



Bangladesh

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Rasheda K. Choudhury has been appointed, on 9th January 2008 as the Adviser for Ministry of Primary & Mass Education, Ministry of Woman & Children Affairs and Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Care Taker Government, People's Republic of Bangladesh. She served as: Director (CEO) of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), a network of more than a thousand NGOs working in the basic education sub sector in Bangladesh; Member, Governing Body, Social Development Foundation (SDF), Bangladesh; Part time Member, National Pay Commission 2004; Member Secretary and Coordinator of EFUCATION WATCH, a civil society initiative that regularly reviews the status of basic and primary education in Bangladesh and suggests pragmatic guidelines for improvement; Member of the Steering Committee, National Committee on Beijing Plus Ten (NCBP), a civil society coalition of more than 600 women's organizations and civil society groups; Board Member, Global Campaign for Education (GCE), a global network of NGOs and Teachers' Unions operating in more than hundred countries; Convener, People's Forum on MDGs (PFM), a coalition of NGO networks, professional associations, teachers unions and youth groups working on MDG issues in Bangladesh; Focal Point for South Asia for the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), a world wide movement of people, institutions, trade unions and activist working on the goal of poverty eradication; Vice Chair, Federation of NGO's in Bangladesh (FNB), the apex body of more than a thousand NGO's operation in the country; Director (CEO), Associating of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB); Secretary General, Women for Women: A Research and Study Group, Bangladesh.

Inclusive Education for Sustainable Development

I am pleased to learn that UNESCO is going to organize an international conference on education focusing on Inclusive Education. The issue of inclusive education is high on the global agenda. Addressing inclusive education requires a multidimensional perspective and involves social and economic barriers, school – community relationship, curriculum perspective and assessment tools, teaching approaches, classroom environment and school management. The Government of Bangladesh appreciates that the socially excluded groups need attention if progress is to be made in realizing the EFA goals.

Bangladesh has undertaken various measures with regard to EFA indicators on access and gender equity. As a result, about 16 million children have enrolled in over 81000 primary schools, and the net primary enrolment rate has increased from 80% in 2003 to 91% in 2007. The Stipend Programme and the School Feeding Programme for the poor children has also been achieved. Despite all the progress achieved to date, about 1.2 million children are nominal pro-poor policies. They are also affected by other forms of social exclusion, e.g. remote locations, language or disability. They are also at the risk of dropout as well as learning and benefiting less from education. Challenges are there to find ways and means to include all the segments of the people into the education system.

Inclusive education must be flexible to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults including the vulnerable and the marginalized. The Government of Bangladesh has been implementing the Second Primary Education Development Programme II (PEDP II), on the basis of sector-wide approach



(SWAP). The main objective of PEDP II is to improve the quality of primary education and to address the issue of inclusive education. Under the “Inclusive Education Framework”, separate action plans have been developed through extensive consultations to address the issues related to gender, the tribal children, the disadvantaged population and the vulnerable groups. A Baseline Survey conducted under PEDP II provides critical information on the current situation in the country. A comprehensive non-formal education policy of the Bangladesh Government has recognized the importance of non-formal education in meeting the learning needs of all disadvantaged children, youth and adults, including the vulnerable and the marginalized.

A newsletter and/or e-bulletin on inclusive education may be published on monthly or quarterly basis to share experiences of UNESCO member countries. A concerted effort is needed to raise awareness on reaching the unreached, attaining the goal of more inclusive societies.