

# Political Economy Analysis (PEA) of Education in Nepal

Development Partners	DFID, EC, UNICEF, WFP, RNN Louise Banham, EC/DFID Magdalena Wierzbicka, Intern EU Delegation to Nepal
International consultants	Alan Smith, University of Ulster (Team Leader) Tejendra Pherali, Liverpool John Moores University Tony Vaux, Humanitarian Initiatives, UK
National Consultants	Yogendra Bijukche (former School Principal) Shrada Rayamajhi (Search for Common Ground) Biswo Ulak (former DFID Nepal)
Peer Reviewers	Prof Bidya Nath Koirala (Tribhuvan University) Anjana Shakya (Him Rights and gender specialist) Richard Thompson (Private – public schools)

# The Study

- Commissioned by Delegation of EU in Nepal and jointly funded by DFID and EU, with national consultants funded by UNICEF and field studies transport provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RNN).
- Political Economy Analysis (PEA) conducted in three phases (over 3-4 months):
  - Desk review and macro analysis in advance of country visit
  - Kathmandu-based consultations with educational stakeholders including Govt, DPs
  - Fieldwork in 10 districts :
    - *Kathmandu and Dhanusha* (in the eastern Terai),
    - *Sankhuwasabha* (in the eastern hills),
    - *Kapilvastu and Rupandehi* (in the western region),
    - *Banke and Rolpa* (in the mid-western region where the armed conflict originated),
    - *Dadheldura, Doti and Kailali Districts* (in the far west, most remote and impoverished region).
- 27 schools, 50 people in Kathmandu and 225 outside the capital were consulted

# Three Levels of Political Economy Analysis

---

## Level 1

Macro-analysis of historical and political context and to identify the main political economy drivers

## Level 2

Education Sector (structural issues, institutions and actors)

## Level 3

Problem-driven analysis of School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP)

# 1. Macro analysis - based on Strategic Conflict Analysis (DFID)

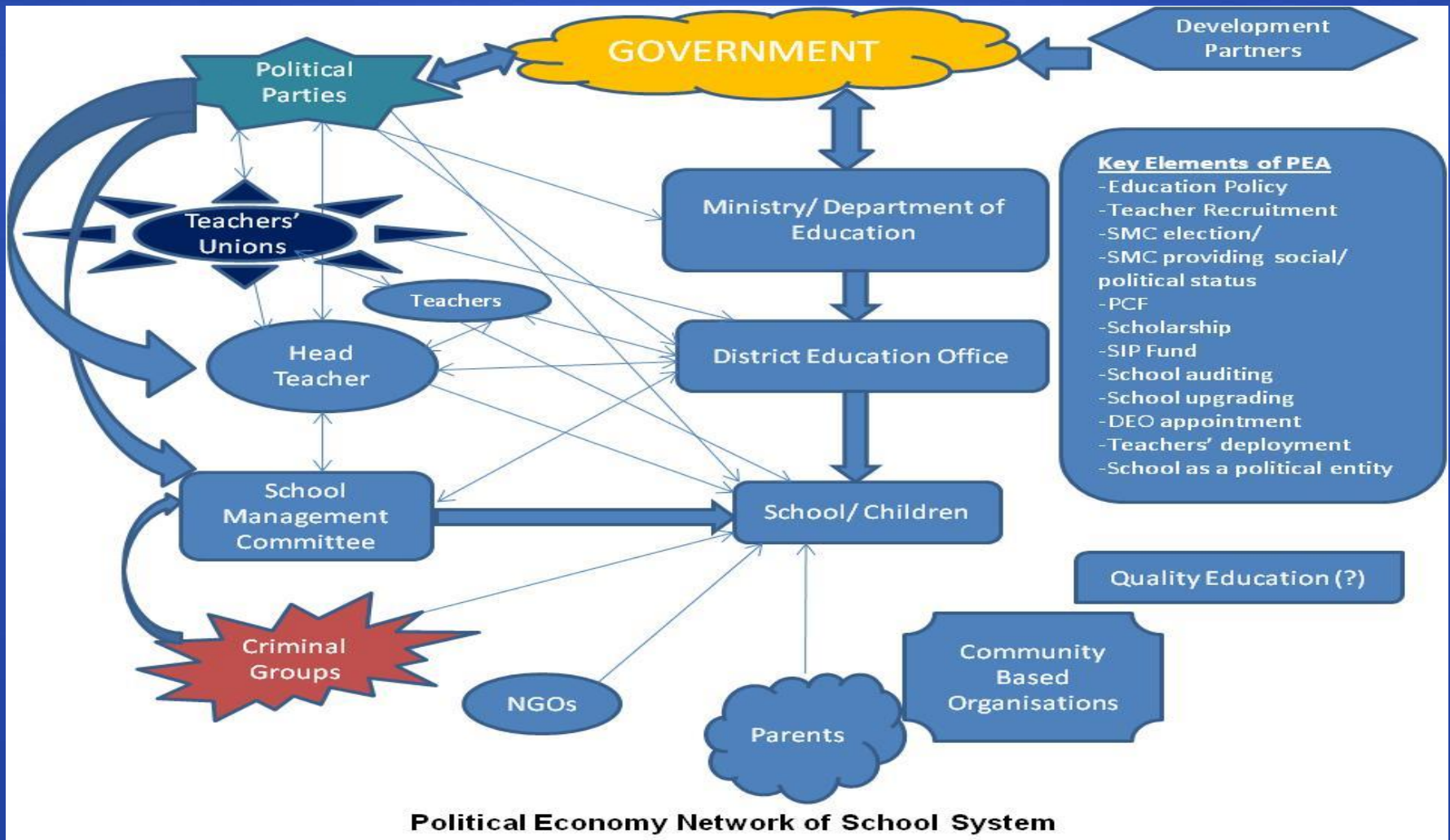
	Security	Political	Economic	Social
<b>International</b>	India/China tension leads to increased security concerns for both neighbouring countries.	<i>India has an interest in weak governance in Nepal Nepal's geopolitical position (sandwiched between two large nations that are becoming stronger political and economic powers in global terms)</i>	<i>Aid challenges coherence in national policies; Overreliance on remittance from foreign employment particularly young men in the Gulf. Economic disparities are perpetuated by INGOs that offer much higher pay than other employers.</i>	Westernisation of social values due to increased involvement of INGOs in local communities. Going abroad for employment or study and social status puts pressures on young people and parents.
<b>National</b>	History of conflict; Continued access to weapons Weak police force and rule of law Culture of impunity in relation to human rights Emergence of armed groups in the Terai and Eastern hills	<b><i>Weak government asserting centralised control; Strong socio-political divisions</i></b> <i>History of rent-seeking by political leaders; Unions linked to political parties make excessive demands; Weak influence of civil society;</i>	<i>Wealth focused in Kathmandu; Policies restricting business; Dominance of business by a few individuals;</i>	Divisions of ethnicity, caste, religion mobilised around federalism and political agendas; Issues of social status now associated with private schools and English medium;
<b>District/Federal</b>	Ethnic armed groups;	<i>Centralised control but promise of federalism;</i>	<i>Remittances from migrants create pockets of wealth outside Kathmandu;</i>	<i>Language issues mobilised around political agendas;</i>
<b>Local</b>	History of conflict; Ongoing political and criminal violence;	Lack of elected representation in VDC and DDC; Reliance on direct action (bandhas etc); Politicisation of community-based organisations (SMCs, Community Forest Users' Groups,	Extortion by armed groups; Unresolved land issues; Corruption in community-based organisations	<i>Social exclusion against dalits, women and other marginalised groups; Shifts in power dynamics and tensions due to women's empowerment</i>

# Macro Analysis

- Geopolitical factors and historical trends lock Nepal into a permanent state of weak governance
- Social structures work against the pro-poor policies
- Politics of ethnicity provide challenges for federalism
- Three main political economy drivers that affect attempts at education reform in Nepal:
  - Centralisation of power, resources and decision-making;
  - Politicisation of service delivery
  - Patronage and economic motivation, often based on political affiliation

## 2. Sector level analysis

Mapping by reference to structural features, institutions and motivations of actors.

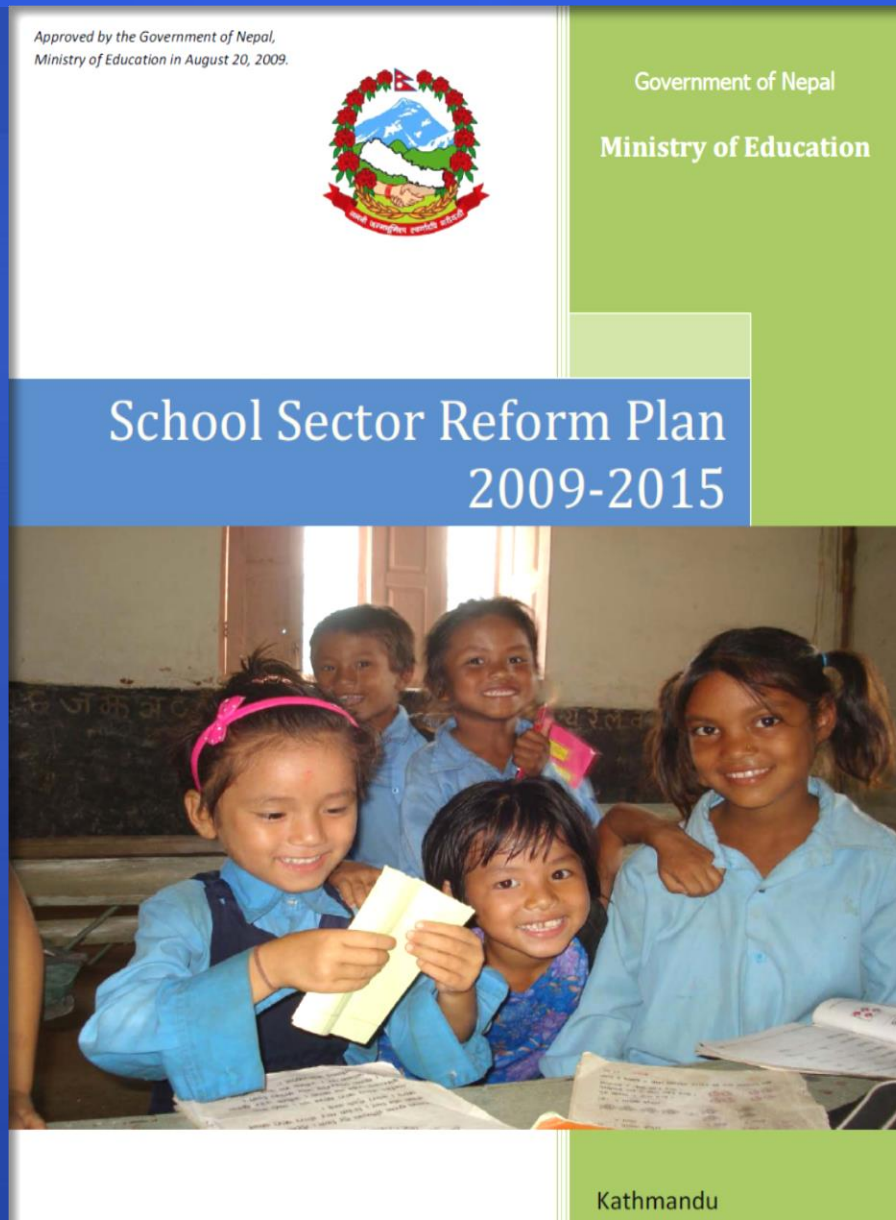




# Sector Analysis

- Politicisation of the education system (e.g. teachers, SMCs, educational officers)
- Teacher recruitment and redeployment problematic
- Corruption in school funds
- Lack of accountability due to political patronage
- Problems with decentralisation policy

### 3. Problem-driven analysis of policy or programme





	<b>School Sector Reform Plan</b>		
	<b>Governance</b> Political influences Decentralisation SMCs Public – private	<b>Identity factors</b> Gender Language Indigenous Bursaries	<b>Teachers</b> Recruitment Training Employment Practices
International <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN institutions</li> <li>• Neighbour countries</li> <li>• DPs (pooling and not)</li> <li>• INGOs</li> </ul>			
National <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political parties</li> <li>• Government of Nepal</li> <li>• Dept Education</li> <li>• Institute Statistics</li> <li>• CDC (curriculum)</li> <li>• Examinations</li> <li>• NCED</li> <li>• Teacher Education</li> <li>• Teacher Unions</li> </ul>			
District, local community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEOs</li> <li>• Private schools</li> <li>• SMCs Public Schools</li> <li>• PTA</li> <li>• Principals</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Children, child clubs</li> <li>• Parents</li> </ul>			

# Decentralisation/ Federalism

- Poor implementation or abuse of decentralisation policy
  - Centrally imposed policy without necessary support for local groups
  - Political patronage based on political affiliation
  - Economic motivations due to poverty – e.g. CSSP
  - Least priority on quality education
- Structural issues - Excessive centralisation remains a key feature of governance, inhibiting local engagement and control
- Confusions about federalism – political control of education, governance of schools and authority over decision-making over employment of teachers, issues about national unity, uncertain transitional politics

# Community Management of Schools

- Politicisation of School Management Committees
  - Absence of local government and SMCs representing political stronghold
  - Support for elections to these bodies based on ideological commitments rather than education policies
  - SMC position provides status and contributes to political career
  - Schools as lucrative place to expand a political power base
  - Management of school funds – both economic interests and gaining social credibility
  - SMCs lack training and generally have no capacity to manage schools
- DEO – at the centre of decentralisation tensions – an ‘educational judiciary’ rather than leading and implementing district educational plan

# Private vrs Public Education

- Private schools –
  - 15.14 % of basic education schools and 33.8 % (one-third) of secondary schools (9 – 12) are under private management.
- Key features – urban-centred, better economic status of parents, social status, perceived as quality education providers, more boys receiving private education than girls
- English medium, unaffected by government education policy, teachers more accountable to the head and the schools more accountable to parents who pay fees

# Education and National Identity

- National identity – a contentious notion
- Ethnic and regional identity overriding national identity
- Educational vision in a new social and political context – e.g. the role of education in peacebuilding, creating national unity
- Lack of clarity and tensions around education in mother tongue – whose agenda (DPs, political parties, indigenous peoples?)
- Danger of further exclusion of marginalised groups- elite groups who subscribe to private schools remain unaffected

# Other problematic issues

- Deployment of permanent teachers is a key issue— job security and very limited prospects of promotion, teachers' unions
- Sense of impunity and lack of accountability to local populations - teacher absenteeism, poor timekeeping and the common practice of teachers having second jobs
- Examinations and Qualifications – different levels –
  - International - Pressures on DPs and government to improve exam results
  - National – increasing +2 and HEIs and access to higher education – citing exam results to the DPs demonstrate rising standards in education
  - Structural – poverty, social need (girls' marriage, qualification as a social status)



# Some final points

- Internationals also political economy actors
  - Drivers of UN multilaterals, bilateral donors and iNGOs
  - Examples of aid distortions
    - EFA focus on enrolment, 'liberal progression' and increase in institutionalised cheating to meet quality goals
    - Priorities for bursaries (girls, dalits, victims of conflict)
    - Donor preoccupation with language issues that benefit elites
- Challenges to the Paris Declaration and DAC Principles re
  - Donor alignment, shared analysis, coordination
  - Ways of working with government, alignment with local policies, state building
  - Doing no harm