First, it is continuing its CBS programme by understanding, nurturing and applying its own areas of comparative advantage carefully. Second and more importantly, SRSP education work/programme has started devoting even more attention, time and weight to partnerships with District Education Departments and international organizations like UNICEF, than it did during its initial phase. It has recognized that government coordinated efforts are most likely to deliver sustainable reform.

#### **5.0 Partnerships with District Government Upper Dir in District Education Plan**

##### ***a) Partnerships can improve service delivery***

Across the country a number of innovative approaches and efforts are underway to form productive Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to improve the status of education in the country. In this case, PPP focuses on new ways to expand and improve the capacity of district education department, schools, community, teachers and the district government to meet the needs of children and their families.

##### ***b) Post Devolution scenario creating an opportunity***

After devolution, rapidly changing political and economic forces created an environment in which many public and private sector organization/institutions discovered a strong mutual interest in exploring new ways to form and sustain partnerships. It has been proved that such partnerships can effectively bring together a wide range of contributors, including district governments, civil society organizations, service providers and communities to expand and improve a variety of support and services for children, besides contributing in achieving the goals and targets in EFA by 2015.

Education up to the higher secondary level has been devolved to the district level, which is a radical shift from the previous arrangements. Earlier, it was centralized at the provincial headquarters. ***Capitalizing on the opportunity to partner with district government in district level education development planning, SRSP in March 2003 submitted a project to Education Sector Reforms Assistance, USAID. The idea was to ensure involvement of major actors to work closely together i.e. district government/education department, civil society organization and local stakeholders with the support of bilateral development agencies, to ensure the country objectives for education are met and to build public and educator understanding of the need for educational change.***

**Box-02 ESRA Programme, USAID**  
 The Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) programme is a \$60 million initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in support of the Government of Pakistan's Education Sector Reform (ESR) effort. The main focus of the programme include; policy and planning, professional development, literacy, public-community partnerships, public-private partnerships, information and communication technologies  
 ESRA was designed around the government of Pakistan's Devolution Plan, which seeks to increase accountability and devolve authority to local governments. In particular, ESRA calls for decentralization of the education sector, with provincial and district-level governance structures and nongovernmental organization (NGO) and private sector entities doing much of what the central government has done for years. It also calls for establishment of public-private and public-community partnerships.

The project focuses on establishing and sustaining district based mechanism for ensuring quality education for all children with a special focus on girls through improving access, higher teacher performance, develop linkages amongst the key stakeholders and direct support for continuing education. The project is supported by Education Sector Reforms Assistance, ESRA for a period of two years (2003-2005).

**6.0 Education Profile of District Upper Dir**

In district Upper Dir there are 656 (3 non functional) boys and 223 primary girls school. The enrollment in these schools is 77,427 of which 60,455 in boys schools and 16,972 in girls school. The total number of teachers is 2126 comprising 1594 are in boys school and 532 in girls schools. In the district 62 middle, 35 high while 6 higher secondary schools. Total enrollment in middle school is 5133, 8109 in high schools while 3102 in higher secondary schools. Teacher serving in middle schools are 445, 496 in high schools and 179 in higher secondary schools.

The literacy ratio in upper dir has increased from 4.1% in 1981 to 21.2% in 1998. ***The literacy ratio, in rural areas, for boys is 35.1% as against 5.4% for girl child.*** These ratios are significantly higher in urban areas of District Dir i.e. 58.6% and 22.6% for boys and girls respectively. There are 149,175 out of school children of age 5-16 in Upper Dir. Some of them never had access to education and others dropped out before completing their primary education. In addition, more than 50% children in the eligible age group are Out of School children & denied educational opportunities are major concerns of the stakeholders (SRSP baseline survey). The details are given in table below:

**Table 02**

Parameters	Boys (Nos.)	Girls (Nos.)	Total (Nos.)
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>125,019</b>	<b>114,826</b>	<b>239,845</b>
<i>i) Children enrolled (5-16 age group)</i>	<i>72,313</i>	<i>18,357</i>	<i>90,669</i>
<i>ii) Out of school children(5-16 age group)</i>	<i>52,706</i>	<i>96,469</i>	<i>149,175</i>
Teachers in Government Primary Schools	1,594	532	2,126
Parent Teachers Association	655	215	870

Source: EMIS, District Education Department

**7.0 District Education Plan**

**a) District Education Plan**

District Education Plan is an effective and workable tool for the equitable and timely extension of resources to pursue the Education for All with in the district in collaboration with different stakeholders. The salient features of DEP are explained in the figure 01:

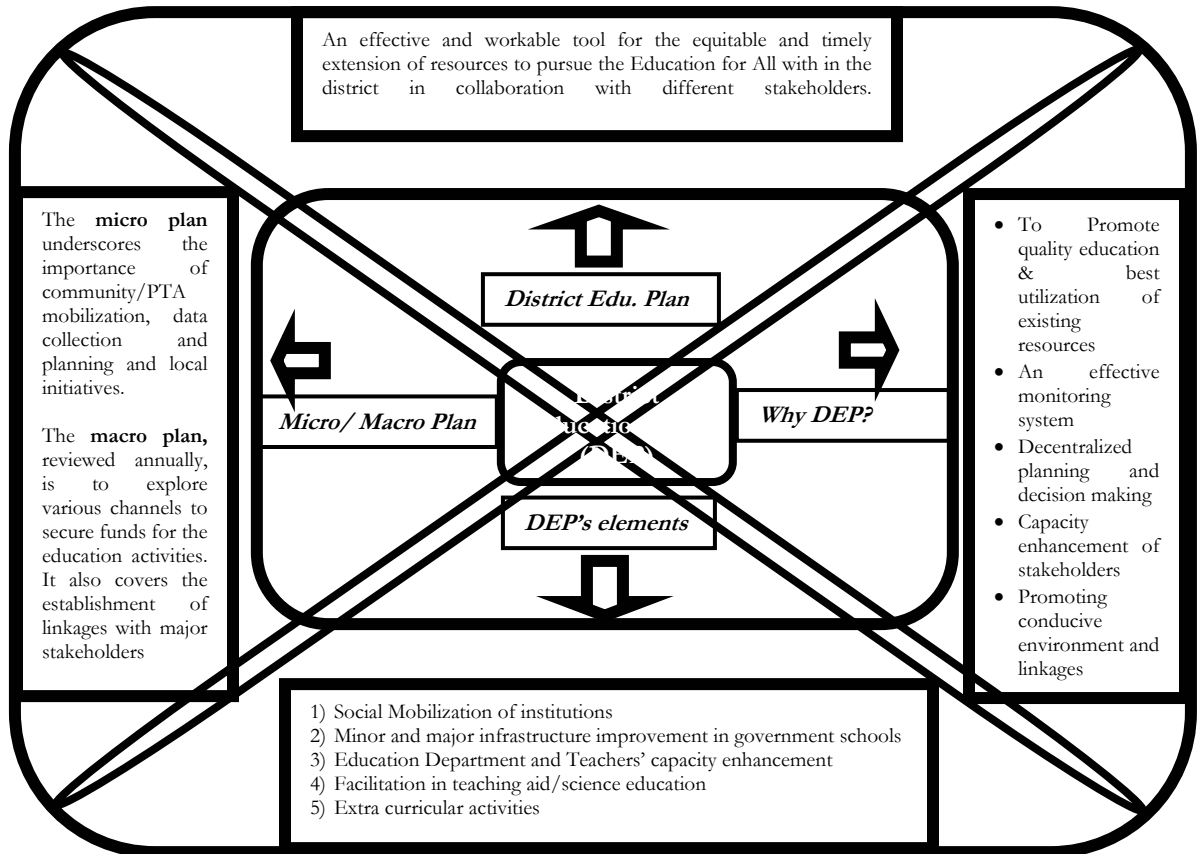


Figure-01, District Education Plan

**b) District Education Plan project in Upper Dir**

The Project Goal is “ to develop quality education system in District Dir” with an objective to ensure that the state education system is made viable at the district level through public private partnership and community participation and in coordination with interventions specifically directed to improve enrolment, retention and completion of primary education. The project, as envisaged, would be benefiting about 70,000 out of school children by bringing them in to schools and will address the issues of enrolled students approximately 90,000.

**c) Project Scope and activities**

The Project has been designed in the socio-political development context of the area, and it is based on strategies most of which have been tested in the field by SRSP. The project takes advantage of government policy initiatives in education, and emerging decentralized structures under District Devolution Plan by strengthening and promoting inter institutional linkages besides working towards sustainability of all components.

**d) Project at a glance**

1. The project activities were initially started in three union councils initially named Chukiatan, Dir and Qulandi. The union councils were identified jointly by District Government and Education Department.
2. Extensive meetings have been carried out with all major stakeholders in this religiously charged district to clarify the main objectives of the project.

3. The project was expanded to five more union councils i.e. Dislawar, Kotkai, Wari, Bibiawar and Ganori. SRSP, in these union councils, has selected Primary schools (boys & girls).
4. Social Mobilization is the centerpiece of the project strategy.
5. The communities and the Parents Teachers Associations (men and women) and forum (EFA) have been mobilized.
6. SRSP through the communities/PTAs have carried out situation analysis in selected schools.
7. School development plans covering the qualitative and quantitative aspects have also been developed with active participation of community members/PTAs and teachers. Up-gradation/rehabilitation of basic facilities along with provision of WES facilities have been identified as one of the major needs as a result of these surveys.
8. Through the EFA forums, SRSP has been able to develop an effective channel with in and outside education department for monitoring & follow up support.
9. A number of training events have been arranged for District Education Department personnel, primary school teachers and master trainers, which have a visible impact on learning.
10. The Adult literacy Centers have been established in the districts with an objective of imparting basic literacy and skills. SRSP on pilot basis has established 10 ALCs. The teachers hired for these centers have been identified with UC Nazims and trained. So far the skills enhancement training has not been initiated, nonetheless, the response has been good as the local shopkeepers, masons etc. are actively participating in these centers.
11. Steps have been taken to upgrade the Local Teachers Resource Centers (LTRCs). These LTRCs provide in service trainings to local teachers through master trainers.
12. Under the project a number of steps have also been taken to review and improve the existing Education Management System (EMIS) for timely information and decision making and proper resource allocation.

## **8.0 Responding to the Challenge**

A number of meetings have been carried out amongst the key project partners; District Education Department, District Government, community members and SRSP setting out few priority areas for action.

- 1. Improved access to education with a particular focus on reaching the poor and marginalized, especially girls.*
- 2. Devising a mechanism for optimum utilization of available resources efficiently and effectively through better planning & management and improved linkages.*
- 3. Building institutional capacity of district education department/district government that is critical to sustainable development.*

Agreements/Memorandum of Understanding have been signed to address the issues mentioned above and as per the agreement, the funds allocated by the Federal/Provincial Governments under Education Sector Reforms and special grants for the financial year 2003-05 for District upper Dir will be utilized for the implementation of District Education Plan. These funds will be utilized to undertake field surveys, Social mobilization for school development plan and proposals, small infrastructure projects, maintenance and provision of furniture & fixture during this period.

The table below defines the roles and responsibilities agreed upon between SRSP and District Government and between SRSP and District Education Department:

### Agreement between District Government & SRSP

#### District Government

#### Sarhad Rural Support Programme

**a) District Government is providing in the following tasks:**

- i) Surveys to identify the schools sites for undertaking development projects
- ii) Reorganization/mobilization of PTAs and strengthening them to actively participate in the programme
- iii) Facilitating communities in designing school development plans, developing proposals and prioritizing them
- iv) Supervision and monitoring of infrastructure projects and implementation of school development plans the programme(SDPs)
- v) Capacity building of education and literacy department

**b) Equal involvement of all the stakeholders in implementation & monitoring the implementation of programme.**

**c) District Government Upper Dir responsible for all the expenditure related to infrastructure development and capacity building. The financing of the programme would be done through SAP/KAP/ADP funds, whereas the development schemes to be implemented under the president's programme for optimum utilization of existing in government primary and middle schools.**

SRSP to provide support to district government in the following:

- a) Social mobilization to organize communities and PTAs
- b) Field surveys to verify list of prioritized schools for development work.
- c) Facilitation and supervision of development work in prioritized schools
- d) Capacity building of District Education Department
- e) SRSP responsible to submit progress reports on Programme activities to district government.

For improvement of government schools education system, District Government Upper Dir and SRSP are collaborating in the following:

### Memorandum of Understanding (for improvement of government schools)

<i>DCO/District Government and EDO (S &amp; L)</i>	<b>Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)</b>
2) SRSP would be facilitated collection of information on education at District level.	1) SRSP would provide support in Developing DEP
3) District support to SRSP in starting/supporting District EMIS cell.	2) SRSP support in developing district EMIS reporting system
4) DED will coordinate with SRSP in its development work and activities in government schools.	3) SRSP assistance in developing plans for rehabilitation of schools
5) District government and Education Department will provide information to SRSP regarding developing District Education Plan.	4) SRSPs support in developing ADPs and in subsequent development work
6) Identify, nominate teachers/master trainers for capacity building events arranged by SRSP.	5) SRSP will identify teachers to be trained by LTRCs
	6) SRSP would work closely with DED and keep them informed about the educational activities in the district.

To strengthen and support the Adult Literacy Centers, SRSP has also signed an agreement with National Institute of Research and Education with following roles and responsibilities:

**Memorandum of Understanding  
(for adult literacy centers)**

<b>Memorandum of Understanding</b>	
<i>National Institute of Research &amp; Education</i>	<b>Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)</b>
1) NIRE for successful implementation of the project, will supply Jugnoo Sabaq books	1) SRSP will identify the target areas for ALCs.
2) NIRE will train teachers, trainers and supervisors	2) SRSP will identify supervisor, teachers and trainers to be trained.
3) NIRE will carry out baseline assessment	3) SRSP will identify learners in the target area.
4) NIRE will monitor the progress	4) SRSP will set up Literacy centers
5) Submit reports to SRSP	5) SRSP will appoint a single point of contact
	6) SRSP will manage funds to be used in Literacy Project and logistical support

**9.0 Moving Forward: What SRSP has done under the DEP Project**

Much progress has been made, so that girls and boys in district Upper Dir are far much better off in terms of education than they were several decades ago. With limited resources, the DEP project under SRSP has been:

**a) Building political commitment**

Political commitment improves projects' chances for success and sustainability. At present, the project operates in a conducive environment and the needed support of District Nazim, District Coordination Officer and District Education Department is ensured. The commitment can simply be assessed by the actions of the District government. From identification of the union councils to MOUs/agreements to promptly notifying the PTAs and EFA forums and the capacity building events etc are all indicative of the magnitude with which the district government has been involved at various levels.

**b) Building partnerships and defining roles & responsibilities**

Effective development requires partnership among different levels of government, the private sector, donor group(s) and civil society. The more this rich array of partners can work together, the better the results will be and the faster education will improve. SRSP through DEP Project has been able to effectively engage all the partners for common objective. The partners involved have different comparative advantages and strengths such as SRSP having an extended outreach, good local knowledge and capacity to mobilize resources or education department with a mandate and expertise etc. The roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined for each partner, which exhibits pooling together different capabilities and creatively sharing comparative advantages of different partners.

**c) Creating new guidelines for education development-DEP implementation mechanism**

Refining the methodologies with an enhanced role of all the stakeholders, following will be the implementation mechanism, once finalized, for District Education Plan:

*Step 1-* Memorandum of understanding/agreements between District Government & SRSP for DEP preparation.

*Step 2-* EDO (S & L) to be assisted by SRSP in developing DEP in consultation with District Government.

*Step 3-* SRSP to mobilize PTAs/Communities (men and women) and raise 20% for minor infrastructure.

*Step 4-* PTAs to be trained by SRSP to develop School Development & Village Education Plans.

- Step 5-** PTA/Communities to be trained by SRSP to develop proposals and documentation on minimum standards.
- Step 6-** Schools for improvement to be identified by PTAs/SRSP and District Education Department.
- Step 7-** District Government approves proposals and deposits its share in to PTAs account.
- Step 8-** Schools for major infrastructure to be identified by District Education Department, SRSP and PTAs.
- Step 9-** Major infrastructure to be accomplished as per standard Government procedures and PTA to monitor the work.
- Step 10-** DCO to provide Policy guidelines and to review DEP
- Step 11-** Resource allocation to District Education Department by District Government
- Step 12-** Village Education Development Plan by Union Nazim/PTAs/communities
- Step 13-** Review of DEP with Major stakeholders
- Step 14-** Preparation of DEP draft in consultation with District Nazim
- Step 15-** District Government/DCO/District Education Department to review DEP
- Step 16-** DEP approval and macro monitoring by District Nazim/DCO and District Education Department.

***d) Improving the quality of Education Programs and services***

SRSP experience in education sector reflects that low enrollment and low retention rates are reflection of poor supply in terms of low quality of education offered. Parents do not consider it worthwhile to send their children to schools if they are not learning anything. Children’s time is considered better used in chores at home or assisting parents in income earning activities. Since the opportunity cost of education is high, the quality of education has to be high, in order to convince the parents of the value of sending children to schools.

Under the partnership, the teachers’ are viewed as crucial determinants for improving the quality of education programs and services and what is being learnt in their classes. The focus has been on teachers’ capacity building, considering teachers’ interests in implementing reforms, developing new programs and their involvement in school development plans. These steps have contributed to an enhanced commitment for improvement thereby improving the quality of services and impacts on learning.

***e) Good governance & Management***

The project has been able to foster regular interaction and ensure inclusion and representation of all the key stakeholders-district government, education department and community members. This broad based participation has improved the overall performance of education endeavors in the district, besides emphasizing upon accountability, integrity and transparency of stakeholders action. Reforms have also been observed in various parts of education sectors; for instance professionalizing teachers training using innovative approaches, making secondary and tertiary institutions (EFA forums/PTAs) more responsive, autonomous, more accountable and decentralizing school management to local level etc.

***f) Involving active civil society to improve the public service***

The top down, technocratic approach, as evident from education profile of district Upper Dir has not been able to produce the desired results especially in primary education. The engagement and involvement of civil society, using the participatory approach, has and will impact on improving the provision of adequate financial resources through district education department, transparency in utilization of resources allocated, teachers’ absenteeism, transfers and appointments etc.

***g) Strengthen institutions and policies***

The project has significant role in contributing ideas about development transformations and finance to support. Nevertheless, extending support in help improving the service delivery through by strengthening institutions and policies has to be viewed as one of the prominent contribution. This has been done at three levels:

- 1. Strengthening District Education Department-**through a) conducting trainings for education department personnel, b) strengthening EMIS cell, c) teachers/master trainers, and d) help improving planning & management/systems
- 2. Revitalizing and strengthening the EFA forums-** at district, tehsils and union level to provide policy guidelines in light of federal/provincial EFA wings for promotion of education. The networks are also means of developing communication & coordination channels for timely information,

monitoring and follow up support. The networks at three levels, through efforts of SRSP, have been constituted by the District Government and are meeting regularly to review the progress at respective levels.

**3. Strengthening/Activation of PTAs and communities** – through the social mobilization component of the project, PTAs (men and women) have been constituted/notified by the district education department and reactivated by SRSP. Their roles and responsibilities have been clarified through extensive capacity building events. These PTAs have been involved in School Development Plans covering development & infrastructure aspects. The members of PTAs have assumed an active role in improving enrolment and retention rates, bringing in *Out of School* children, teachers absenteeism and infrastructure needs of the schools.

**h) Advocacy and communication**

Realizing the fact that the acceptance of programme and its quality depends largely on appropriateness and relevance of messages delivered for getting support of the partners/stakeholders and influence public policy, emphasis has been given to develop a communication and advocacy strategy and integrate it as an essential component of the DEP. Keeping the scale in view, there is currently little effort in the district to advocate better education or communicate education message of vital importance to masses. The strategy developed, at this stage, defines a framework, which identified the prominent issues which can be advocated for and on which communication would prove effective. The strategy identifies, for SRSP, the areas necessary to tackle by engaging all the partners to ensure a common frame of reference for understanding the problems in delivering quality education for all and how to deal with it.

**i) Decentralized planning management and community ownership**

Although the government has a major role to play in education, governments can not do every thing. Realizing the fact, the project management has taken steps to ensure community participation context in which the project strategies focusing decentralized planning & management and community ownership can flourish. Through *EFA forums at UC level and PTAs*, community members have been involved fully in identifying problems and needs and finding solutions for it. Two pronged approach is followed to generate the interest of communities at village and union council level.

*Village level*-Unlike the previous system with head teacher being the responsible authority, the PTAs have been given more autonomy in school developing plans vis-à-vis resources required. The PTA members in this new system have been delegated authorities to identify development and infrastructure needs, besides delegation of financial powers for funds utilization. Active local participation in governance and activities of schools, with a sense of shared ownership of their affairs has been proving vital in school success.

*Union Council level*-quarterly EFA forum meeting are arranged to discuss, review and examine the factors important in ensuring the effective implementation of primary education programme at union council level. The outcomes are shared with other forums and with stakeholders for identification of possible solutions and resource commitment.

The emerging PTAs/EFA forums institutions whose capabilities are growing will make decentralization of management to communities more feasible. Arguably, the more communities

**PTA Bakaray**

**Box-03**

The Government Primary School, Bakaray was established in 1979 with two rooms. In 1994, an additional room was constructed. Currently, a total of 217 children are enrolled with only three rooms. To accommodate the children, the PTA decided to construct an additional room. The PTA had a fund of Rs 5,250, where as the cost estimate for room was Rs. 31,000. The PTA and community members contributed Rs. 13,750 in kind (masonry work/labor). Through advocacy, PTA was able to get the zinc sheet from the education department for the roof. The PTA members were committed to arrange Rs. 12,000 to provide children with adequate facilities & a comfortable environment.

**PTA Kas Kalay**

The members of PTA Kas Kalay through awareness have been able to enroll 90 Out of School children raising the total enrolled form 200 to 290. Using the PTA funds and community contribution, the PTA constructed, on make shift basis, a room to accommodate the children.

**Enrolment in schools**

The three union councils where project activities have been initiated, initially, has observed an average increase of 20 students per school

become involved in management of the problems related to education, the greater is the likelihood of success.

**j) Cost Effectiveness**

Local monitoring & supervision through PTAs, Local Councilors and EFA forums is cost effective and less expensive because of the proximity to the point of provision and better interaction with local communities easing up pressure on the inspection staff with the education department. One Assistant District Officer (inspection) in Upper Dir has to monitor 200 schools in his circle without any support mechanism from education department.

**k) Innovations**

**Increasing local participation-** Lack of manpower with education department coupled with weak structures in dealing with daily administrative tasks and taking effective actions against teachers who do not perform well are contributing in poor service delivery. The concept of participatory organization has been introduced for the first time in education sector in Upper Dir. Interestingly, these organizations have helped in identifying and implementing services that are demand induced and not supply driven. Their involvement has improved the quality, reduces the cost of delivery and enhanced sustainability. The extensive trainings have built the community's capacity that now frequently focuses on monitoring teachers' performance, ensuring school supplies and other qualitative aspects.

**School Development Plans-** Currently, education department circulates proformas to collect quantitative information on monthly basis which is then consolidated yearly in to district Education Management Information System (EMIS) without validation. The resource allocation by the provincial government is mostly based on this information. The project has engaged PTAs effectively in developing school plans. Apart from quantitative information, the overarching objective of quality education, setting yearly targets, developmental and infrastructural needs and extra curricular activities are important components of this plan.

**PTAs Training-**A comprehensive PTA Training Manual has been developed, in extensive consultation with education department, covering the needs of the recipients. The new manuals designed are covering the very important aspects of quality education, child rights, women rights in Islam, school development plans, behavioral change etc. Trainings to men and women PTAs have been imparted based on this new manual. The trainings have given new dimensions to PTAs changing their roles from receivers of training to change agents. The focus has now shifted from just record keeping to ownership of the programme and linking up the school goal with macro education goal, besides phasing, timing, sequencing, implementing and monitoring education development efforts at micro-level.

**Teachers' Education-** The approach of mechanically conducted teachers training programmes with content knowledge, mostly supply driven, has slightly been challenged by the project. The aim is to educate and not train the teachers. The factors impeding the effectiveness of teachers' education programme has been considered while designing these sessions in consultation with district education department and master trainers. Proper/detailed Training Needs Assessment (TNAs) was carried out to ensure teachers involvement at preliminary stage. Apart from catering to the needs identified in TNAs, discussions on women & child rights, quality education, effective planning & management have been integral part of the teachers' education programme with an aim to enhance their critical thinking, innovations and devising mechanisms for reforms/improvement in their respective schools, specifically, and society in general. Unlike the temporary project approach, the sustainability of the teachers' education has been kept in mind. Their role (head teachers, ADOs and master trainers) from being a participant in the initial rounds was transformed to educators at intermediate stages to keep the momentum even when project's technical or financial support is withdrawn.

**Students' role-**students have most crucial and too often under appreciated & under supported roles, extending beyond just being consumer of schooling. Competition in

amongst the schools, poster competitions, interactive theatres etc. have contribution to children's cognitive, social & cultural development.

**Local Teacher Resource Centers-** Unlike the conventional Local Teachers Resource Centers, the project has also planned to strengthen these centers through diffusion of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT). The DEP project is also focusing on building the capacity of Assistant District Officers/master trainers in ICT applications and promoting ICT for knowledge management and intermediation between LTRCs and development support agencies, other sources of knowledge and new technologies. These steps would help reduce the information & communication gap and improving relations with external agencies, besides enhancing the capacity of local teachers with availability of latest updates on education.

**Citizen community Boards (CCBs)-** under the devolution programme, the process of formation of CCBs have also been triggered enabling access to the allocated development funds. The project has facilitated formation of CCBs of PTAs. These CCBs have been allocated Pak Rs. 90,000 from district government funds. The project, still to be initiated, is for electrification of schools.

#### **10.0 Sustainability & Replicability**

Successfully convening or establishing partnerships is a complex and challenging task and all partners must play significant roles for the partnership to succeed. Though the project period is for only two years (2003-2005) and with limited finances, SRSP has facilitated all the entities to encourage, create and possibly sustain partnership. The partnership in Upper Dir is based on clear goals, is broad based and has included key stakeholders (District Nazim, District Coordination Officer, District Education Department and Communities) from the beginning. It has established clear governance structure that defines partners' roles and responsibilities to avoid organizational duplication. The partnership has enabled the partners to benefit by drawing on their strengths/comparative advantages and contributions.

On programmatic side i.e. developing and implementation of DEP, SRSP has developed effective strategies to maintain the momentum and sustain the activities undertaken. Though the scale is quite small i.e. concentrating DEP activities initially in three and now in eight union councils and at primary school level, yet SRSP has been:

- a) able to identify the partners who have interests in improving the education services. The benefits of the partnership, when approaching the potential partners, has been clarified at an initial stage through extensive dialogues and meetings.
- b) able to engaged the District Nazim, District Coordination Officer, District Education Department, Teachers and community members meaningfully. Though the steps taken may appears small, but all the partners have been assigned significant roles, such as creating new guidelines for education development by developing DEP and influencing policy, partners have contributed valuably with a sense of accomplishment that energies spent and time invested has been worthwhile.
- c) able to disseminate/share information, through education forums, on practices/success stories to other union councils. It has contributed in inspiring members from other union councils to adopt new ideas and approaches introduced by the project.. This, in turn, would also help in maintaining the momentum and sustain activities even when the financial and technical assistance is with drawn, but that too depends on the level of commitment at all levels.
- d) able to demonstrate positive results through the partnership. Through the efforts of the project by effectively engaging PTAs, a visible increase of almost 20 children per school has been observed.

District Education Plan is a new concept in NWFP and can simply be termed as ‘forward-thinking’ tool bringing innovation in education planning and management by engaging meaningfully all the partners. It has taken the planning from ‘approximation to precision’, however responsibility lies with district government/education department to settle funds based on the budgeting in DEP and EFA plans.

### **13.0 Key Lessons learned**

- a) Working together through strategic partnerships can upgrade the quality of education and improve service delivery.
- b) Institution strengthening; sustained development should be rooted in processes that are responsive to the challenges.
- c) Decentralizing education management to parents teachers association and communities can ease-up the pressure on resource constrained education department.
- d) Improving the education planning & management & management information system can contribute in optimum utilization of available resources.
- e) Professionalizing the teachers force through innovations in trainings and involvement in school development plans etc. can enhance teachers’ motivation and commitment.
- f) Active local participation in the governance & activities of schools, with a sense of ownership can contribute to schools success.