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Whole School Development Initiative in Yemeni Basic Education: Lessons Learned from JICA Girls' Education Project

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1 . Introduction

1.1 Background

The Republic of Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world. With a per capita GNI of US \$ 550 , it has a population of 20 3 million(World Bank , 2004) . Its annual population growth of 3 .1 percent has weakened the impact of economic growth and social development. The 2004 Human Development Index (HDI) ranks Yemen as 151st out of 177 countries(UNDP ,2004) ,which implies that education and health standards are lacking in the country in comparison to other countries. In the education sector, achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015ⁱ is one of the most important national targets in Yemen. In 2002 , the Government of Yemen established the Basic Education Development Strategy (BEDS) , which aims to achieve 95 percent net enrollment rate in the basic education sub-sector by 2015 . The total gross enrollment rate at the basic level (Grade 1 - 9) is 69 percent in 2004; however, the rate for girls is only 53 percent(World Bank , 2005) . Girls' completion rate at the primary level(grade 6)is only 33 percent compared to boys' at 68 percent (Ogawa , 2004) .

Yemen is one of the EFA: FTI (Education for All: Fast Track Initiative) countries selected by the World Bank and other international donor agencies after the G 8 Kananaskis Summit held in June , 2002 . Due to this initiative, the Government of Yemen has also set FTI goals which include 100 percent of the grade 6 completion rate by 2015 .Since Yemen has participated in the EFA: FTI, with the receipt of the FTI Catalytic Fund and other bilateral/multilateral donors' increased support, including Germany, Japan, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, UNICEF, World Bank, and World

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Food Program, the Government of Yemen has been accelerating the implementation of BEDS to promote more efficient use of existing education resources, expand access to education for all especially among girls, and improve the government's implementation capacity related to educational policies and services. These reform processes involve various stakeholders in the sector, including educational officials both at the central and local levels as well as teachers and communities.

1.2 Problem Statement

Basic Education Development Strategy (BEDS) has been implemented under a framework of decentralization of educational operations and services from the Ministry of Education (MOE) to the governorate-level education offices, district education offices, each individual school and community. Decentralization of government services in Yemen was enacted in 2001 when the first local council election was successfully held. However, there is still insufficient authority delegated from the central to the local level as well as insufficient capacity at the governorate, district and schools levels to tackle school-level educational issues.

To achieve the goals of BEDS under the pressures of rapid demographic growth and an increased demand for improved education quality, the Government of Yemen has to improve utilization of education resources and increase its efficiency at all levels of the stakeholders from the central level to governorate, district, school, and community levels. For that purpose, capacity building, especially at the local government levels and school management are urgent issues in Yemen. In May 2006 during the Government/Donor Agencies' Joint Annual Review Meeting, the Ministry of Education introduced its Mid-term Results Framework (MTRF), which proposed a concrete mid-term target indicators and detailed action plans to achieve BEDS outcomes for the period between 2006 and 2010. School level management and community participation development have been increasingly emphasized as one of eight primary areas in the BEDSⁱⁱ.

This approach is called Whole School Development (WSD) and is considered by MOE as an effective way to improve school level management and community support. Supported by the Basic Education Development Project (BEDP) and funded by World Bank, DfID, and the Netherlands, MOE is currently trying to introduce the WSD pro-

gram in 600 schools in ten governorates of the Republic of Yemen. WSD is one of the reform approaches developed in Anglo-Saxon countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, to improve education quality by giving schools autonomy to manage themselves in a framework of educational decentralization. Given this situation in the education sector, we wonder to what extent the WSD approach can contribute to improving access and the quality of education sector in Yemen, including educational decentralization at the school level.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the WSD approach to improving access and quality of education in Yemen. For the objective, the study first defines a concept of WSD as applied to developing countries by reviewing previous related studies. With a clear understanding of WSD as it applies to developing countries, the study examines a current project that has been using this approach over the last two years in the Taiz Governorate - Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Broadening Regional Initiatives for Developing Girls' Education (BRIDGE) Project.

The objective of the BRIDGE Project is to improve girls' enrollment at basic education through the building capacity of schools and local educational authorities by providing school-level financing to implement pilot activities, and promote community participation in school activities by awareness raising activities. The project is implemented in six districts within the Taiz Governorate, namely, Maawiyah, Same, Maqbanah, Al Makha, Al Waziyah and Dubab.

Using the BRIDGE Project as a case, this study conducts in-depth analyses of the following aspects. First, the study analyzes the various situations the pilot schools are located in rural and disadvantaged areas in the country. Based on a clear understanding of the reality in rural schools, the study investigates what kinds of institutional mechanisms the BRIDGE Project has at the school level and at each level of government (e.g., steering, coordinating, implementing, supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the project process). The study assesses what kind of achievements the JICA BRIDGE Project could make in terms of students' enrollment, improvement of school environment and quality of education. The study also examines to what extent the BRIDGE Project can

contribute to activate community participation in school. Finally, based on the analyses of the BRIDGE Project, this study provides lessons learned from the Project as one of the WSD initiative implemented in Yemen, and concludes with policy recommendations for expanding a similar approach at the national level.

1.4 Significance of the Study

There is much analysis done on the key elements of successful implementation of school-based management both in developed and developing countries. However, there are no such studies conducted in the case of Yemen. Since the level of decentralization, education system, and educational issues are different from other countries, it is valuable to examine the Yemeni case with the WSD approach education project. This study will be the first attempt to analyze a process of school improvement by using an actual case study in Yemen.

The government of Yemen is about to implement whole school development initiative in the piloted governorates first, eventually to be expanded at the nation-wide level. Findings from this study will have a significant contribution to the government policy implications and planning of concrete implementation activities by providing lessons learned from the JICA BRIDGE Project. The study will also provide recommendations to the government on the roles she should play for the successful implementation of such school-based approach. Ultimately, this could enhance the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, from the central and local government, to the school and community level under educational decentralization.

2 . Defining Whole School Development (WSD)

The concept of whole school development (WSD) is derived from experiences of school improvement in developed countries, known under various names, such as school-based management, school-site management in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. According to Briggs and Wohlstetter (2003), school-based management (SBM) has been popularly adopted for reforms by states and school districts across the United States since the 1960s as a vehicle for improving schools. Up until the late 1980s, SBM was most often adopted and implemented as a stand-alone reform to remedy a variety of ills of the school system. However, as Ful-

lan and Watson (1999) conclude, SBM failed when it was treated as an end in itself. By the late 1980s, SBM efforts entailed much more than a change in governance. The purpose of SBM efforts became to improve student achievement. Since improving student outcomes involves a process of change, SBM has constituted a redesign of the whole school organization.

A similar path of development has also been observed in developing countries. SBM has been popularly implemented throughout the world starting in the early 1990's in Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and then Africa coupled with the trend of decentralization of education. Since the trend reached less developed countries, the emphasis has been increasingly placed on the idea of "whole school" change. According to Akyempong (2004), WSD could be defined as an approach by treating a school as the unit of change, to change the "whole" school's organizational culture and structure and the relationships with the community to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In the existing literature, the clear distinction between SBM and WSD cannot be discerned. Since school-based management itself evolved and emphasizes aspects of the whole school development, this study, therefore, regards the re-conceptualized SBM as the WSD.

Previous studies including Fullan and Watson (1999), Simkins et al (2003), De Grauwe (2005), and Caldwell (2005) discuss the similarities and differences when applying SBM experiences in developed countries and developing countries. The similar points that they mentioned are as follows:

- The role of leadership, which means head teacher, is key to improve the school;
- It is a new teaching and learning methods;
- It is the process of capacity building at school;
- Parents and community play an active role in school management;
- More accountable and transparent system could be introduced; and
- External supporting system to provide trainings and advices to head teacher and teachers is indispensable.

On the other hand, the differences that were pointed out are as follows:

- Schools especially in devastated areas lack basic minimum inputs necessary to function as a school, such as school buildings, classrooms, facilities, teachers and hours of teaching in developing countries;
- Head teachers, who are supposed to be a key actor to lead the change, tend to have less experience, capacity and support in developing countries;
- Capacity and organizational environment to provide external supports at local government tend to be less developed in developing countries;
- Because of limited resources, human resources, such as parents and communities, are of great importance for school support in developing countries; and
- Ensuring equity, it is important to develop a flexible policy reflecting different levels of capacities and experiences of each school and head teacher in developing countries.

The education system and schools in developing countries, especially less developed countries like Yemen, are different from those in developed countries in that the education systems are underdeveloped and lack experience, resources and facilities. WSD approach could not just be planted in these countries. In addition, considering these similarities and differences, it becomes obvious that it is a natural consequence to emphasize the “whole” school development in developing countries. They do not have all the tools, resources, and facilities needed to be function as a school. Therefore, providing support separately for the construction of school infrastructure, training teachers and head teachers, deployment of teachers, delivering textbooks and teaching materials, improving curriculums, and encouraging community participation, could not be effective. A school without management capability would not be able to coordinate these separate elements of support to improve the educational services that the school provides.

In developed countries, WSD mainly focuses only on quality of education. However, as UNESCO (2005) defines it, the success of teaching and learning is likely to be strongly influenced by the resources made available to support the process and the direct ways in which these resources are managed. Therefore, the whole school development approach in developing countries includes the rehabilitation of school buildings and the provision of resources such as textbooks, furniture and stationary as conditions to improve quality of education.

Schools in developing countries are not only lacking in infrastructure, they receive only few capacity-building opportunities. Head teachers, especially in the more remote schools, are often isolated and receive little or no support from the administration. Therefore, for those head teachers in remote schools, school-based management sometimes makes their life harder by increasing the administrative and managerial workload. This could contribute to a widening disparity among schools (De Grauwe , 2005). Community participation in school councils could be double-bladed, it can help to develop an effective school council by bringing local needs and resources and at the same time, bring interpersonal conflict among community members and between the school and the community to the school council (Leithwood and Menzies , 1998). When the majority of the community is illiterate, school management tends to be controlled by local elites who are interested in building up their power. In such a situation, greater inequities within the school community are created, and then the monopolization of power leads to the lack of transparency, especially in the use of school funds. Schools in which the head teacher has no management training, where the teachers have few resources, and the surrounding community is extremely poor with little expertise in education, can hardly be expected to engage in strategic planning and self-evaluation with enthusiasm (De Grauwe , 2005).

WSD is not only an approach for schools and communities to implement school management, but also includes a supporting and monitoring and evaluation system from the local education authorities. However, in many developing countries, educational decentralization is an on-going policy and full allocation of decision-making authority and financial resources are not yet realized. Local educational authorities tend not to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, as they have not received training to adjust themselves to new circumstances. Therefore, sometimes, local educational authorities become obstacles for schools to implement their own management by not supporting but rather controlling schools.

This paper defines the objective of the Yemeni WSD approach as to improve access and quality of basic education in rural public basic education schools through: 1) strengthening capacity of local educational authorities, including district education officers and head teachers; and 2) promoting community participation in schools' decision-making with providing school level financing.

It is a process that takes time since WSD intends to change the culture and ways of thinking in school management. As even the developed countries have been modifying its model, the WSD should also be carefully reviewed considering the prerequisite conditions of each individual country.

3 . Methodologies

In order to investigate the objectives, the study reviews JICA BRIDGE Project documents and conducts interviews to several officers at the Ministry of Education (MOE), Governorate Education Office (GEO) and District Education Office (DEO). Field visits to BRIDGE Project's piloted schools are also conducted to assess the progress of pilot activities and interviews to school committee members and fathers and mothers in the community. More specifically, the study assesses the BRIDGE Project in terms of the following three aspects. First, the study draws a clear picture of BRIDGE Project areas and reveals project characteristics from baseline survey report and observation at the field survey. Then, it identifies the implementation mechanism of BRIDGE Project from two perspectives: 1) school level implementation and; 2) school support system by local educational authorities based on the project's inception report and interviews.

Finally, it examines achievements of the Project for the first 18 months from two perspectives, school pilot activity implementation and community participation based on progress reports and school visits observation.

4 . Results: Assessment of BRIDGE Project

4.1 Situational Analyses of Pilot Districts and Schools

When the BRIDGE Project started in June 2005, girls' enrollment was not only low but the physical conditions of the pilot schools were also very poor. There was only one girls' school included in the pilot school, and only five out of 56 schools could offer a separate building only for girls. Due to shortage of classrooms at schools, about 20 percent of classes were offered outside of the buildings, such as under the trees or in the building shade. With an average of 57 students in one classroom, almost all the schools do not have any facilities other than the classrooms, such as the library and laboratory. Bathrooms were only available at 5 schools among all. The shortage of female teachers was a serious issue. Among the 555 governorate teachers

at all 56 pilot schools, only 28 female teachers are identified. Among 56 schools, only 37.5 percent of schools offer grades 1 to 9 of basic education.

In spite of poor conditioned school infrastructure, it was found that there was strong demand for girls' education among parents. According to the Project's baseline survey, ninety-five percent of parents agreed to both male and female having equal rights for education. Eighty percent of parents disagreed, indicating that it is enough for girls to read and write. Ninety-eight percent of parents agreed with the idea that women's participation in education is necessary to improve education. However, most parents do not know about their children's school and teachers.ⁱⁱⁱ The results indicate that lack of knowledge and understanding about the schools makes parents hesitate when considering sending their daughters to school.

4.2 Implementation Mechanism

In the BRIDGE Project, school committee is a key engine at each pilot school to help encompass both school and community participation in planning, implementing and evaluating school's pilot activities. School committee is composed of 20 members, which includes a head teacher, teachers, representatives of fathers and mothers' council, community leaders, such as a sheikh (tribal leader) and preachers. Each school was encouraged to form the school committee to represent diversified members from the community. The chairperson of the school committee plays a central role at the school to agree on a contract with JICA regarding the school's pilot activities, to supervise the whole implementation process of the pilot activities, including accountability of funding. In most of the pilot schools, the chairpersons are head teachers of the schools. In some exceptional cases with inexperienced and weak head teachers, community leaders become the chairperson. Features of the implementation mechanism under the BRIDGE Project are that the school committee is composed by representing both school and community, and that the school committees have strong power over the decision making regarding the use of school grants. Outside of the BRIDGE Project, social workers play a key role to bridge the school and community. Instead of social workers, BRIDGE Project encourages the school head teachers to work closely and directly with the community. In most of the pilot schools, social workers were not originally assigned. Therefore, it was thought to be more effective to set up a place for both

schools and communities to discuss about the school matters together, instead of making another layer (social worker) between the school and community. Since the school committees include representatives from fathers' and mothers' councils, opinions of fathers and mothers could be reflected to the decision at the school committees. Fathers' and mothers' councils are encouraged to have separate meetings to discuss their interests to the school matters and are encouraged to be responsible for implementation of pilot activities.

Each school committee has a treasurer and auditor. These three members, chairperson, treasurer and auditor, are core players and are provided training twice every year on how to prepare proposals (2 days) and financial reports (1 day) on school pilot activities. Based on the schools' proposal, the school grant of a maximum of 500 000 YER^{iv} (US \$ 2 525) per school, is provided to each school. The Project does not impose, but encourages the school to make local contributions. Each school committee opens a bank account to receive and manage the school grant. Each school committee is requested to keep financial records and submit the report at the end of the project year.

District Education Offices(DEOs)are responsible for supporting schools. Since they are the closest to and know the best about their schools, DEOs are requested to visit each school twice a month to monitor progress and provide advice to resolve problems related to implementation of pilot activities. In the project, DEOs are expected to be a mentor to schools. For weak schools, special support programs are developed to help head teachers achieve a single progress to give them confidence. The Project emphasizes that the DEOs' role is not to control and overwhelm schools, but it is to support schools to enable them to improve their schools by themselves. On the other hand, Governorate Education Officer (GEO)'s roles are to guarantee transparency and accountability of the use of school grants, to share the pilot schools' and districts' experiences among other districts in Taiz Governorate. Moreover, GEO are responsible for implementing awareness raising activities in Taiz Governorate.

4.3 Achievements

Since the Project began in June 2005 , it is too early to discuss achievements of the Project as a whole. Therefore, this study only reviews achievements of the first 18

Table 1 : Comparison of School Pilot Activities between Year 1 and Year 2
(%of the funding allocated)

Activities	Year 1	Year 2
Building and maintaining school	38%	19%
Hiring local teachers	36%	53%
Buying school materials	17%	7 %
Organizing extracurricular events	2 %	4 %
Mothers' activities	3 %	14%
Others	4 %	3 %
TOTAL	100%	100%

Source: Progress Report No 2 and No 3 (JICA , 2006a and 2006b)

months. In summary, the Project is so far successful since all the pilot schools could complete the first round of pilot activity implementation with proper and transparent use of the funds, and girls' enrollment has improved.

The Project has already contributed to increasing the number of girls in school in the first year. The total number of female enrolment has increased. In total, female enrollment increased by 1,727 in one year, from 6,095 in 2004 to 7,822 in 2005 . As per the results, the female/male ratio has improved in target schools from 61 / 100 in 2004 to 75 / 100 in 2005 . In the first project year , 227 pilot activities were implemented in 56 pilot schools and currently 256 school activities are implemented in 59 pilot schools. Table 1 displays the composition of pilot activities. Implementing pilot activities contributes to improving the school environment for education by building classrooms, hiring teachers from local community. In Year 1 , eighty-two classrooms were newly added or rehabilitated under the Project, which meets the urgent needs for classrooms. One hundred forty-five teachers (65 females / 80 males) were hired under the Project in Year 1 and 165 teachers(63 females / 102 males)in Year 2 . There are growing demands to hire local teachers at pilot schools.

Implementing pilot activities also helps to activate the community's participation in education. Based on Shaffer's ladder of participation(1994) , the first year of participation is examined as follows:

- 1 . The mere use of a service: There are some activities, such as purchasing the first aid boxes, holding literacy and sewing classes at schools. Mothers participated in these activities.

- 2 .Involvement through the contribution of resources: Both labor and financial contributions were realized through implementation of pilot activities. In the first year, six percent of the total funding spent for the BRIDGE Project activities was mobilized from the community. Construction workers were male members from local families. Since these labors were from the community, which was strongly encouraged by the Project, construction was quickly completed. Women in the community provided food and water for workers at the school.
- 3 .Involvement through attendance and the receipt of information, implying passive acceptance of decision made by others: The BRIDGE Project encouraged meetings to be held at each school committee, and fathers' and mothers' council to discuss the progress and concerns of activity implementation. Even though official discussions were limited to a number of members, educational issues discussed at the meetings were brought up at social events, such as wedding parties and weekends-gatherings, by community people involved at the meetings, including fathers and mothers.
- 4 . Involvement through consultation on a particular issue: In a course of implementing pilot activities, many problems arose. When some conflicts between schools and community occurred, they were solved individually through consultation with the school and community in the presence of a DEO.
- 5 . Participation in the delivery of a service: Community people were actively involved in finding candidates for contract teachers. Male teachers are selected from the educated local community members. Female teachers were identified among their family networks, such as a wife who grew up in the city and got married to a local man. Since teachers were located within the local networks, the people feel they can trust them and are willing to send their daughters to schools, even if the teachers are male.
- 6 .Participation as implementers of delegated authority: Even though the core members of the school committee tend to be run by limited members, such as a head

teacher, community leaders and wealthy men, politically important men, the school committee has for the first time brought the school and community together with the primary motive of improving the school.

5 . Discussion and Conclusion

Since the implementation of the JICA BRIDGE Project began 18 months ago, the Project has achieved significant outputs and has made improvement in the schools involved. Reflecting on the past 18 months, the following five points are identified as lessons learned based on analyses of school achievement and the authors' field experiences.

- 1 *The model of support for individual schools by allocating small grants makes a substantial impact to mobilize and motivate the community and school to work together for improving their schools.*

Establishment of school committee and fathers' and mothers' council at each pilot school helps to create a forum to gather the school and community together for discussions about their own school and children's education. This contributes to shorten the gap between the school and the community. In addition, providing the school grant directly to the schools creates a positive atmosphere showing that they are trusted and valued. This helps to empower the school and the community to resolve their own problems by themselves.

Whenever the BRIDGE Project team visits the school, the school is asked to invite key members of the school committee, such as the treasurer, internal auditor, and head of fathers' and mothers' councils. It is beneficial that the school can share information and can avoid situations where the head teacher dominates all the decision-making by himself. Since the members are selected among the people, it helps to create a democratic system. After continuing the regular monitoring for a year, schools became accustomed to discussing the issues among the members by themselves.

- 2 *Continuous follow up and provision of support from DEOs to schools is indis-*

pensable for schools' successful implementation of pilot activities.

Building trusting relationships between DEOs and the school–community is the largest and most valuable asset brought forward in the first 18 months of the Project. Before the Project started, some DEOs had never visited their district pilot schools. After a year, all the DEOs became fully aware of all the situations and issues in their schools and were able to successfully resolve the issues, taking on a role as mediator. It has been good learning opportunities for the DEOs to develop tailor–made support according to different levels of schools.

The areas in which the JICA Project operates are usually remote and half abandoned, including sites in the middle of the deserts or on mountain tops. In the beginning, people were unable to trust the government and were unsure whether the Project could really benefit them or otherwise. After repeated visits with continuous communication and ongoing support throughout the year, the people started to feel that they could trust what the Project is doing and have faith in the government. Furthermore, schools and communities were not accustomed to managing such a fund. Therefore, support from the DEOs helped them to build more confidence about what they were doing.

3 *Close and rigorous monitoring is essential to hold schools accountable and ensure value for public money.*

JICA–GEO team visits all the pilot schools three times in one project year to approve school proposals and monitor the progress of pilot activities and proper use of the funds. This frequent monitoring makes schools think seriously about the use of the funds. It is also helpful for JICA–GEO team to identify problems before they escalate into a crisis.

4 *Capacity building of the head teachers is essential not only for implementation of the pilot activities, but also for linking pilot activities toward improving quality of education.*

The BRIDGE Project proved to improve access to basic education by increasing number of students' enrolled and improving the school environment. However, one challenge to be addressed by the end of the project period in November 2008 is how the Project can increasingly contribute to improving the quality of education. Pilot activities tend to focus on improving the basic conditions of school infrastructure, such as building classroom and toilets, hiring teachers, and buying goods for school. Schools and the communities tend to be satisfied with buying goods, building facilities, and hiring teachers. They are less interested in how to make use of these new resources to improve the quality of education. To improve the school atmosphere so that students feel comfortable enough to learn and to improve teachers' attitudes and teaching skills requires strong and effective leadership of head teachers. The Project has begun to provide head teachers with training to increase their awareness of their responsibility for school improvement both in access and quality and to provide practical skills to improve school management.

5 *Lack of teachers is the most serious educational issue in rural and disadvantaged schools. A local teacher contracting system is one of the solutions. In addition, contracted local teachers are more efficient than deployed teachers from cities in rural and disadvantaged schools because they are known and trusted by community people and could easily stay in the school community.*

One hundred sixty-five teachers were hired by the BRIDGE Project in Year 2 , showing that there is a huge demand for teachers. Selection criteria for contract teachers are: i) the teacher should complete minimum of 10th grade, ii) the teacher should come from the local community or be familiar with the local community; and iii) if both male and female could be identified, female teachers could be preferable for appointment. Since these teachers were found and selected by the community people, parents were encouraged to send their daughters to the school even though they were male teachers. The most important point is not whether these teachers are male or female, but whether they come from the same community and are familiar to the parents. Even though 63 female teachers is a smaller number than 102 male teachers, this number is remarkably large compared to the number of GEO female

teachers in the same school. The BRIDGE experiences reveal the fact that female teachers could be found from the local community.

Comparing the process of whole school development to driving, we can see that so far the JICA Project has successfully brought a car, a metaphor for school mechanism necessary for the implementation, to each pilot school. The Project has also provided gasoline(school grant)to the car, and put a driver(a head teacher)in the driver's seat. However, what is missing is the road map for the driver. The goal is for the car to arrive at the destination where there is an improvement of "access of good quality".

This study emphasizes the importance of policy coordination among and within different levels of government for the successful implementation of WSD. In Yemen, educational decentralization is still an on-going process. Clear definition of roles and responsibilities at each level of government is not yet determined, and financial decentralization is a process that requires a long time to implement. Due to this, government policy coordination is vital in the WSD approach. For instance, the JICA BRIDGE Project hired nearly 180 contracted teachers from the local communities. The government, such as the MOE, Ministry of Civil Services, and Governorate Education Office, should consider developing a sustainable policy and mechanism to provide training and maintain the hiring of these contracted teachers in order to substitute the official teacher employment policy. Without qualified teachers in the classrooms, it is not possible to provide education in remote areas and as a result, high quality of education could be never achieved. One way that has already started is to hire qualified contract teachers under the government payroll as official teachers. Another way could be to hire the BRIDGE contract teachers under substitute teacher employment system that is funded at the local government level. In either way, the most important point is to keep these contract teachers at the same school that they were originally hired.

Another example is the abolishment of school fees which began in school year 2006 - 2007 for female students from grade 1 to grade 6 and for male students from grade 1 to grade 3 .The goal of this initiative is to attract students from poor families. However, an alternative financial arrangement for the schools has not been implemented. Schools used to keep 30 percent of the school fees for their own activities, but with the abolishment of fees, schools have now lost one of their financial re-

sources. When the JICA project is over, schools will not have enough any financial resources to maintain their activities. The MOE, Ministry of Finance, Governorate Education Office, and Local Councils should coordinate to arrange appropriate financial transfers to the school level and identify alternative resources to continue JICA's efforts after the BRIDGE project ends. Achievements previously discussed have only just emerged. The school and community need to not only accumulate more years of experience until their efforts are rooted into the ground, but also need to receive strong support from the Yemeni government.

Coordination at the GEO is also necessary if the JICA project is to be expanded nationally. The Girls' Education Unit at GEO is responsible for the implementation of the project but the WSD process requires a range of expertise to monitor the progress. It is necessary to include inspectors to monitor the quality of teaching, financial officers to monitor the accountability of school grants, community participation experts to raise the community awareness, and training experts to provide training to teachers and head teachers.

In February of 2007, ten high-level MOE officers conducted study visits to JICA Project sites in Taiz, which was an indication that the MOE is examining the JICA Project with an intention to expand it nationally. It is certainly encouraging to expand the JICA BRIDGE model nationally as it is obvious from this study that the WSD approach used in the project has a significant contribution in achieving access to good quality education. However, WSD does not become a silver bullet simply by introducing it into a model. There are no straightforward solutions to the education situation in Yemen. Even if more responsibilities and resources were introduced at the school levels, strong government support is requisite to making schools fully functional and effective. The WSD approach is a process of learning that requires a great deal of time; as such, patience and continuous support are key to its successful implementation.

Notes

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i EFA in Yemen is 100 percent of completion rate at grade 6 of basic education.

- ii Eight primary areas of education process in the BEDS are: teacher and guidance, curriculum and evaluation, school administration, education funding, decentralization of education, girls' education, school building, and community participation.
- iii Eighty-two percent of the parents don't know whether they respect their children's teacher. Sixty-seven percent of the parents do not know whether they are willing to help the school or not. Eighty-three percent of the parents do not know whether they must cooperate with community to improve education.
- iv Exchange rate as of November 25 , 2006 : 1 USD = 198 YER

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