Transparency in education

Report Card in Bangladesh

by

Shahnaz Karim

Quality Schools Programme in Mexico

by

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International Institute for Educational Planning

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Presentation of the series

Several studies conducted over the past decade have clearly emphasized the negative impact of corruption on the economic, social and political development of countries, due to the increased transaction costs, the reduction in the efficiency of public services, the distortion of the decision-making process, and the undermining of social values. They have also shown a strong correlation between corruption and poverty: Statistical regressions suggest that an increase in the per capita income of a country by US$4,400 will improve its ranking on the index of corruption (international scale) by two points. Moreover, it has been observed that corruption tends to contribute to the reinforcement of inequities, by placing a disproportionate economic burden on the poor, and limiting their access to public services.

As a consequence, fighting corruption has become a major concern for policy makers and actors involved in development. In view of the decrease in the international flow of aid and the more stringent conditions for the provision of aid – due to growing tensions on public resources within donor countries, and the pressure exerted by tax payers on governments to increase transparency and accountability in resource management – it is regarded today as a major priority on the agenda of countries and of international agencies for development co-operation. The Drafting Committee of the World Education Forum has expressed this concern in the following terms: "Corruption is a major drain on the effective use of resources for education and should be drastically curbed"[1] .

1. UNESCO. 2000. *Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: meeting our collective commitments.* Adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000. Extended commentary on the Dakar Action Plan (par. 46).

A rapid review of the literature shows that a number of attempts have already been made to tackle the issue of corruption both globally and sectorally. In the social sector, for example, several studies have been conducted on corruption in the provision of health care services. However, it appears that the education sector has not been given proper attention by national education authorities and donors, despite the many grounds for attaching a particular priority to the challenge of combating corruption in education:

- No public sector reform aiming at improving governance and limiting corruption phenomena can obtain significant results as long as the case of education has not been properly addressed – given the importance of the education sector, which in most countries, is the first or the second largest public sector both in human and financial terms.
- Any attempts to improve the functioning of the education sector in order to increase access to quality education for all, cannot prove successful if problems of corruption, which have severe implications for both efficiency in the use of resources and for quality of education and school performance, are not being properly dealt with.
- Lack of integrity and unethical behaviour within the education sector is inconsistent with one of the main purposes of education; that is, to produce 'good citizens', respectful of the law, of human rights and fairness (it is also incompatible with any strategy that considers education as one of the principle means of fighting corruption).

In this context, the IIEP launched a new research project within the framework of its Medium-Term Plan for 2002-2007, which deals with 'Ethics and corruption in education'. Corruption is defined as "the systematic use of public office for private benefit that results in a reduction in the quality or availability of public goods and services". The main objective of this project is to improve decision-making and the management of educational systems

by integrating governance and corruption concerns in methodologies of planning and administration of education. More specifically, it seeks to develop methodological approaches for studying and addressing the issue of corruption in education, and collect and share information on the best approaches for promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in the management of educational systems, both in developing and industrialized countries.

The project includes works on topics of relevance such as teacher behaviour, school financing, textbook production and distribution, and academic fraud. It also includes monographs on success stories in improving management and governance, as well as case studies which facilitate the development of methodologies for analyzing transparency and integrity in education management.[2]

Within this framework, the IIEP asked experts to present cases in Bangladesh and Mexico in which the setting up of participatory diagnosis tools and promotion of greater social control in the use of resources improved transparency and accountability in education:

- *Shahnaz Karim* describes the Report Card Survey implemented in Bangladesh, which, through participatory diagnosis, enabled the identification of the gaps and flaws in the country's basic education system, facilitated the location and investigation of corruption, alerting public authorities accordingly and encouraging them to take the necessary measures to improve the situation.
- *Claudia A. Santizo Rodall* and *Enrique Cabrero Mendoza* analyze the implementation of the Quality Schools Programme (QSP) in Mexico, which contributed greatly to improving transparency and accountability

2. An information platform, called ETICO, has also been created within the framework of the project. It is available on the IIEP's web site, at the following address: http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/etico/etico1.html.

as well as to preventing and limiting corrupt practices in the management of educational funds, thanks to the introduction of mechanisms for social participation.

The IIEP is very grateful to the authors for their valuable insights and contributions and would like to thank them accordingly.

Jacques Hallak and Muriel Poisson

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List of abbreviations

Study 1. Report Card in Bangladesh

BDT	Bangladesh *taka*
CCCs	Committees of Concerned Citizens
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIP	National Integrity Programme
PAC	Public Affairs Centre
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
UEO	*Upazilla* education offices
UNO	*Upazilla* Nirbahi Officer

Study 2. Quality Schools Programme in Mexico

CIDE	*Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas*
PETE	*Plan Estratégico de Transformación Escolar*
QSP	Quality Schools Programme

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Study 1
Report Card in Bangladesh – Survey on primary education

Shahnaz Karim is a senior research officer at Transparency International Bangladesh, which was directly involved in the preparation of the Report Card survey in Bangladesh.

Executive summary

Education is fundamental for the socio-economic transformation and advancement of a country. In Bangladesh, the education sector is one of the largest and most important public service providers. However, even though compulsory primary education and mass education programmes have been introduced by the government and enormous amounts of money spent, widespread lack of basic education remains the Achilles' heel of the society and economy of Bangladesh.

A Report Card survey is a simple and flexible approach for organizing public feedback. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) conducted a Report Card survey of the primary education sector in Bangladesh to identify the gaps and flaws in the country's basic education system and locate and investigate corruption. This survey was conducted from 22 September to 20 December 2000 in eight *Upazillas* of the greater Mymensingh district. It targeted government primary education offices, primary school teachers, students and their guardians. The survey, which was conducted on 171 head teachers, 966 students and 966 guardians covered a total of 2,103 persons in 171 primary schools. It looked at 105 government, 40 non-government, 14 satellite and 12 community primary schools.

TIB addressed the following issues through the survey: ascertaining the level of corruption in the appointment of primary school teachers; identifying the nature of corruption in the *Upazilla* Education Office; determining the satisfaction level of teachers concerning services rendered by the officers and staff of the *Upazilla* Education Office (UEO); ascertaining the overall quality of service of various *Upazilla* Education Offices; establishing the level of corruption in the admission of students in primary schools; determining

the amount of surcharge subscriptions collected from primary school students; probing the nature and extent of corruption in the Food for Education Programme; and ascertaining the level of guardians' satisfaction with the education of their children.

The survey revealed, in particular, that students are required to make unauthorized payments for admission into schools, purchase of books, sporting events, promotion to higher classes, entertainment of officers from the *Upazilla* Education Offices and holding of religious events as well as for various other purposes. Money is also collected in the form of examination fees. The TIB survey also revealed misuse of the criterion for eligibility for the Food Education Programme. Finally, cases of delayed delivery of services by the Union Parishad Education Offices and incidents of education officer misbehaviour with teachers during primary school inspection were reported.

The Report Card survey was conducted as part of TIB's efforts to raise the general public's awareness of corruption in certain service delivery sectors of the country. A Report Card survey was conducted in several *Upazillas* so that the findings could be used as an advocacy tool for curbing corruption and to establish good governance in those areas. Indeed, as a result of the survey the relevant authorities were alerted as to corruption in their areas and took appropriate measures in this regard. The report also contributed towards establishing good relations with these authorities.

This report begins by presenting the context in which a Report Card survey was launched in Bangladesh. It then describes the methodology followed in detail. The third chapter groups the survey findings into three major areas, namely: unauthorized fees collected in primary schools, distortions in the management of the Food for Education Programme and corruption in the government's primary education offices. The fourth chapter explores the impact of the study and the problems and constraints encountered during its implementation. The last chapter draws conclusions from this experience and explores future perspectives.

Chapter 1
Introduction

The key to achieving high rates of economic growth in Bangladesh while at the same time ensuring that the fruits of this growth are shared equitably among the population lies in the development and proper utilization of the country's human resources. Education is a basic requirement for socio-economic transformation and advancement and is the prime ingredient of human resource development. It has therefore been recognized as a priority sector by all governments since independence.

In Bangladesh, the education sector is one of the largest and most important public service providers. However, even though compulsory primary education and mass education programmes have been introduced by the Government of Bangladesh and enormous amounts of money spent, widespread lack of basic education remains the Achilles' heel of the society and economy of Bangladesh.

1. Background

Bangladesh has come a long way since its independence in 1971. Per capita income has grown from about US$70 in 1971 to US$350 today. Social indicators such as life expectancy, the adult literacy rate, the primary school enrolment rate, gender parity in education and access to safe drinking water also have improved remarkably. The improvement in policies since the mid-1980s has enabled Bangladesh to grow faster and to reduce poverty. Yet Bangladesh still has a long way to go in terms of human development. In the

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32 years since independence, Bangladesh's population has more than doubled to approximately 130 million. Excluding the city-states, Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world. It is still one of the world's poorest countries: Nearly 35 per cent of the population live in hardcore poverty, 8.5 per cent of newborns die at birth, 67 per cent of children under the age of five are underweight, 40 per cent of children drop out of primary school and only 15 per cent of the population has access to electricity (World Bank, 2000).

Bangladesh's economy suffered a temporary setback in 1998 due to massive floods – the worst in recent history. However, the country's medium-term economic prospects are reasonably good. The most important economic challenges for Bangladesh are to place the highest emphasis on human development, improve governance and build strong institutions, enhance the competitiveness of the private sector, manage foreign direct investment, establish a sound financial system and maintain a stable macroeconomic environment.

Many studies have demonstrated the strong links between education and an individual's income. In recent times, more and more evidence is emerging that links education and a country's economic growth. According to one study, educated labour played a greater role in Bangladesh's growth than physical capital (Kaoume, 2000). Even a modest exposure to education has been found to reduce poverty levels substantially in Bangladesh.

Primary education is of 5 years' duration in Bangladesh, starting at age six. Today, primary education is characterized by (i) substantial progress made in increasing enrolment during the late 1980s and early 1990s, (ii) a large number of children from very poor backgrounds and from illiterate families who are now attending school, and (iii) diverse types of schools serving children who have diverse needs, including working children (Latif and Rahman, 2000). Among these are a large number of schools run by non-governmental

organizations that have innovative, well-structured and highly relevant schooling models that are currently being replicated in Africa and other South Asian countries.

Prior to independence, schools in Bangladesh were established, managed and financed by local communities with only partial financing by the government. Primary schools were nationalized after independence. Today, approximately half of the schools are managed by government and the other half privately run and managed. Presently about two-thirds of students are enrolled in government schools. In terms of enrolment and gender parity, Bangladesh ranks well regionally and is on a par with China and Indonesia. The country is however lagging behind in terms of its teacher-student ratio (with only one teacher for every 63 students) and gender parity in the teaching force.

The government finances all expenditure in government schools as well as 80 per cent of teacher salaries in registered non-government schools on the basis of school registration and eligibility criteria. The government also provides grants to non-government schools for the repair of school buildings. Students in both government and non-government schools receive free textbooks. Even though Bangladesh's public spending on education as a percentage of GNP has increased over time, it is still quite low. In fact, Bangladesh has one of the largest and lowest-cost education systems in the world. At the primary level, the cost per student is only US$13 or 3.6 per cent of GNP per capita (Hussain, 2000). Such low costs are achieved through exceptionally large class sizes, low teacher salaries and minimum spending on teaching-learning materials and in-service teacher training. However, education now constitutes one of the largest items in both the revenue and development budgets and education's share in the government's total budget has also increased over time. In the recent past, governments have been fairly consistent in giving priority in allocations to primary education in both the revenue and development budgets.

Achievement of the overall vision for Bangladesh in 2020 depends heavily on substantial progress in education (World Bank, 1998). A major weakness of Bangladesh's current education system is its inability to adjust adequately to revolutions in science and technology, economic and political conditions and demographic and political structures. There is a considerable disparity between development needs and the basic form, content and orientation of the education system. The cost of education is increasing and mobilization of public and private resources remains well below what is required. Happily, the government is aware of the need for change in both policies and the governance of the institutional fabric of the education system and is working towards these. The government's development objectives for the primary education sector are to (i) improve school quality and system efficiency, (ii) establish a sustainable, cost-effective and better-managed education system, and (iii) ensure universal coverage and equitable access to quality primary schooling. Bangladesh by 2020 should achieve a strong system of basic education with virtually every child enrolled and completing primary education with at least minimum levels of competency directly related to life skills (World Bank, 1998).

Perhaps the greatest strength of the primary education system in Bangladesh is the consistent, high-level national commitment and consensus on the priority of primary education. As a result of this commitment and the programmes it has spawned, Bangladesh has achieved one of the largest centralized systems of primary education in the world.

2. The primary education scenario in Bangladesh

Five-year compulsory primary education for the 6-10 year age group is imparted mainly in government and non-government primary schools. Full or partial primary level education is also offered in high schools, *madrassahs,*[3]

3. Institutions where mainly religious education is imparted.

kindergartens, satellite schools, etc. These institutions numbered 14,692 in 2000 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2002). A substantial number of NGO-run non-formal schools catering mainly for drop-outs from government and non-government primary schools also exist. However, very few NGOs impart education for the full five-year primary education cycle. As a result of this, on completion of 2-3 years of non-formal primary education in NGO-run schools, students normally re-enter the higher classes of government/non-government primary schools. NGO-run schools differ from other non-government private schools in that they operate essentially to meet the educational needs of vulnerable social groups in areas served neither by government nor by private schools. They usually follow an informal approach to suit the special needs of children from vulnerable groups.

During the Fourth Five Year Plan (1991-1996) of the Government of Bangladesh, steps were taken to improve primary education, focusing on the introduction of compulsory primary education. The Food for Education programme was also introduced to encourage enrolment and reduce drop out rates among poor children. The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) had as its ultimate aim raising the literacy rate and quality of education at all levels. Primary education was made compulsory with the targets of (i) increasing gross enrolment to around 110 per cent, and (ii) attaining a completion rate of 75 per cent by the end of 2002 (Government of Bangladesh, 2002). To this end, compulsory primary education was made more effective through local government and community support. To meet the commitments made in these Plans, the Government of Bangladesh made the eradication of illiteracy through the development of basic education its major focus. Basic education is delivered in Bangladesh through two parallel systems: the formal and the non-formal. Due to the high level of national commitment, outstanding progress has been recorded in education and particularly in primary and non-formal education.

Access to primary education over the last 20 years has increased steadily in Bangladesh. The gross enrolment rate rose from nearly 60 per cent in

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1980 to 73 per cent in 1990 and 96.5 per cent in 2000 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2002). In absolute numbers, in the last two decades, primary education enrolment has more than doubled from 8.2 million to 17.6 million. The current estimate of the net enrolment rate of boys and girls has also narrowed to a ratio of 51 to 49. The drop-out rate in primary school decreased from 60 per cent in 1990 to 35 per cent in 2000. These achievements in terms of enrolment have been made possible by legislative support, provision of physical facilities, massive social mobilization and an increase in the number of primary schools to 62,117 in 2000, of which government primary schools represented 37,677 or 61 per cent of their total number (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Over 15,000 full primary schools have been added since 1990. This increase reflected the Government of Bangladesh's policy of establishing schools in remote areas with community support and participation.

However, the primary education scenario is fraught with problems. Shortage of schools within accessible distance is a major difficulty in rural areas. Existing schools face shortages of classrooms, furniture and other supplies as well as overcrowding. There is a dearth of proper teaching aids as well as a lack of equipment, books and supplies for students. There is a severe shortage of teachers and existing teachers lack adequate professional skills. Teacher absenteeism and an unattractive learning environment are great impediments. Finally, there is a lack of awareness and interest of parents and weak community involvement. Policy issues such as resource availability, community participation, gender specificity, system balance and modernization of the curricula must also be considered.

3. The Report Card survey

Decision-makers in government, academia and advocacy groups have come to recognize the potential of public feedback in making government more responsive and accountable. Public feedback is especially powerful in contexts where the government operates as a monopoly service provider

and leaves the user of the services with no 'exit' options. In these disabling conditions, public feedback or the 'citizens' voice' become a potent catalyst for change.[4] When this citizens' voice is built on an objective assessment of both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of different public services, based on first-hand interactions with the agencies providing these services, it is possible to rank agencies on the quality of performance. This 'score card' can be used to stimulate collective action by citizens and provide organizational leaders with an opportunity to design reforms and bring in a strategic reorientation.

The Public Affairs Centre (PAC) in Bangalore, India and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) built on this concept to design 'Report Cards on Public Services', which provides a relatively uncomplicated and widely replicable tool for improving transparency and public accountability.

A Report Card survey is a simple and flexible approach for organizing public feedback. Its basic objectives are to:

- generate citizen/user feedback on basic service delivery institutions;
- convert widespread private complaints into collective campaigns;
- facilitate comparison of performance of different services and institutions; and
- serve as a basis to initiate dialogue and advocacy programmes.

4. Ensuring food, clothing, housing, education, medicine and security of life and property of citizens are important functions of a state in the present day system of governance. The state engages various organizations to meet these needs of the people. Presently, different non-government organizations also provide various services to the people in exchange for fees. However, there are many services which cannot be provided by any organization other than those owned by the state. The state or government enjoys an absolute monopoly in the rendering of these services. The people do not get these services from any organization other than ones owned by government. In these cases, the people do not have any other option. If the quality of the service is poor, the people can play a role in improving its quality. The service quality of the government organization can also be improved through uniting the people and strengthening their voice. The Report Card was devised to pool the people's voice in an organized fashion. See ActionAid Bangladesh and Transparency International Bangladesh, 2001.

Report Cards are an aggregate of public ratings on different aspects of service quality, built on scientific random sample surveys of users of different public services (utilities) in a given locality. The specific aspects addressed in the survey include availability of the service, usage, satisfaction, service standards, major problems with service, effectiveness of grievance redress systems, corruption encountered and other hidden costs experienced by citizens on account of poor service.

Report Cards provide a benchmark on the quality of public services as experienced by citizens. They seek to capture citizens' feedback in simple and unambiguous terms and are a means of testing different options citizens wish to exercise – either individually or collectively – to tackle the problems at hand. Issues are placed within the perspective of other elements of service design and delivery as well as in comparison with other services, so that ultimately a strategic set of actions can be devised and initiated for positive and sustainable change.

Report Card methodology has its roots in quantitative research methods, but is enhanced by qualitative findings obtained from interviews and observations. Mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods has proven valuable as it complements attitudes with statistics and augments opinions with numbers. Report Card methodology combines these two methods of research with two primary (although by no means exclusive) research techniques: focus groups and questionnaires. However, even though Report Card methodology is adaptable it must nonetheless abide by statistical conventions.

The credibility of Report Cards lies in the fact that they are neither the opinions of a handful of people, nor the complaints of a few aggrieved citizens. The methodology involves systematic sampling across all subsections or segments of citizens – including those who are satisfied as well as those aggrieved – and presents a complete picture that includes all opinions. Report

Cards are thus able to provide a reliable and comprehensive representation of citizens' feedback.

Table 1.1 Difference between Report Card approach and institutional approach

	Report Card		Other research
1.	Report Card is an approach to gauge the quality of service of an organization	1.	Research is carried out to systemically investigate the presence of a problem
2.	Report Card is prepared to gauge the degree and nature of service quality, irregularities, mismanagement etc. of an organization	2.	Research is usually carried out to know something and establish a truth
3.	It has to be carried out in relation to a specified framework	3.	It does not follow any rigid framework
4.	It is a tool for good governance	4.	It is carried out to investigate an event
5.	Advocacy is one of its components	5.	Advocacy is not required after research
6.	It is applied only for gauging service quality	6.	Research can be undertaken to inquire about any event

Source: ActionAid Bangladesh and Transparency International Bangladesh, 2001.

Report Cards are prepared and finalized through the following stages:

1. Preparatory stage:
   - identification of institutions
   - determination of goals and objectives
   - identification of respondents
   - preparation of draft questionnaire
   - pre-testing and finalization of questionnaire

- determining the size of sample
- determining the sampling strategy
- preparing the sampling list.

2. Implementation stage:
   - collecting information
   - verifying collected information
   - editing collected information
   - tabulating collected information
   - analyzing collected information.

3. Reporting and advocacy
   - finalizing the Report Card
   - releasing the Report Card report and initiating advocacy
   - follow-up.

The print media generally publicizes Report Card findings prominently. Seminars and workshops involving local civic activists, representatives of NGOs and concerned citizens and authorities are also organized in connection with the release of Report Card findings. Report Cards provide an objective data base to put organized pressure on public service agencies.

The information and findings provided by Report Cards have largely succeeded in catalyzing citizens to take proactive steps. Public interest groups, NGOs and international organizations are increasingly realizing the value of Report Cards in chalking out effective strategies to make public service agencies more responsive and accountable.

Chapter 2
Objectives and research methodology

1. Objectives of the TIB survey

TIB conducted a Report Card survey of the primary education sector in Bangladesh to identify the shortcomings and defects in the country's basic education system.[5] It also aimed at locating and investigating corruption. This survey was conducted between 22 September and 20 December 2000 in eight *Upazillas* (sub-districts) of the greater Mymensingh district. It targeted both service providers and recipients: government primary education offices, primary school teachers and students and their guardians.

The aim of the survey was to identify the gaps and flaws in Bangladesh's primary education system as well as to locate and investigate corruption. The survey endeavoured to address the following issues:

- ascertaining the level of corruption in the appointment of primary school teachers;
- identifying the nature of corruption in the *Upazilla* Education Office;
- determining the satisfaction level of teachers concerning services provided by the officers and staff of the *Upazilla* Education Offices (UEOs);
- ascertaining the overall quality of service of various *Upazilla* Education Offices;
- ascertaining the level of corruption in the admission of students in primary schools;

5. All data in this paper has been taken from TIB's report on corruption in primary education in Bangladesh (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2001).

- ascertaining the amount of surcharge subscriptions collected from primary school students;
- probing the nature and extent of corruption in the Food for Education Programme; and
- ascertaining the level of guardians' satisfaction with the education of their children.

2. The TIB Survey: research methodology

This Report Card survey was conducted on primary education offices, primary school teachers, students and their guardians in the Mymensingh Sadar, Muktagachha and Gouripur *Upazillas* of Mymensingh District, the Jamalpur Sadar and Sharishabari *Upazillas* of Jamalpur District, the Kishoreganj Sadar *Upazilla* of Kishoreganj District, the Madhupur *Upazilla* of Tangail District and in the Nalitabari *Upazilla* of Sherpur District. The Report Card survey was conducted on 171 head teachers, 966 students and 966 guardians – a total of 2,103 persons from 171 primary schools in eight *Upazillas* under five Districts. The survey covered 105 government, 40 non-government, 14 satellite and 12 community primary schools spread over these eight *Upazillas*.

In six of the eight *Upazillas*,[6] TIB had formed Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCCs) with a view to raising the awareness of the general public on corruption in the country. To this end, TIB also organized seminars and workshops, formed coalitions with local groups and conducted research on the legal and institutional structures of accountability. These committees were established as part of TIB's three-year (1 January 2000-31 December 2002) National Integrity Programme (NIP) and are continuing their operation under NIP Phase 2: Making Waves (1 January 2003-31 December 2007). These

6. In Madhupur, Nalitabari, Mymensingh Sadar, Muktagachha, Kishoreganj Sadar and Jamalpur Sadar *Upazillas*.

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Committees actively work to curb corruption in public and private organizations and for good governance. One aspect of their work was the Report Card survey. A specific intention behind conducting the Report Card survey in these six *Upazillas* is that the CCCs would be able to use the Report Cards as an advocacy tool for curbing corruption and to establish good governance. The other two *Upazillas*, namely Gouripur and Sharishabari, were used as control areas.

Primary schools were selected by random sampling as were the responding students of the fourth and fifth grades. Information was collected from the head teachers of the schools and from students. A minimum of 20 primary schools was selected from each *Upazilla*. Of these, as a general rule, 10 were from among those covered by the Government of Bangladesh's Food for Education Programme while the other 10 were from among those not covered by the Programme. In some *Upazillas* there was some deviation from this standard average.

Eight students (four each from grades 4 and 5) were selected from each primary school covered under the Food for Education Programme. Of the four from each class, two were from those covered under the Food for Education Programme and the other two were from among students not covered under the programme. Information was also collected from guardians of all selected students as well as from the head teacher of each school. As for schools not included in the Food for Education Programme, four students (two each from grades 4 and 5) were selected from each primary school. Information was also obtained from the guardians of these students. The head teacher of each selected school also provided necessary information. Data for this sample survey was collected from 22 September to 20 December 2000. The sampling error of this survey was less than 2.5 per cent on a confidence level of 95 per cent.

Chapter 3
Survey findings

Survey reports of the eight selected *Upazillas* indicated that there were 420,000 students enrolled in the 1,299 primary schools. On average, there were 329 students per primary school. It may be recalled that the national average for students per school is 226 (Bangaldesh Bureau of Statistics, 2002). This means that the number of students in this region is higher than the national average. The number of students in the primary schools of Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla* is 537, the highest amongst the eight *Upazillas*. The teacher-student ratio in the survey area is 86 to 1 as against the national figure of 57 to 1.

A perusal of the socio-economic conditions of the students revealed that the major occupation of students' guardians covered in this survey was agriculture, with 46 per cent of guardians working in this sector while 15 per cent were in business and 10 per cent were labourers. Only 6.52 per cent of guardians were in the public service. Guardians of 81 per cent students covered in the survey belonged to the low-income group with a monthly income of Bangladesh *Taka* (BDT) 4,000[7] or less. Only 10 per cent of students' guardians had a monthly income of BDT 4,000 to BDT 6,000. The survey showed that the average monthly income of guardians of the primary school students was BDT 2,488. It was evident, therefore, that children of low-income families attended these primary schools.

The survey unearthed major irregularities in the system. It revealed that teachers, the school management and government employees were major

7. 58 BDT = 1 United States dollar.

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actors in incidences of corruption. It also showed that lack of accountability was the principal facilitator for corruption. Other major reasons behind corruption were lack of transparency, low salary of employees, use of discretionary power, monopoly of power, the presence of powerful interest groups and last but not least, bureaucratic red tape. The survey also showed that students were required to make unauthorized payments for admission into the schools, purchase of books, sporting events, promotion to higher classes, entertainment of officers from the *Upazilla* Education Offices, holding of religious events as well as for various other purposes. Money was also collected as examination fees. It should be highlighted that neither specific guidelines nor any accounting system existed for this money.

The survey findings are reported in this paper under three major headings:

- unauthorized fees collected from students;
- irregularities in the Food for Education Programme; and
- irregularities in the Primary Education Offices of the government.

Data has been presented using percentage rates and averages in such a manner as to give an overall picture of each *Upazilla* as well as to present a comprehensive analysis of the situation. The currency used is Bangladesh *taka* (58 BDT = 1 US$).

1. Various unauthorized fees collected in primary schools

One of the objectives of the survey was to find out whether students are forced to make any unauthorized payments in the various government-owned primary schools. This section gives a description of the various fees that the students had to pay in these primary schools.

a. Fees for admission into primary schools

Each year approximately one-fifth of students in primary schools complete their primary education (there is a substantial number of drop-outs) and move on to secondary schools and a corresponding number are enrolled in the primary schools. Ninety-one per cent of the guardians said that they did not have to pay any fees to have their children admitted to the schools. Only 6.52 per cent of guardians said that they had pay admission fees for their children. The survey showed that these guardians paid on average BDT 63 as admission fees. Guardians of 82.54 per cent of these students said that they were not given any receipts for the fees and only 17.46 per cent said that they were given receipts.

Table 3.1 Fees for admission into primary schools

Name of *Upazilla*	Percentage of students paying admission fee	Amount collected yearly (in BDT)
Madhupur	-	-
Nalitabari	-	-
Mymensingh Sadar	30.4	41,641
Muktagachha	-	-
Kishoreganj Sadar	22.5	27,229
Sharishabari	-	-
Gouripur	0.9	5,006
Jamalpur Sadar	-	-

Mymensingh Sadar, Kishoreganj Sadar and Gouripur *Upazilla*s were respectively ranked as first, second and third in collecting admission fees for primary schools. In these three *Upazilla*s 30 per cent, 22 per cent and 0.9 per cent of students respectively paid fees for admission. Admission fees were not collected in any of the other *Upazilla*s. *Table 3.1* also shows that primary

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schools in Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla* collected on an average BDT 341,000 per year as admission fees.

b. Unauthorized payment for books

Primary school textbooks are provided free of charge by the Government of Bangladesh. The survey showed that school authorities collected fees to make these books available to the students. Of the students, 5.28 per cent said that they paid fees to obtain their textbooks. These students paid on average BDT 4. No fees were however taken from students in Kishoreganj Sadar, Gouripur and Sharishabari *Upazilla*s. The survey also revealed that primary schools in Jamalpur Sadar *Upazilla* collected on average nearly BDT 39,000 per year for books. The amount for Madhupur, Mymensingh Sadar, Nalitabari and Muktagachha *Upazillas* were BDT 30,000, BDT 28,000, BDT 9,000 and BDT 7,000 respectively.

c. Fees for sports

The survey also showed that fees were often collected for games and sporting events. This fee was said to be paid by 3.68 per cent of the students. An average of BDT 6.33 per person was collected from these students. This was reported in Mymensingh Sadar, Kishoreganj Sadar and Gouripur *Upazillas*. Fees for sports were not collected from students in the other *Upazillas*.

Primary schools in Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla* collected the largest amount of money for games. An amount of BDT 5.75 was collected on average from 17.4 per cent of the students in the *Upazilla*, amounting to a total of BDT 89,000 for games and sporting events. In Kishoreganj Sadar *Upazilla*, 6.67 per cent of the students in primary schools paid an average BDT 8.62, amounting to an annual collection of nearly BDT 26,000. In Gouripur

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Upazilla, 7.7 per cent of the students of the various primary schools paid on average BDT 5.5, which amounted to BDT 17,000 annually.

d. Fees for promotion to the next class

The survey revealed that fees were collected from students for promotion to higher classes. This should not be misinterpreted to mean that students who had failed their finals were promoted in return for a fee. Rather, students who had passed their finals and should have been automatically promoted were required to pay this fee.

In this regard, 2.26 per cent of the students said they had paid a fee for promotion to a higher class. These students paid an average of BDT 7.96. Instances of paying fees for promotion to a new class were only reported in Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla*. The survey showed that a large amount of money (a total of BDT 16,000 annually) was collected from students being promoted to a higher class.

e. Entertainment fees for Primary Education Officers

It is customary for schools to entertain officers from the primary education offices of the government – the *Upazilla* Education Officer or the Assistant Education Officer – when they come to inspect the schools. There is a prevalent feeling among teachers and school management committees that if the officer is adequately entertained, he/she will look favorably upon the school. Some government officers also expect to be lavishly entertained.

Table 3.2 Fees for entertaining government officers

Name of *Upazilla*	Average amount collected per student	Amount collected yearly (in BDT)
Madhupur	1.90	108,142
Nalitabari	-	-
Mymensingh Sadar	0.14	12,487
Muktagachha	2.73	141,880
Kishoreganj Sadar	3.47	155,727
Sharishabari	0.52	16,813
Gouripur	-	-
Jamalpur Sadar	-	-

The survey revealed that only some schools collected fees for entertaining these government officers, with 7.18 per cent of the students speaking of paying these fees. Primary schools in Kishoreganj Sadar *Upazilla* collected the highest amount under this head. Each student paid on average BDT 3.47 (see *Table 3.2*). In Muktagachha *Upazilla* the average fee charged was BDT 2.73. Fees collected from Kishoreganj Sadar, Muktagachha, Madhupur, Sharishabari and Mymensingh Sadar *Upazillas* amounted to BDT 155,000, BDT 142,000, BDT 108,000, BDT 16,000 and BDT 12,000 per annum respectively for entertainment of Education Officers.

f. Subscription for Milad[8]

Most schools hold a *Milad* ceremony on various religious occasions such as the birth and death anniversary of the Prophet Mohammad (S.M.). There are recitations from the Holy Koran and singing of hymns, with distribution of sweets afterwards. Schools generally do not have any funds for these ceremonies.

8. Muslim religious ritual.

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According to the survey, a substantial amount was collected as fees for these *Milad* ceremonies. Of the students, 4.03 per cent confirmed paying an average of BDT 7.74 as fees for *Milads*. Primary schools in Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla* collected the highest amount of fees for this purpose, amounting to a total of BDT 172,000 annually. In Muktagachha a total of BDT 19,000 was collected. The collection for Madhupur and Jamalpur *Upazillas* were BDT 9,000 and BDT 1,500 respectively.

g. Examination fees

The Government of Bangladesh does not award any grants to primary schools for conducting examinations. Consequently, teachers do not get paid for invigilation duties or for grading scripts. Teachers therefore collect fees from students for holding examinations. There is no government policy or indicated rate for such fees. This facilitates corruption and in certain places the fees charged are rather high. The following paragraphs provide a description of the amount of money collected from students in the survey area for conducting various examinations.

(i) Fees for the first term examination:

A total of 96.48 per cent of the students mentioned paying fees to be allowed to sit for the first term examination. On average, a fee of BDT 14.75 was charged per student.

The survey showed that primary schools in these eight *Upazillas* collected a total of BDT 6,100,000 as fees for the first term examination. Primary school teachers in Mymensingh Sadar, Madhupur and Jamalpur Sadar *Upazillas* annually collected fees amounting to BDT 1,258,000, BDT 1,134,000 and BDT 920,000 respectively. *Table 3.3* describes the average and annual amounts of money collected by the primary schools in different *Upazillas* for the first term examinations.

Table 3.3 First term examination fees

Name of *Upazilla*	Average amount collected per student (in BDT)	Amount collected yearly (in BDT)
Madhupur	19.92	1,133,787
Nalitabari	18.54	488,007
Mymensingh Sadar	14.11	1,258,499
Muktagachha	13.87	720,837
Kishoreganj Sadar	13.18	591,492
Sharishabari	13.00	420,316
Gouripur	12.90	569,431
Jamalpur Sadar	12.48	920,524
Total	14.75	6,102,893

(ii) Fees for the second term examination

The survey further revealed that fees were also collected from students for the second term examination. Ninety-six per cent of students confirmed paying the fee. BDT 14.64 was collected on average from each student for this examination.

Primary schools of these eight *Upazillas* collected a total of about BDT 6,070,000 as fees for the second term exam. *Table 3.4* gives the figures for each *Upazilla*.

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Table 3.4 Second term examination fees

Name of *Upazilla*	Average amount collected per student (in BDT)	Amount collected yearly (in BDT)
Madhupur	20.36	1,158,830
Nalitabari	18.54	488,807
Mymensingh Sadar	13.92	1,241,552
Muktagachha	12.53	651,197
Kishoreganj Sadar	13.69	618,380
Sharishabari	13.00	420,316
Gouripur	12.84	566,783
Jamalpur Sadar	12.58	927,900
Total	14.64	6,069,765

(iii) Fees for the annual examination

The survey also confirmed that fees were collected from students for the annual examination, with 96.24 per cent of students saying that they paid these fees at an average rate of BDT 14.65. A total of BDT 6,086,000 was raised annually from primary schools in these eight *Upazillas* as fees for the annual examination (see *Table 3.5*).

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Table 3.5 Annual examination fees

Name of *Upazilla*	Average amount collected per student (in BDT)	Amount collected yearly (in BDT)
Madhupur	20.14	1,146,308
Nalitabari	18.54	488,807
Mymensingh Sadar	14.01	1,249,580
Muktagachha	13.20	686,017
Kishoreganj Sadar	13.43	602,711
Sharishabari	13.00	420,316
Gouripur	12.87	568,107
Jamalpur Sadar	12.53	924,213
Total	14.65	6,086,059

h. Fees for other purposes

The survey also revealed that fees were collected from students for various other purposes. It was found that 7.97 per cent of the students paid an average of BDT 7.79 for purposes other than those mentioned above. The highest collection was in Muktagachha *Upazilla*, where BDT 4.38 was collected per student on average, amounting to a total of BDT 227,000 (see *Table 3.6*).

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Table 3.6 Fees for various other purposes

Name of *Upazilla*	Average amount collected per student (in BDT)	Amount collected yearly (in BDT)
Madhupur	-	-
Nalitabari	-	-
Mymensingh Sadar	0.17	15,162
Muktagachha	4.38	227,633
Kishoreganj Sadar	0.39	17,502
Sharishabari	-	-
Gouripur	-	-
Jamalpur Sadar	-	-

i. Total annual collection of unauthorized fees

It was found that a total of over BDT 19,800,000 was collected each year in the eight *Upazillas* in the primary schools as fees under all the above heads. Of this, BDT 1,649,000 were collected for specific purposes such as fees for textbooks, sports etc, while BDT 18,200,000 was raised as examination fees. *Table 3.7* below shows the total amount of unauthorized fees collected by the primary schools in the *Upazillas* concerned.

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Table 3.7 Total unauthorized fees collected

Name of *Upazilla*	Average amount collected per student (in BDT)	Amount collected yearly (in BDT)
Madhupur	62.86	3,578,000
Nalitabari	55.97	1,475,000
Mymensingh Sadar	48.77	4,394,000
Muktagachha	47.21	2,453,000
Kishoreganj Sadar	47.67	2,139,000
Sharishabari	39.52	1,277,000
Gouripur	39.03	1,722,000
Jamalpur Sadar	38.12	2,811,000
Total		19,849,000

2. The Food for Education Programme

The Government of Bangladesh embarked upon an innovative programme in 1991 to encourage guardians of low-income families to send their children to school. The purpose of the Food for Education Programme was to ensure that children of very poor families or low-income households, who were otherwise forced to engage in income-generating activities at an early age to augment the family's income, were sent to school. The criterion for eligibility was that the family concerned could not possess more than 50 decimals of land (100 decimals = 1 acre).

The Government of Bangladesh launched this programme to increase the enrolment rate of children at primary schools and thereby to increase the literacy rate. The project was operational in various primary schools of the country between 1991 and 2002. This section reviews the efficacy of the programme in terms of whether or not children of poor families benefited from the project and whether or not there was corruption in the project.

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Almost 10 years into the programme, the TIB survey found that there were deviations from this set criterion in 16 per cent of cases. Moreover, on average every student received 22 per cent less food grain every year.

a. Corruption in selection of students

The sole criterion set by the Government of Bangladesh for inclusion of students in the Food for Education Programme was that the family concerned possessed 50 decimals of land or less. The survey revealed that the criterion was not observed in nearly 16 per cent of the cases.

In respective of this deviation, the first, second and third positions were held by Mymensingh Sadar, Kishoreganj Sadar and Gouripur *Upazillas* respectively, as shown in *Table 3.8*. The rates of deviation from the selection criterion for the Food for Education Programme in these *Upazillas* were 38.9 per cent, 28.2 per cent and 27.5 per cent respectively. On the other hand, the criterion was seen to be strictly adhered to in Muktagachha and Jamalpur *Upazillas*. There were a number of reasons contributing to these irregularities, namely intervention on behalf of the family by influential relatives or some other person and bribes taken by the concerned authorities.

Table 3.8 Corruption in the selection of students for the Food for Education Programme

Name of *Upazilla*	Percentage of students*
Madhupur	7.7
Nalitabari	17.5
Mymensingh Sadar	38.90
Muktagachha	-
Kishoreganj Sadar	28.20
Sharishabari	13.7
Gouripur	27.5
Jamalpur Sadar	-

***** These students did not qualify for inclusion in the programme under the set criterion.

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b. Intervention by influential persons

In reply to a question posed in the survey as to whether assistance of influential relatives or some other person was necessary, 13 per cent of the guardians said that they had to solicit the help of some such person for inclusion of their children in the project. These were guardians of students who were entitled to the benefits according to the government criterion. Seventy-three per cent of guardians said that they did not need to seek the help of any influential relative/person for the purpose.

As illustrated in *Table 3.9*, 53.84 per cent of the guardians in Jamalpur Sadar *Upazilla* mentioned securing the help of some influential relative/other person to get their children included in the Food for Education Programme. In Kishoreganj and Mymensingh Sadar *Upazillas*, 20 per cent and 17 per cent of the guardians said that they had to seek help from such influential persons. Guardians in Nalitabari, Muktagachha, Sharishabari and Gouripur said they did not require the intervention of any such person on their behalf.

Table 3.9 Intervention by influential persons

Name of *Upazilla*	Percentage of intervention
Madhupur	5.12
Nalitabari	-
Mymensingh Sadar	16.67
Muktagachha	-
Kishoreganj Sadar	20.51
Sharishabari	-
Gouripur	-
Jamalpur Sadar	53.84

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c. Bribes

Nearly 16 per cent of guardians said that they had to pay bribes to ensure that their children were included in the programme, and 84.48 per cent of the guardians said that they did not have to pay any money for inclusion of their children in the project. The survey indicated that 15.5 per cent of students paid an average of BDT 32. In most cases it was the primary school teachers who collected this money (from 82.22 per cent of guardians). However 11.11 per cent of guardians paid the dealers and 2 per cent paid various other people involved with the Programme.

The survey revealed that guardians had to pay for inclusion in the Food for Education Programme only in Jamalpur Sadar and Madhupur *Upazillas*. Money was not collected for this purpose in any of the other *Upazillas*. Seventy-two per cent of the guardians from whom money was collected in Jamalpur Sadar *Upazilla* said that the teachers collected this money, and 17.24 per cent of guardians said that the dealers collected the money. In Madhupur *Upazilla*, guardians reported that all the money was collected by teachers of the schools.

d. Irregularities in the distribution of food grain

Those covered under the Food for Education Programme were also asked if they were given less food grain than their allocated share. Sixty-eight per cent of guardians said that they were always given less, whereas 24 per cent said that there were occasional shortfalls. Only 5 per cent of the guardians said that they always received their allotted quota. Four per cent were unable to answer this question (see *Table 3.10*).

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Table 3.10 Irregularities in distribution of food grain: an overview

	Percentage of students								
Distribution of food under FEP	Madhupur	Nalitabari	Mymensingh Sadar	Muktagachha	Kishoreganj Sadar	Sharishabari	Gouripur	Jamalpur Sadar	Total
Less than allocation	94.87	22.5	80.55	89.74	94.87	48.26	48.27	53.85	67.59
Occasional shortfall	-	62.5	16.67	-	5.12	31.03	37.93	43.59	24.13
Never any shortfall	-	12.5	-	-	-	20.69	3.45	2.56	4.82
Did not know	5.12	2.5	2.78	10.26	-	-	13.79	-	4.18

e. Actual disbursement

In reply to the question as to how much less was distributed per monthly disbursement, 41 per cent of respondents said that they received 2 kilogrammes (kgs) less every time. Nearly 27 per cent of the respondents said that on average the amount received was 3 kgs less. Six per cent of respondents said they received 4.8 kgs less per disbursement. On average every student received 2.47 kgs less of food grain per disbursement. The annual shortfall came to 30 kgs per student. According to this estimate, 1,241 tons of food grain went 'missing' every year during distribution under the Food for Education Programme in these eight *Upazillas*. The market value of this missing food grain – at BDT 10 per kg – amounted to BDT 12,420,000.

The survey revealed that of the eight *Upazillas*, Gouripur, Kishoreganj Sadar and Sharishabari occupied first, second and third positions in distributing

reduced amounts of food grain under the Food for Education Programme. In these *Upazillas* every student received on average 3.67 kgs, 3.34 kgs and 2.92 kgs less per disbursement. On the other hand, Kishoreganj Sadar and Nalitabari performed better in the sense that they were at the other end of the spectrum.

Table 3.11 Shortfalls in disbursement of food grain

Name of *Upazilla*	Average shortfall per student per disbursement (in kgs)	Annual shortfall (in metric tons)	Value of missing food grain (in BDT at 2000 market prices)
Madhupur	2.27	231	2,310,000
Nalitabari	1.62	59	590,000
Mymensingh Sadar	2.84	356	3,570,000
Muktagachha	1.86	143	1,430,000
Kishoreganj Sadar	3.34	69	690,000
Sharishabari	2.92	117	1,170,000
Gouripur	3.67	135	1,350,000
Jamalpur Sadar	1.94	131	1,310,000
Total		1,241	12,420,000

Looking at the overall picture, *Table 3.11* shows that 356 tons less were distributed every year in Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla*. The overall figures for Madhupur, Muktagachha and Gouripur were 231 tons, 143 tons and 135 tons respectively. In Jamalpur Sadar, Sharishabari, Kishoreganj Sadar and Nalitabari *Upazillas* the quantities amounted to 131 tons, 117 tons, 69 tons and 59 tons respectively. The market value of this missing food grain was BDT 12,420,000.

Despite all the irregularities, the survey nonetheless showed that there was a positive side of the Food for Education Programme. Given the socio-

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economic condition of the families concerned, the amount of food grain the students took home did help their families. Some families sold the food grain on the market to augment their incomes and some kept it and used it for themselves. Of respondents, 45.51 per cent said that they benefited in several ways from the Programme, whereas 50.34 per cent said that they benefited to some extent. Only 0.34 per cent said that they did not benefit at all.

3. Corruption in the Primary Education Offices of the government

The survey also confirmed that corruption runs rampant in the primary education offices of the Government of Bangladesh: Approximately one-third of responding head teachers reported that they had to bribe officials occasionally. The survey revealed many cases of intentional delays in delivery of services in the Union Parishad Primary Education Offices. Incidents of misbehaviour with teachers during primary school inspection by Education Officers were also reported.

a. Bribery at Education Offices

In response to the question as to whether officials needed to be bribed to provide services that were their duty and responsibility (see *Table 3.12*), 34 per cent of responding head teachers said that they occasionally had to pay bribes. Thirteen per cent said that they had to bribe officials every time. However, 42 per cent replied that they never needed to pay bribes to have things done at the Education Offices. The amount of bribe varied according to the nature of the service required.

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Table 3.12 Bribery at education offices

Bribe required	Victimized head teachers (as a percentage of total)								
	Madhupur	Nalitabari	Mymensingh Sadar	Muktagachha	Kishoreganj Sadar	Sharishabari	Gouripur	Jamalpur Sadar	Total
Always	20.0	0.0	52.2	8.0	4.8	4.5	0.0	10.0	12.86
Sometimes	65.0	36.8	4.3	40.0	57.1	13.6	4.8	65.0	33.92
Never	10.0	31.6	34.8	44.0	28.6	68.2	95.2	15.0	41.52

b. Comparative positions of Upazilla *Education Offices in bribe-taking*

As shown in *Table 3.13*, Madhupur, Jamalpur Sadar and Kishoreganj Sadar *Upazillas* were respectively ranked first, second and third in taking bribes for providing services to schools and teachers. Eighty-five per cent, 75 per cent and 62 per cent of the teachers in these three *Upazillas* acknowledged that they needed to pay various amounts of bribes to various staff in the Education Offices. On the other hand, the Gouripur *Upazilla* Education Office stood at the bottom of the list. Only 4.8 per cent of the teachers of this *Upazilla* said that they had to pay bribes at these offices. Mymensingh Sadar, Muktagachha, Nalitabari and Sharishabari *Upazillas* ranked fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh respectively.

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Table 3.13 Corruption in *Upazilla* education offices

Name of *Upazilla*	Percentage of head teachers facing corruption
Madhupur	85.00
Nalitabari	36.80
Mymensingh Sadar	56.50
Muktagachha	48.00
Kishoreganj Sadar	61.90
Sharishabari	18.10
Gouripur	4.80
Jamalpur Sadar	75.00

c. Delays in service delivery

The survey revealed many instances of deliberate delays in delivery of services in the Education Offices. Head teachers reported that this was quite customary and that they expected delays and planned accordingly. The *Upazilla* Education Offices in Jamalpur Sadar, Madhupur and Nalitabari ranked first, second and third in terms of delayed delivery of services. As illustrated in *Table 3.14*, 95 per cent, 65 per cent and 63 per cent of teachers spoke of delays in service delivery in these three *Upazillas* respectively. Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla* was at the bottom of the list. Only 13 per cent of the teachers of this *Upazilla* complained that the Education Office did not provide timely service. Kishoreganj Sadar, Muktagachha, Sharishabari and Gouripur ranked fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh on delayed delivery of services.

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Table 3.14 Delays in service delivery in *Upazilla* education offices

Name of *Upazilla*	Percentage of affected head teachers
Madhupur	65
Nalitabari	63.2
Mymensingh Sadar	13
Muktagachha	48
Kishoreganj Sadar	57.1
Sharishabari	18.2
Gouripur	14.3
Jamalpur Sadar	95

d. Hostility towards teachers during school inspections

Approximately one-third (29.82 per cent) of responding head teachers made allegations of misconduct/misbehaviour by *Upazilla* Education Officers during school inspections. They reported that these officers displayed arrogance, superciliousness and were often outright rude in their self-importance. However, the majority of head teachers (59.65 per cent) said that the *Upazilla* Education Officer or Assistant Education Officer never misbehaved with them or any of the school teachers. Only 3 per cent of head teachers said that inspecting officers always misbehaved with them during inspections.

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Table 3.15 Hostility towards teachers during school inspections

Name of *Upazilla*	Percentage of respondents facing hostility
Madhupur	65
Nalitabari	84.2
Mymensingh Sadar	43.4
Muktagachha	-
Kishoreganj Sadar	23.8
Sharishabari	22.7
Gouripur	4.8
Jamalpur Sadar	30

It is evident from *Table 3.15* that Nalitabari tops the list of *Upazillas* where the concerned officials from the *Upazilla* Education Office misbehave with teachers when inspecting primary schools. Eighty-four per cent of head teachers in this *Upazilla* spoke bitterly and vociferously about their experiences in this regard. Madhupur and Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla* Education Offices occupied second and third places respectively. Sixty-five per cent of teachers in Madhupur and 43 per cent in Mymensingh Sadar *Upazilla* reported incidents of misbehaviour. Jamalpur Sadar, Kishoreganj Sadar, Sharishabari and Gouripur *Upazillas* occupied the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh positions respectively in this regard. It was a very interesting finding that no teacher in Muktagachha *Upazilla* reported any such incident.

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Chapter 4
Report Card survey results

1. Recommendations

A well-executed survey is a fruitless exercise unless the final package allows citizens to judge the accuracy of the research and utility of the findings. These latter must conform to user expectations and lead to practical interventions.

Once the survey had been completed, TIB made a series of recommendations based on the findings:

- There should be a valid account for collecting extra payments from students. The rate should be identical for all schools and students/ guardians should receive a receipt against these payments. A guideline in this respect could be formulated after discussion in the School Managing Committees;
- The *Upazilla* Nirbahi Officer (UNO)[9] should regularly check Meeting Minutes sent by the School Managing Committees. He/she should send letters to managing committees asking them to keep track of collections and to regularly check the accounts;
- Adequate measures should be taken to alert managing committees about possible corruption in their schools;
- The UNO should ensure that those responsible for school monitoring carry out their duties reliably;

9. The Chief Executive Officer for the *Upazilla.*

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- The UNO should also ensure that 40 per cent of poor students are awarded stipends under the new Government stipend programme[10] and that the required guidelines in awarding the stipends are followed to the letter.

TIB meticulously planned and subsequently launched extensive high-profile advocacy activities based on the findings of the survey and its recommendations.

2. Advocacy activities

TIB conducted widespread advocacy activities based upon the survey findings. The major objectives of the advocacy programme were as follows:

- to curb corruption in the *Upazilla* Education Offices;
- to reduce different kinds of fees extorted by the primary schools;
- to curb corruption in the Food for Education Programme;
- to improve services in the Education Offices; and
- to improve the quality of education in the primary education sector.

TIB's advocacy activities were conducted in the following stages:

- identifying the issues;
- arranging press conferences;
- sending the report to the authorities concerned;
- sending letters to the concerned authorities asking for their co-operation;
- meeting with the concerned authorities and giving recommendations; and
- organizing awareness building seminars in the survey areas.

10. This stipend programme was introduced in July 2002 after the Food for Education programme was brought to an end.

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Media releases proved an effective conduit for disseminating the survey findings. To enable a non-technical audience to assess the accuracy of the findings, media releases stressed the following points:

- major issues explored in the survey;
- the survey sample;
- the response rate;
- analysis of the responses;
- identification of the problem areas; and
- suggested areas for improvement.[11]

The complete report was sent to various government officials to bring the situation to their notice, alert them about incidences of corruption and solicit their co-operation in resolving these irregularities. The following officials received the report:

- Minister for Education, Government of Bangladesh;
- State Minister for Education, Government of Bangladesh;
- Member of the Parliament of each CCCs area;
- Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh;
- Director-General, Directorate of Primary Education;
- Deputy Commissioners of Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Sherpur, Tangail and Jamalpur districts;
- Additional Deputy Commissioners of Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Sherpur, Tangail and Jamalpur districts;
- District Education Officers of Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Sherpur, Tangail and Jamalpur districts;
- *Upazilla* Nirbahi Officers of all CCC areas;
- *Upazilla* Primary Education Officers and Assistant Primary Education Officers of all CCC areas;

11. *Training workshop for the governance coalition, Bangladesh on the Report Card approach: A resource kit* (2001).

- Presidents and Secretaries of the *Upazilla* Primary Teachers' Associations of Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Nalitabari, Muktagachha, Madhupur and Jamalpur *Upazillas*.[12]

Each CCC sent letters to the District Administration, the District Education Offices, the *Upazilla* Primary Education Offices and the *Upazilla* Primary Teachers' Associations seeking permission to meet with them (see *Table 4.1*). The main objective of these meetings was to seek co-operation from the authorities in curbing the corruption in the primary education sector that was identified in the survey. Most of the authorities agreed to the meetings to discuss the report at length. Some government officers and teachers criticized the findings but others appreciated the initiatives taken by TIB.

12. *Combating corruption through promoting integrity in Public Service Delivery System* (2003).

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Table 4.1 Advocacy meetings on the Report Card survey

Types of advocacy meeting	Meetings in CCC Areas						Total
	Madhupur	Nalitabari	Mymensingh Sadar	Muktagachha	Jamalpur Sadar	Kishoreganj Sadar	Total
Press conference	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Meeting with district administration	-	-	2	-	1	1	4
Meeting with *Upazilla* administration	1	-	-	1	-	1	3
Meeting with District Primary Education Officer	-	-	1	1	-	1	3
Meeting with *Upazilla* Primary Education Officer	1	-	1	-	1	1	4
Meeting with Teachers' Associations	1	1	-	1	1	1	6
Meeting with head teachers	2	1	-	-	1	-	4
Meeting with Civil Society	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Meeting with *Upazilla* Education Committee	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Seminars	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	7	5	6	4	5	7	35

Source: Transparency International Bangladesh, 2003.

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3. Impact of the study

The final analysis was released and put in the public domain/forums for discussion and debate. Public officials, confronted with such public opinion ratings on the quality of service delivery, were called upon to provide explanations for their shortcomings and irregularities. The end result of this exercise was to:

- improve the quality of services provided;
- reduce the level of discretionary power exercised by civil servants; and
- increase the level of accountability by involving citizens in the entire process of monitoring the service delivery institutions.

The survey involved concerned citizens of the locality from the very outset of the process. These groups were representative of the local communities and TIB strived to involve them intimately with the survey process in order to develop ownership and sustainability of future advocacy programmes. The survey solidly placed the information generated in the public domain.

Important feedback was received from the citizens/users on:

- availability of services;
- satisfaction with services;
- responsiveness of service providers;
- hidden costs of services/corruption;
- willingness to pay for better services; and
- quality of life.

The survey also proved successful in developing a working relationship with local service providers in order to make future acceptance of citizens' feedback and engagement possible. Of course, such interaction varied from

person to person or from institution to institution. A high level of tact and understanding proved essential in order not to tread on toes or to display what might be interpreted as insensitivity. The most important element was the spontaneous and eager involvement of the concerned citizens. Without such involvement the project would have been undermined or sabotaged by the intransigence of the local bureaucracy/politicians.

The District Administrations concerned gave positive assurance to assist with advocacy activities and take necessary steps to implement the recommendations of the report. The Additional Deputy Commissioners also made a number of suggestions of their own to curb corruption in the primary education sector. Some District Primary Education Officers have taken initiatives to improve services in the *Upazilla* Primary Education Offices. A number of head teachers (outside the respondents) criticized the report, however most appreciated and agreed with the findings. The Primary Teachers' Associations of the concerned *Upazillas* appreciated the initiatives of TIB and related their experiences in the Education Offices where they often faced corruption. Leaders of the Associations agreed with most of the findings of the report and promised to implement the recommendations of the report. The members of the Associations also accepted invitations to work alongside TIB in curbing corruption in the primary education sector.

TIB has created an innovative advocacy tool called the People's Theatre as a means of generating awareness about and against corruption at all levels of society and its adverse impact on the country. The general aim of the theatre is to visualize the negative impact of corruption and to create consciousness among the general public in relation to the available service from the state. Findings of the Report Card survey have been incorporated into these theatre performances in order to encourage people to reject corrupt practices and create a demand for anti-corruption programmes that would enhance the level of service provided by the service delivery sectors.

A number of meetings were also organized with members of civil society and with various civil society organizations. The discussions focused on ways and means to overcome corruption in primary education. Participants were representatives of different segments of society. The Kishoreganj CCC also organized a seminar on 'Faults in basic education and solution' on 22 August 2002. The main objective of the seminar was to inform various groups of people about different types of corruption in the primary education sector. The seminar was very well attended and an extremely fruitful discussion ensued. Later on, a series of workshops was organized based upon the survey findings on the role of civil society in ensuring transparency and accountability in the public sector. The survey was tremendously successful in engaging the interest of other civil society organizations and the media. TIB has found that the wider the constituency, the greater the success rate in terms of continued advocacy.

In terms of the changes introduced in comparison with previous practices, the survey made the following impact:

- Most of the *Upazilla* Primary Education Offices have become aware of incidents of irregularities in their offices and have taken initiatives to curb corruption. As a result, corruption has somewhat reduced in these offices. A number of teachers informed the CCCs that subsequent to the report being published and the high-profile advocacy activities being conducted, they no longer have to pay bribes to the education office to obtain services;
- Most of the education officials agreed with the findings of the report. Only a very small number of criticized the findings and complained that the report tarred them with the same brush regardless of the level/ degree of irregularities;
- The CCCs were able to establish very good relations with the authorities, teachers and the administration;

- The CCCs were able to talk to more than 500 head teachers of primary schools and a large number of education officers;
- As a result of CCC advocacy, a number of education offices decided on a fixed amount of fees for various purposes. Before the advocacy, the amount was not fixed and a large number of schools collected a huge amount of money as fees from students for various purposes. For instance, the examination fee for the students of Madhupur was on average BDT 20. After the CCC initiatives, the authorities decided to collect BDT 15 per student as examination fees. The officials of other areas have also taken decisions to fix lower ceilings for these fees;
- Teachers have become alert about the consequences of collecting unauthorized payments from students.

In terms of approach, from a political point of view TIB has found a bipartisan approach critical. Concerned citizens maintaining an equal distance in relation to the main political parties can make the difference between success and failure of the initiative. The survey has also presented an opportunity for the 'other side' to present their case. The level of interaction has depended on the existing relationship between concerned citizens and service delivery institutions. It has been TIB's experience that it is far more effective if service delivery institutions can be persuaded that the data is acceptable and that there is need for improvement. Such an acceptance can jump start future advocacy campaigns.

The survey was able to identify the nature and extent of corruption in the primary education sector in the selected areas. As a result of continued advocacy, the concerned authorities were alerted about corruption in their areas and took appropriate measures in this regard. The report also contributed towards establishing good relations with the relevant authorities. However, changes in the behaviour of officials and improvements in the quality of services that they provide are very slow. The above-mentioned findings indicate that only minor improvements have taken place. In some of the TIB working areas in Bangladesh the various incidences of corruption have only slightly

lowered. TIB hopes that over a period of time such 'questioning' by an enlightened group of concerned citizens will help to increase the level of accountability of these public servants.

4. Problems and constraints

The concept of a participatory monitoring process in relation to such service delivery institutions as schools and government education offices is a new and innovative approach in Bangladesh. Surveys findings in time became advocacy tools, i.e. the findings were disseminated to raise awareness, which led to demand for better services. In this regard, TIB faced a number of difficulties in implementing its recommendations:

- There were excessive delays in arranging meetings with the authorities concerned. It took a long time to persuade them and to then make appointments;
- There was significant apprehension on the part of government teachers and officers in co-operating with TIB. A number of officials were initially uneasy about TIB. Most primary school teachers, being government employees, were not enthusiastic about assisting TIB because of possible sanctions from the authorities concerned. A number of officials were also anxious about the motives behind the survey. As a result, they did not participate in advocacy activities;
- A number of officials and teachers became unhappy with TIB and the CCCs for putting the survey findings in the public domain. For instance, the *Upazilla* Education Officer of Muktagachha (who incidentally was also a member of the Muktagachha CCC) resigned from the CCC after the release of the report. Furthermore, she displayed a highly non-co-operative attitude and no longer took part in any activity carried out by TIB and the CCC;
- The Official Secrets Act of 1923 was often cited by Government officers to withhold information.

Chapter 5
Conclusions and future perspectives

1. Lessons learned

TIB has learned some valuable lessons from implementing this project. Last minute decisions and changes were a great hindrance and in many cases the absence of a systematic work plan hampered the process. The necessity of cordial relations with the concerned authorities and the value of systematic consultations with all levels of stakeholders have also been learnt. TIB has also realized that an advocacy team should be not only highly motivated and able to rise above petty differences for the sake of a greater cause: It should also be well trained so that it may carry out its responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. Finally, a realistic budget should be prepared with adequate allocations in order to ensure that project components can be optimally implemented without constraints.

2. Future plans

TIB plans to try to curb the particular incidences of corruption revealed by the survey, through the following actions:

- arranging a number of Focus Group Discussions with different education officials at *Upazilla* and District levels and at the Secretariat;
- meeting with the leaders of different Teachers' Associations;
- holding informal discussions with the guardians of the students;

- meeting with the food distributors involved with the Food for Education Programme;[13] and
- conducting periodic Report Card surveys to assess changes, note progress and highlight areas for further improvement.

3. Conclusion

Corruption in Bangladesh has now become a huge systemic problem that cannot be avoided by any member of society. It has become to a great extent almost part and parcel of the country's culture. It is necessary to develop first and foremost a holistic approach in order to curb corruption. Furthermore, in the present context of increasing globalization, the fight against corruption needs to originate primarily from an indigenous perspective in order to be effective.

Corruption, defined as misuse of public resources and office for private and personal gain, is an endemic issue in most developing countries. It affects the quality of life of ordinary citizens in many ways but one such manifestation is the poor and deteriorating level of service delivery in sectors such as health and education. Researchers and practitioners have identified a number of reasons for such malfeasance. Among the most common reasons are the high level of discretionary power of service providers, the minimal level of accountability between service providers and recipients and the lack of 'exit routes' or choice available to service recipients.

In such circumstances it is often difficult for citizens to confront service providers directly. It is even more difficult, politically and socially, for poor

13. CCC members had planned to sit with the distributors to identify the reasons behind the various irregularities. However, the Government of Bangladesh stopped the Programme in June 2002. At present there is a Stipend Programme (since July 2002) that gives 60 per cent of students BDT 100 per month.

citizens to openly cite corruption of bureaucrats and politicians, who tend to control the provision of such basic services as health and education. In order to overcome this initial hurdle civil society organizations have been involving citizens in a participatory monitoring process in relation to such service delivery institutions as schools, hospitals/health centres, courts and municipalities.

An empowered citizenry is the mainstay of a country's national integrity system. Citizens need to be informed, aware of their rights, willing to claim them and prepared where necessary to complain without fearing eventual oppression. Substantial and lasting change will be accomplished only if a large number of people from every socioeconomic background demand accountability and transparency in the way services are provided.

This Report Card survey was conducted as part of TIB's efforts to raise awareness of the general public of corruption in certain service delivery sectors of the country. The objective of conducting the Report Card survey in these six *Upazillas* was that the findings could be used as an advocacy tool for curbing corruption and to establish good governance in those areas. The Report Card surveys carried out in some of these *Upazillas* have been instrumental in initiating changes in the quality of primary education. The exercise has succeeded in creating greater awareness among both citizens (users) and government agencies (service providers). Dialogue with service providers for reform has been an important outcome of these exercises. The Report Card model has also been applied to the study of significant themes such as quality of health care services in public hospitals and, more recently, to the service delivery of the local government system and land administration.

This was Bangladesh's first independent assessment of the quality of public services by citizens and it provided the platform for a paradigm shift in performance management and accountability in public service delivery. This tool can be a powerful new instrument of collective public voice for effective change at all levels of government and all stages of democracies. TIB hopes

that the Report Card approach will be replicated by other like-minded organizations and that it will also be used to assess the quality of governance at the state level.

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Appendix
Advocacy techniques and characteristics

Advocacy: Advocacy is a process of effective communication that is used to influence the opinion and behaviour of policy planners and decision-makers towards a specific goal.
Advocacy = to influence policy makers to frame pro-people policies
Advocate = those who work to influence policy makers to frame pro-people policies
Lawyer = legal practitioners working on the side of the law

Characteristics of advocacy:

a) planned and continuous work
b) always directed towards positive transformation
c) demands newer arrangements in existing power relations
d) promotes the interests of the people in the policy process
e) involves those people who have stakes in the formulated policy
f) a dynamic and creative process

Advocacy strategies: Five strategies are adopted for achieving the primary objective and for executing the main programme.
These are:
Co-operation strategy: the main purpose is to build collaboration between the community, group, the state and/or business sector.
Education strategy: the main purpose is to build political awareness and raise critical consciousness; involves strengthening NGOs.

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Litigation strategy: the main purpose is to promote change by using the court system.
Persuasion strategy: the main purpose is to use information, analysis and citizens' mobilization to press for change.
Conformation strategy: the purpose is to voice protest to draw attention to the negative policy impacts and bring pressure for change; this can lead to conflicts.

Qualities of an advocate

- a clear idea of the relevant issues
- capacity for analysis of social scenario
- idea about different phases and practical implications/ramifications of the issue
- good communicator
- wisdom
- capacity to analyze the situation
- capacity to give prompt decisions
- a good organizer
- drive and initiative
- time conscious
- good planner
- mental readiness to accept other people's opinion
- good speaker

Different processes of advocacy

a) Building a network: building a network among those who look at the problem with similar views and attitudes and are prepared to face it. This is considered the first step in working on a particular issue.
b) Building a short-term coalition: to build a short-term coalition with those individuals and organizations that work for same or similar short-term

goals. This type of coalition may undergo change anytime; it is better to give it a permanent shape. It can be more effective if unexpected allies – who are not generally considered to be allies – can be included in the coalition.

c) Building a long-term coalition: to build and sustain a long-term coalition with regular action programmes in order to attain specific aims, objectives and decisions. Different individuals and organizations of various segments of the civil society with different ideologies or individual segments such as women can also be partners in this coalition. These coalitions are most effective when they are ready to jump into action on any issue.

d) Mass media: The mass media should be involved as the role played by the mass media in projecting the hopes and aspirations of the people is crucial in the formulation and transformation of policies.

e) Legislature: In Bangladesh, the principal decision-making authorities are the parliament, parliamentary standing committees and relevant government officials, whether elected officials or government officers: The power of making decisions lies with them. As a result, decision-makers within the 'government' must be approached. Frequently pressured by various vested interests, they surrender to these vested interests if the people do not apply a counter-force to them.

Theoretically, the parliament or parliamentarians are very important in the political system of Bangladesh due to its law-making function. Many other people are directly or indirectly involved in the formulation of a law or bill. For example, officials of ministries, ministers, the cabinet and different parliamentary committees are intimately involved with the law-making process. Thus, to be able to influence the legislative and policy process, it is important to have a good idea of the whole law-making process; besides, communication must be maintained on a continuous basis with officers of different levels, the parliamentary committees, members of parliament and the ministers.

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Practical aspects of advocacy: As a policy activist, some preparatory tasks are essential when undertaking advocacy work or lobbying with the local member of parliament or relevant government officials. This is because any advocacy work or lobbying has a specific agenda or objective. Orderly and well-planned steps are needed to achieve these objectives, which gradually lead to the goals. First, it is essential to fix an agenda. For example, we can consider the subject of conservation of Sal (*Shorea robusla*) forest. To start advocacy or lobbying on this agenda, the first requirement is the sale of the objective. The objectives for advocacy on the subject may include: (i) to preserve the Sal forest which is nearing extinction, and (ii) economic and social empowerment of the local people through participation of the poor in the management of Sal forest.

Following this, a lobbyist or policy activist would need to know all information about a Sal forest. This may include the present land area of the Sal forest, the land area that is surrounded by Sal trees, the degree of destruction of the forest during the past two decades, government and private initiatives for forest conservation and general information about the outcome of these initiatives.

The above-mentioned information would assist an advocate or lobbyist by serving as the primary basis for conducting a lobbying programme on "Sal forest conservation" with the elected MP of the area, relevant forest official and local people. Apart from these, a lobbyist must also have a clear idea about many other practical aspects (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2001).

Study 2

Quality Schools Programme in Mexico – Improving accountability and transparency in schools*

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Executive summary

This research analyzes the implementation of the Quality Schools Programme (QSP) created in 2001. This programme delegates functions to elementary education schools so they can improve material and pedagogical aspects of their teaching. School directors, teachers and students' parents are responsible for developing a school project, which is financed by the QSP. The QSP introduces mechanisms for social participation that can promote transparency and accountability during QSP implementation. These mechanisms can also prevent, and fight, corruption practices. QSP execution overcomes vertical and bureaucratic practices in education sector policies by promoting horizontal relationships among school community members that foster mutual responsibility in solving problems. The QSP also promotes the contribution of external actors to schools' development. QSP operations demand negotiations among school directors, teachers and parents: Policy networks for QSP implementation are formed as a result.

The policy networks approach used in this research highlights the balance of power between actors implementing the QSP. Actors' interactions within networks determine success in achieving transparency, accountability and social participation in schools during QSP implementation. To assess success in these areas, this research has developed case studies in 25 schools in five Mexican states in order to interview members of School Councils such as directors, teachers and parents. School sector chiefs, school supervisors and State QSP Co-ordinators were also interviewed. In total, 118 interviews were undertaken, the results of which were codified according to the following indicators: level of social participation, transparency and accountability. These indicators made it possible to rank schools according to low or high performance as well as the extent to which QSP rules were followed.

Indicators of social participation were lower than those of transparency and accountability in most of the case studies. The most active school members sit on the School Councils: They trigger transparency and accountability in order to encourage school community participation in QSP implementation. The main lesson for public policies, in Mexico and in other countries, is that policies based on mutual responsibility create incentives for transparency during decision-making processes at schools while at the same time promoting accountability at the school level. Those schools identified with low performance warn us about potential problems that can develop during QSP operations. Among these problems are: lack of collective work, lack of transparency in decision-making and dominance of a small number of actors during QSP development. These problems must be prevented in order to successfully implement the QSP in the future and to discourage corrupt practices.

Introduction

This report deals with the experience of designing and implementing a new programme in Mexico to enhance the quality of elementary education: the Quality Schools Programme (QSP). This programme was initiated in 2001 and has among its purposes to eliminate bureaucratic culture by promoting horizontal relations in which responsibilities at the school level are shared among school directors, teachers and parents in order to advance children's education and improve schools. The design of QSP established among its priorities the promotion of transparency and accountability in schools in order to solve problems of efficiency and effectiveness. It was not designed with the purpose of ending specific situations where corruption could be present, but rather to contribute to fighting them.

The QSP promotes community participation through formulation and implementation by each school community of a *school project* that must foster quality and improvement in the environment for children's education. The QSP allocates financial resources that are administrated directly by each school in the programme. Consequently it is important that school communities, which represent social participation, demand transparency and accountability in relation to their school projects and the use of financial resources.

The National QSP Co-ordination sponsored the present research, the objective of which is to analyze QSP implementation at 25 schools in five Mexican states. This study was undertaken from July to September 2003. The main finding is that QSP design, based on shared responsibilities among school community members (such as the school director and parents' and teachers' representatives) fosters co-operation and mutual supervision. This brought, first of all, more efficient and transparent decision-making processes

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inside schools and secondly the promotion of a culture of accountability. It is emphasized that the design of QSP facilitates social prevention of corruption practices. This paper begins by introducing a brief background of the administration of the education sector in Mexico. In *Chapter 2*, the implementation of QSP is described. In *Chapter 3*, political relationships surrounding QSP implementation are analyzed. *Chapter 4* develops the research methodology. *Chapter 5* introduces research results and is followed by conclusions.

Chapter 1
Elementary education administration in Mexico

The federal government, through the National Ministry of Education, and the National Teachers' Union signed the National Agreement for Elementary Education Modernization in 1992. This supported three main policies to reform public elementary education, which were: i) to reorganize its administration by decentralizing responsibilities to the state governments, ii) to improve appreciation of society by teachers by introducing a civil service or *carrera magisterial*, and iii) to reformulate the content of nationally-used textbooks for elementary education schools.

The National Agreement becomes relevant to the decentralization of public elementary education if one takes into account that from 1921 to 1992 this type of education was mainly the responsibility of the federal government. When the process of decentralization took place in 1992, 21 million students, 800,000 teachers (equivalent to 72.6 per cent of the total number of elementary education teachers in the country) and 154,000 elementary education schools (comprising kindergarten, primary and secondary education) were transferred from the federal government to the states for their administration (Barba, 2000; Moctezuma, 1994).

If we define decentralization as the *deconcentration* and/or *devolution* of decision-making authority (Allen, 1990), the National Agreement was an incomplete decentralized policy, or a *functional devolution*, in the sense that responsibilities were assigned but not accompanied by decision-making power (Cabrero *et al*, 1997; Santizo, 1997). In other words, state government administrators must strictly follow federal directives for education policies,

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leaving few opportunities to develop local initiatives or foster innovation. Furthermore, the elementary education sector in Mexico has been characterized by the absence of accountability mechanisms and means to promote transparency, which also reaches the school level.

Mexican public administrations have focused on enacting *government policies*, leaving aside the *public* side of policies, in the sense that the constituency had no role in public policies' formulation or implementation (Cabrero, 2000). In 2001 the federal government through the Ministry of Education created the QSP as a policy that incorporated the public side of public policies as it focuses on the school level to empower school communities. School communities should improve aspects of pedagogy and infrastructure that have an effect on schools' development and the quality of education provided; the QSP therefore contributes to ending the centralization trend that characterized the Mexican education system from its origins until recent developments.

During its first year of operations, the school year 2001-2002, the QSP counted 2,240 participating schools. Two years later, during the school year 2003-2004, the QSP aimed to include 15,000 schools. This target represented 16 per cent of the total number of public schools in which the QSP could be applied.

Box 1. Schools participating in the QSP by school year

In the early stages, the QSP operated in primary schools situated in poor urban areas only. In 2002, however, schools for indigenous people in rural areas and schools with facilities to provide secondary education through TV broadcasting were included.

	Cycle 2001-2002	Cycle 2002-2003	Cycle 2003-2004 Goal set by the QSP
QSP Schools	2,240	9,820	15,211
Total of schools[1]	93,996	94,507	94,507*
% of QSP schools	2.4	10.4	16.1

* This total represents all public primary education schools in the country including indigenous education. In addition secondary education through TV broadcasting (*telesecundarias* in Spanish) is included. For the school year 2003-2004, the total amount of schools from the previous year was considered.

The QSP strategy for implementation is based on the construction of inclusive or extensive social participation as well as the improvement of accountability and transparency mechanisms in public management. In this sense, the QSP programme is fostering the formation of networks for implementation and QSP principles could develop into a fight against corruption from the most basic unit in the education sector: the school. Moreover, democracy in Mexico is experiencing a process of consolidation and therefore a programme such as the QSP has the challenge of multiplying its effects on other public policies.

Chapter 2
QSP design for implementation

The QSP promotes community participation through formulation and implementation by each school community of a *school project* that is financed by the QSP but conditional on schools' acquisition of additional funding from municipal authorities and the private sector.[14] A school community comprehends the school director, teachers and parents.

School communities are organized around their projects and the relationships established between their members are at the heart of QSP implementation.[15] This section describes the administrative structure of the QSP and the process of resource allocation to school projects. *Chapter 3* focuses on analytical issues to explain relationships among actors during QSP implementation.

14. The State Council for social participation select school projects according to the rules for projects selection established in the QSP operation rules described in *Appendix 1*.

15. This paper takes into account QSP operation rules for the school year 2002-2003 where schools developed school projects. These rules changed for the school year 2003-2004, when the school project changed its name to Strategic Project for School Transformation (*Plan Estratégico de Transformación Escolar* or PETE in its Spanish acronym) which represents a broader concept of school transformation. A PETE should contain results of a school management's self-evaluation, a brief description of the school's vision as well as its mission towards its community and the functions and compromises of the director and teachers. In addition, a PETE should describe the objectives and strategies that the director and its teachers will follow to improve their school's operations in three dimensions: its management, its pedagogical techniques and its community's participation. See rule 4.4.1.3 of the *QSP National Operation Rules*, The Federation Official Diary, 29 August 2003.

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Box 2. Characteristics of school projects

QSP operation rules for 2002-2003 established (in rule 5) that each state would design its own strategy for QSP operation according to their own school transformation programmes and the support needed by schools in poor areas. A school project is an instrument for planning and development. Planning should comprehend at least 5 years so as to overcome problems associated with short-term planning or annual planning. The school project should start from the analysis of the school's diagnostic (rule 5.3.1). Each school community should express its vision, goals, strategies and compromises in its project. A project must also include strategies for innovation and actions for each one of the following three dimensions: (i) the organization of the general functioning of a school, (ii) teaching, and (iii) collaboration between the school and parents.

Rule 4.15 mandates that 80 per cent of QSP resources received by schools should be used to buy pedagogical material and for school maintenance and equipment such as furniture or books. The remaining 20 per cent can be used for teacher training, courses to update the director's skills and parental guidance.

In practice, each school project must include three elements:

- a diagnosis of the school's situation including its main problems or needs. Problems and needs in each school should be identified through a survey of parents and teachers. Once problems have been identified these should be ranked and priorities established;
- general and specific objectives and the activities necessary to attain them, those responsible for each activity and the evaluation instruments to be used. Specific objectives should refer to each of the following three topics:
  - teaching methods;
  - school management; and
  - relationships between parents and school authorities;
- an annual working plan that should include all those proposed actions as well as sources of funding and actions and their costs according to the following activities:
  - building plans, acquisition of equipment and books;
  - school maintenance and acquisition of pedagogical material;
  - other activities to reinforce teaching and learning processes.

1. QSP administrative structure for implementation

Three main groups of administrative structure are involved in QSP implementation as shown in *Figure 2.1*.[16] The first group is composed of each school's Council for Social Participation (School Council). This council is composed of a school director, who is president of the Council; a parents' representative who in most cases is the President of the Parents Association; and a teachers' representative who may in turn be the representative of the National Teachers' Union in his/her school.[17] School Councils have functions that include the formulation of school projects, management of projects' financial resources and supervision of the achievement of project objectives.

16. See Table 11, Participants in the program and their main responsibilities, "QSP National Operation Rules", published in *The Federation Official Diary*, Mexico City, on 3 March 2002.

17. School Councils for Social Participation were created before the QSP regulations of 2001 by the General Law for Education of 1993 (see Articles 68 to 73). School Councils, however, were given concrete operational functions in 2001 when the QSP was created.

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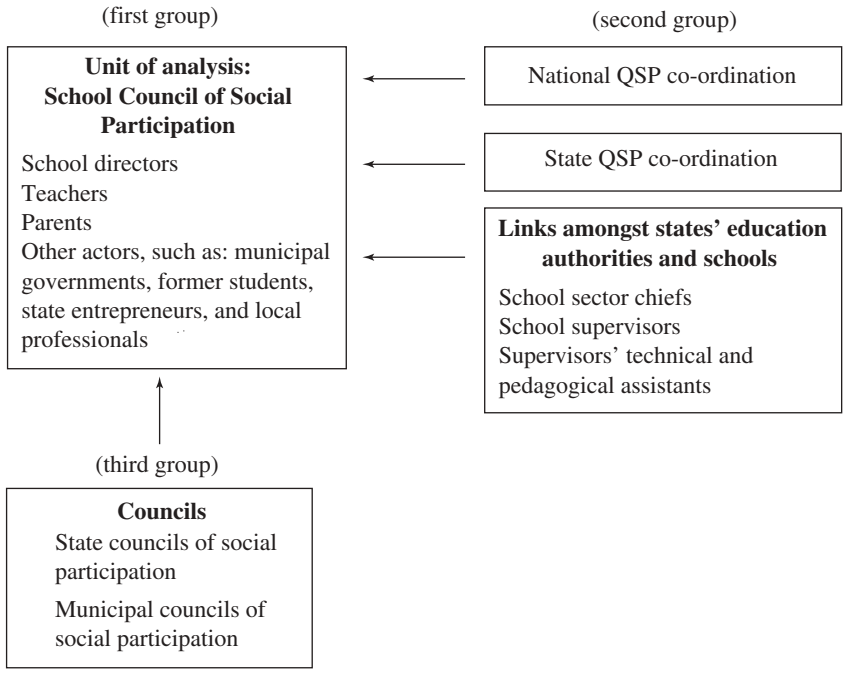
Figure 2.1 Scheme of actors during QSP implementation



The National and State QSP Co-ordinations, made up of the education authorities, are part of a second group of administrative structures. State QSP Co-ordinations are responsible for implementing the QSP in each state. They select school projects and in co-ordination with other agencies supervise the application of QSP evaluations in participating schools. In this second group those who serve as a link (or *enlace*) between schools and each State QSP Co-ordination are included. Among these latter are: School Sector Chiefs, School Inspectors or Supervisors and Supervisors' Technical Pedagogical Assistants.

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Box 3. QSP school selection process

The QSP application process involves the following five stages:

1) school registration once the QSP opening has been published by the State QSP co-ordination;
2) school directors and teacher training for elaboration of school project;
3) school projects and annual programme formulation for each of the applicant schools;
4) school project assessment; and
5) school project selection.

Rule 5.2 indicates that QSP participation is voluntary and that all schools that comply with the requirements established by the QSP can apply for the project selection process. However, schools should commit themselves to activating their School Council for Social Participation and directors and teachers should receive training for their school project and annual programme elaboration.

Finally, the State and Municipal Councils for Social Participation comprise a third group. The General Law for Education of 1993 (see *Box 4*) established these Councils in addition to the School Councils. Parents' and teachers' representatives as well as officials of education and members of the local community should be part of State and Municipal Councils (see *Box 2*). Each year State Councils select those schools that will be part of the QSP based on the advice produced by each state selection committee (see *Chapter 2* and *Section 1*). Furthermore, Municipal Councils should promote the involvement of schools in the QSP. These Councils are responsible along with School Councils for seeking donations for school projects, which can be provided by the private and social sectors in each local community.

Box 4. State and municipal Councils for Social Participation

The General Law for Education of 1993 established that education authorities must promote society's participation in activities related to education.

Article 70 of the General Law establishes that in each municipality a Municipal Council for Social Participation will operate. Municipal authorities, parents and their associations, distinguished teachers, school directors, teachers' unions and social organizations' representatives as well as any person interested in the improvement of education may sit on these Councils.

Article 71 establishes that State Councils for Social Participation will have a consultancy role in the education sector, therefore providing advice and support. In these Councils parents and their associations, teachers and their union's representatives as well as pedagogical institutions, state and municipal authorities and those members of society with an interest on education will have their participation ensured.

In the State of Aguascalientes, for example, the State Council was composed of a supervisor of secondary education; the director of indigenous education; municipality representatives, some of whom are teachers; education officials from each municipality; a teacher's union representative; primary and secondary school directors' representatives; the state's parents' association representatives; and representatives of society such as doctors and media workers. There were 33 members of the State Council for Social Participation in Aguascalientes in 2003.

The Municipal Council of the city of Aguascalientes was composed in 2002 of the president of the parents' association; municipality and teachers' union's representatives; education officials such as supervisors; representatives of parents and school directors at the primary and secondary education levels; and distinguished teachers at the same levels of education. There were also some representatives of social organizations and the commerce sector. This Municipal Council comprised a total of 21 members.

There are administrative instances for QSP operation that were not included in the fieldwork stage of this analysis, such as the QSP Technical Committees of the States Trusteeship and the State QSP Project Selection Committees.

2. Allocation of resources for the QSP

The QSP budget is composed mainly of federal and state government financial resources, complemented with funds collected by School Councils. QSP national operation rules set the financial allocation to the QSP and to each school as follows: The federal government provides funding for the QSP to each state according to the proportion of the population aged between 4 and 14 years enrolled in elementary education in each state, on the condition that states commit themselves to providing additional financial supporting the programme.[18] In 2001, the federal government provided funding to the states on a 2 for 1 basis. This means it gave 2 pesos for each peso provided by each state, however this rule changed in 2002 and 2003 when the federal government provided funding on a 3 for 1 basis. The federal government currently finances 75 per cent of the total QSP budget in each state, the other 25 per cent being provided by local governments as shown in *Figure 2.2*.

18. Federal contributions to QSP are deposited in the National Trusteeship of the QSP (or *Fideicomiso Nacional de Escuelas de Calidad* in Spanish) and contributions to each state are transferred to each State Trusteeship of the QSP, which administers these funds in each state.

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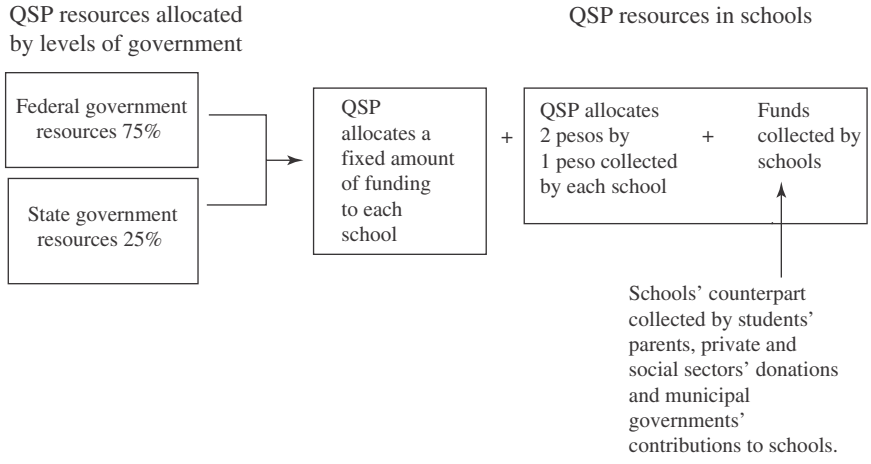
Figure 2.2 Resources for QSP implementation by type of source



Source: Data collected by the authors.

A School Council can obtain resources for its school project as shown in the second part of *Figure 2.2*. First, the QSP assigns a fixed amount to each school. Secondly, it assigns an additional amount depending on the amount collected by the school community on a 2 for 1 basis, meaning 2 pesos for each peso collected by the school. School Councils can collect financial resources from parents, municipal governments or the private sector. Parents' contributions can be through annual quotas, activities organized by parent associations[19] and parents' voluntary work, which has a monetary value that is estimated by the State QSP Co-ordination. Municipal governments and the private sector can contribute with financial or material resources.

19. Parent associations run activities such as lotteries, special events or a school co-operative operated during school breaks to sell refreshments.

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From its inception in 2001 until its third year of operation in 2003, the federal government has allocated to the QSP a total of US$292.4 millions (at 2003 values), which represents 68.7 per cent of the total resources that the QSP has received as shown in *Table 2.1*. State governments have contributed to the programme with 20.7 per cent of resources and School Councils have been able to collect 14.5 per cent of resources for the QSP from municipalities and the private sector.

Table 2.1 QSP sources of funding (millions of pesos – 2003 constant value)

	School year					
Source of funding	2001-2002 a	2002-2003 b	2003-2004 c	Total QSP funding by 2003 at Present value** pesos ($a*r_1+b*r_2+c$)	Total QSP funding by 2003 in millions of US$***	%
Federal Government*	407	1,278	1,277	3,156	292.4	68.7
State Government *	156	366	365	952	88.2	20.7
Municipalities and private sector**	63	266	300	665	61.6	14.5
Total	605	1,838	1,867	4,594	425.7	100.0

* Source of funding established in the QSP national operation rules. Federal funding includes 6 per cent of resources for QSP administration and funding for the QSP in the Distrito Federal, the capital city.

** Amounts published in the QSP electronic page.

*** Present value of 2003 of the total resources allocated to QSP since 2001 until 2003. r_1 and r_2 correspond to interests rates used to calculate the present value.

Sources: National QSP Operation Rules 2001, 2002 and 2003; www.escuelasdecalidad.net/pub/numeralia/index.html

At the school level, the allocation of resources on a 2 for 1 basis has not changed, however the amount provided by the QSP to each school at the beginning of the school year has been modified as shown in Table 2.2. In 2001, the QSP allocated a fix amount of 100,000 pesos per school in the programme at the beginning of the school year. In addition, schools could collect up to 66,600 pesos in order to receive, on a 2 for 1 basis, a maximum amount of 133,300 pesos from the QSP. Thus, the maximum total annual budget per school in the programme was of 300,000 pesos (around US$32,000 at 2001 rates).[20]

Table 2.2 Maximum funding provided by the QSP to schools by school year in current pesos (total in current US$)

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Fixed amount allocated by QSP	100,000	50,000	50,000
Variable amount allocated by QSP	133,333	166,667	125,000
School contributions	66,667	83,333	62,500
Total in pesos	300,000	300,000	237,500
Total in US$	32,116.9	31,053.9	22,006.5

The QSP rule mentioned changed in 2002. Although the maximum budget per school project was maintained at 300,000 pesos (around US$31,000 at 2002 rates), the QSP allocated a fixed amount of 50,000 pesos at the beginning of the school year per school in the programme. In addition, each school should collect up to 83,300 pesos in order to receive funds on a 2 for 1 basis and be able to double that amount. Only in special cases, depending on the QSP State Coordination's decision, could a school receive a fixed amount of 100,000 pesos at the beginning of the school year.[21] The decrease in the initial amount of 100,000 pesos to 50,000 pesos was due to the rapid increase

20. QSP National Operation Rules, Federation Official Diary, 3 April 2001.
21. QSP National Operation Rules, Federation Official Diary, 13 March 2002.

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in the number of schools in the programme, which was not accompanied by an increase in federal and state resources for the QSP. In 2003, given public budget restraints and the growth of programme, the maximum amount provided by the QSP to schools was 175,000 pesos and the maximum total budget per school was of 237,500 pesos (around US$22,000 at 2003 rates).[22]

During the school year 2001-2002, schools collected 12 per cent of additional financial and material resources from municipalities and activities organized by parents (see *Table 2.3*). A smaller amount of 4 per cent was obtained from entrepreneurs and small merchants' donations. At that time, the average amount of resources administered per school stood at US$17,404, which represents 54.19 per cent of the maximum total budget approved (of US$32,116.9) for that period (see *Tables 2.2* and *2.3).*

Table 2.3 Resources received by schools by source and average of resources administered per school during the school year 2001-2002

	2001-2002
QSP contributions	86%
Municipalities	6%
Parents	6%
Others	4%
Total	100%
Average of resources per school (pesos)	162,565 pesos (US$17,404)

Source: Bracho, 2002.

22. "QSP National Operation Rules", *Federation Official Diary*, 29 August 2003.

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Box 5. A school project and funds collected during the school year 2001-2002

The school Rafael Ramírez Castañeda of the State of Aguascalientes required 240,000 pesos from the QSP to develop a 300,000-peso project during the school year 2001-2002. The school therefore had the task of collecting an additional amount of 60,000 pesos. The project output is presented in the following two tables.

The first table below shows that the school collected 61,500 pesos mainly from the municipality and student's parents. Contributions were material and pecuniary in addition to the QSP contribution: This school administered 284,500 pesos for its project.

The second table below shows that this school obtained 94.9 per cent of the total resources required for its school project. In absolute terms, however, the amount administered was superior to the national average per school project of 162,500 pesos.

Sources of funding for the school project (current pesos and dollars in 2001)

		Cash	In kind	Total
Funds collected by school				
Parents	Paint and the job of painting		18,262	18,262
Parents	Fees	5,435		5,435
Municipality	Donation	13,333		13,333
Municipality	Building material		24,492	24,492
Total (a)		18,768	42,754	61,522
QSP funds				
Fix amount (b)				100,000
Variable amount 2: for 1 basis (c)				123,044
Total funds a+b+c				284,566
Total funds (dollars)				30,465

Funding required by activity planned in the school project and funds allocation (current pesos in 2001)

	Planned investment	Funds allocation
Funding to build classrooms, buy furniture for classrooms and books for the library	160,000	40,489
Funding allocation for classroom maintenance and to buy equipment to teach (such as computers)	80,000	243,647
Funding to strengthen learning activities	60,000	- -
Total	300,000	284,137
Percentage of funding obtained by the school to its project		94.9%

The amount of resources collected for school projects reflects the level of commitment to QSP implementation of the actors involved. The QSP financial scheme creates vertical and horizontal accountability obligations. School Councils are vertically accountable to federal and state governments for an efficient and transparent allocation of financial resources. School Councils are also horizontally accountable to school communities as regards the impact and use of all types of resources in the school's project and to donors on the use of those resources that were donated. One point is remarkable: Parents and teachers' representatives are part of each School Council and are therefore decision-makers through whom school communities can exert checks and balances during project implementation. Furthermore, private sector donors that collaborate with QSP implementation have the right to request resource allocation reports and to find out the impact of

expenditure on the education provided. New public management schemes followed by the QSP administration therefore favour mutual accountability (as suggested by Behn[23]) among stakeholders in public elementary education schools.

23. Robert D. Behn promotes the idea of creating webs of mutual and collective responsibility in the education sector. In this way "each one of us will accept that we all have responsibility for improving education". He emphasizes that everyone wants to be an *accountability holder* (to supervise others) but he is proposing to think about each of us as an *accountability holdee* (as one that could be supervised). Behn wishes to end the traditional concept of hierarchical, unidirectional systems of accountability, in particular in education systems where everyone is thinking in terms of holding educators accountable or in terms of holding someone else accountable. In contrast, in *webs of mutual responsibility* parents would be neither clients nor customers nor accountability holders. They would be partners. Behn poses the following questions to make us aware of sharing responsibility and the need to respond to others for the consequences of our acts in relation to achievements in education: Why shouldn't we hold districts accountable? Why shouldn't we hold the school board and city-council members accountable? Why shouldn't we hold state superintendents, state legislators, and governors accountable? Why shouldn't we hold students accountable? Why shouldn't we hold parents and taxpayers accountable? Why shouldn't we hold local business executives, union officials, and other civic leaders accountable? Why are all these people accountability holders? Why can we not think of them as accountability holdees? (Behn, 2003).

Chapter 3
Policy networks for mutual accountability

QSP design is based on new public management and decentralization principles in which power relationships inside the schools will be redefined through community participation in order to constitute new ways of governance that go beyond mere hierarchical and bureaucratic relationships.

New types of governance are based on horizontal relationships that can be analyzed through analytical frameworks for policy networks (such as those developed by Rhodes and Marsh, 1992*a*, 1992*b*; Marsh, 1998; Marsh and Smith, 1996, 2000). Policy network analysis emphasizes interactions between actors in which negotiations or resource exchanges are based on a *mutual resource interdependency situation* (Benson, 1982). Actors negotiate an exchange of material, financial and political resources as well as information and knowledge. Negotiations are based on some type of rational decision-making, in the sense that actors gather all the information possible and attempt to obtain the best result possible from each resource exchange that they undertake.

Classic rationality assumes that actors make decisions based on complete information about the costs and benefits of all their possible alternatives and that all relevant information is common knowledge for the interacting actors (Dowding, 1991). Assuming these conditions all actors' decisions will be transparent for the rest of the actors in the society in the sense that all of them know the costs and benefits of each decision and its possible alternatives. Classical rationality as a result has been criticized in different ways, however its assumptions allow establishing the conditions in which information exists and flows in policy networks, which could determine the existence of different levels of transparency during negotiations and agreement settlement.

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It is necessary to consider some assumptions about the interests and objectives of government officers and employees. One assumption is that government representatives have as their own interest the promotion of the public interest (Laffont, 2000). This would imply that government representatives exchange resources in networks according to the public interest. A second assumption is that of government representatives making decisions under conditions of complete information, as classical rationality assumes.

Both assumptions mentioned above would lead government representatives to make transparent decisions. The assumption of complete information implies that all members of society have the same knowledge and information about an issue as officers. Thus, officers' decisions are transparent to the society. In addition, the assumption that officers are guided by the public interest limits the possibilities of them having a private agenda. In this sense, being accountable appears to be an exercise without complexity. The assumptions of public interest and complete information make easy "the obligation to inform, explain and justify a decision, in other words, of being responsive to a constituency".[24]

These assumptions mentioned above have been questioned in different ways (Simon, 1957, 1997; Tsebelis, 1990; Williamson, 1996). In practice, society does not own complete information and actors possess private information and can obtain private benefits from it. This is an important problem in the public sector as in the best case scenario it may provoke non-efficient and non-effective decisions and in the worst it may facilitate the emergence of corruption, understood as decision-making processes to promote personal benefits.[25] These problems could exist in policy networks for QSP implementation even where the design of the QSP attempts to prevent them.

24. *Random House dictionary of the English language*, 1987 (2nd edition).
25. Transparency International, 2003 at www.transparency.org.

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1. Policy networks for QSP implementation

Negotiations among members of a school community depend on the level of actors' participation and the interest promoted. When a balance of power is in place, mutual oversight among the members of a school community may exist, however it is not rare that some actors dominate negotiations, particularly those actors that possess some *type of authority*. This fact could mean that some decisions are made by leaders and passively accepted by the rest of the community. In cases such as this, a minor participation of parents gives more decision-making power to other actors. Passive actors could comply with certain QSP requirements such as voting in a school meeting. This follows the QSP rule of collegiate decision-making, however it shows that compliance with QSP rules alone cannot ensure achievement of the objectives of transparency, accountability and efficiency in QSP implementation in each school.

Actors' information and *knowledge* are factors that can influence the type of policy network in place in a school community. An actor participating in the QSP is an informed actor when he/she is aware of QSP operation rules, objectives and those responsibilities and rights acquired as well as of his/her right to participate in school project formulation when a school project's objectives are established. For example, members of school communities such as parents and teachers should be aware of how goods and services suppliers are selected and bought. Actors have knowledge of a school project if they know the annual working plan that will be followed, what has been achieved after a short period of time and what still needs to be accomplished when the school year has ended. Actors in a school community must be informed and aware of relevant issues concerning a school project if social participation, transparency and accountability objectives are to be fulfilled.

The level of compliance on each of the issues mentioned above shows the level of actors' participation and the quality of the decisions made.

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Following this reasoning, this research is not focused on the functioning of formal QSP mechanisms but on the way in which these mechanisms are perceived, interpreted and applied by actors during day-to-day decision-making.

Networks can generally operate with minimal membership or a core of members. The core of each QSP policy network is composed of the school director, parents and teacher representatives. These actors are the most active members in a school and therefore regularly participate in school matters, however in a QSP policy network all parents and teachers should participate. In addition, QSP regulations set the conditions for extending these networks by involving other actors in the school environment that could contribute to children's education.

2. Social participation in networks for QSP implementation

The objective of QSP is for education to be seen as an issue for a school community as well as for all those in a school's environment who share an interest on education. There is a pecuniary interest when support from entrepreneurs, professionals and authorities in the community is sought but there is also the purpose of making them responsible for the education of children in their community. This makes networks for QSP implementation appropriate for broadening social participation, which differentiates them from the closed communities that the literature on policy networks has identified as *policy communities* characterized by restricted access (Rhodes, 1986). QSP policy networks' functioning makes them more likely to resemble *issue networks* where access is open, especially to all actors with an interest in and valuable resources to exchange in relation to the pursued objectives. All actors in issue networks could therefore intervene in debates or define public policy orientation. In these networks there is no clear structure or entry

barriers; exit is also flexible as actors can belong to the network on a temporary basis. These networks therefore do not have a rigid structure (Van Waarden, 1992).

The objective of promoting formation of policy networks in schools can encounter some problems, among which is parents' lack of motivation. This tends to occur when parents are not well informed about the schools' functioning. For example, some teachers have pointed out that parents sometimes do not agree to pay an annual voluntary fee for the school or do not participate in collective activities. This is understandable, in part, as parents who send their children to public schools have low incomes and as historically school teachers and directors have not provided explanations of financial resource allocation to parents. If lower levels of trust are shown by parents it is likely that there will be higher levels of uncertainty from actors that are not directly linked to schools, but from whom schools are nowadays asking for co-operation. Under these circumstances, policy networks for QSP implementation are facing difficulties in expanding their membership to include actors of the school environment or the social community that have traditionally been outsiders to schools.

3. Transparency and accountability in networks for QSP implementation

The QSP makes School Councils accountable to their superior authorities (vertical accountability) and to the school community and donors (horizontal accountability). In addition, parents and teachers' participation can reinforce demands to be informed or receive explanations about decision-making processes inside schools. In this sense, more participation would bring transparency.

There are many factors that could affect transparency and accountability levels and which are relevant to deterring practices that could involve corruption. First of all, during decision-making some social conventions or operating understandings (Richardson and Jordan, 1979) intervene in negotiation processes. Among the most common social conventions in schools are the director's leadership as the highest school authority and social leadership exerted by some parents and other members of the school communities. In practice, a leader could be dominant in the sense that only he/she exerts decision-making capacity, substituting for the whole school community. The important issue to analyze is the influence of dominant decisions on both achievement of education policy objectives and on promotion of the interests of the school and social communities.

Secondly, interacting actors possess material, financial or political resources to different degrees. Resources grant power to those who possess them, in such a way that resource distribution amongst actors determines power distribution.[26] Legal and political types of authority are resources owned by the school director and those parent representatives elected by the parents' community. The power of each actor could nonetheless be balanced by collective decision-making in School Councils. It is necessary to acknowledge that a school's director, teachers and parents have a common interest in the satisfactory functioning of schools that is reflected in student achievements. Differences in interests among actors can arise in the form of differences in their preferred ways of achieving objectives; therefore to ensure success of QSP implementation, a regular flow of information among actors in School Councils is needed to develop trust and reciprocity.

26. According to Dowding (1996) and Nunan (1998), the possession of resources makes it possible for actors to exert influence over others and therefore to change the behaviour of others. Actors' power is unequally distributed in networks as resources are unequally distributed. See also Santizo, 2002 (Chapter 3).

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Chapter 4
Methodology

One task of this research is to determine the interests promoted in the policy networks created in each school. The dominant interests are determined by some of the factors mentioned above, such as the level of social participation and the type of information and knowledge that actors possess. Dominance of some interests over others in policy networks can affect the levels of transparency, accountability and efficiency achieved. It is therefore necessary to provide an explanation of the conditions that lead to the prevalence of some interests over others in policy networks in schools and their effect on QSP objectives. This is an issue that goes beyond mere QSP operation rules compliance, residing in political and interpersonal relationships inside each school community. Political relationships between actors during decision-making processes in schools are the object of analysis of the present research. The methodology used in this research is presented in this section.

This research applies qualitative methods such as in-depth, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis to develop case studies. Interviewees can express their point of view on the issues raised and their answers are interpreted in the context in which the interviews take place. It is important to take note of the terms that respondents employ as these represent part of the information that allows understanding of the respondents' interests in specific issues (May, 1997).

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1. Case studies selected

The present research has as an objective to identify those factors that could provide an explanation of higher or lower levels of success during QSP implementation in different school environments. Thus, as external researchers to QSP administration, we asked the National QSP Co-ordination to select five Mexican states including three states where QSP implementation is considered successful according to the School Councils' functioning and the institutional capacity of the State QSP Co-ordinations to administer the programme. The remaining states were not to have these characteristics.

The same procedure was applied in each state analyzed; we therefore asked the State QSP Co-ordinations to select five schools including three with acceptable School Council functioning and two that were experiencing difficulties.

Box 6. Best practices in schools

According to rule 9 of the QSP national operation rules for the school year 2002-2003, the following are standard practices that allow identification of best school performances:

9.1.1 A school community sets goals and achieves them.
9.1.2 A school activities' calendar pursues attendance and punctuality and optimizes the time assigned for teaching.
9.1.3 A school director exerts academic, administrative and social leadership to accomplish school community transformation.
9.1.4 A school director and teachers work as an integrated team that shares interests and goals.
9.1.5 A school director and teachers acquire training on a regular basis.
9.1.6 Learning is facilitated by teachers who offer learning opportunities to students in relation to their rhythm, style and aptitudes.
9.1.7 Teachers' course planning takes into account student diversity.
9.1.8 Teachers reinforce students' confidence in their capacities and encourage their efforts by acknowledging their accomplishments.

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9.1.9	Teachers achieve active, critical and creative participation from their students.
9.1.10	Teachers are able to criticize their own performance and to rectify it by having a positive perception about themselves and their work.
9.1.11	A school community evolves in an environment that fosters universal values such as solidarity, tolerance, honesty and responsibility, all of which compose a frame for civic formation and the emergence of a culture of legality.
9.1.12	A school environment favours appreciation of our multicultural reality.
9.1.13	A school promotes students' health, cultural appreciation and the preservation of the environment.
9.1.14	Parents are organized and participate in teaching activities supporting teachers. Parents are informed regularly of the progress and performance of their children and have channels to make comments on school performance.
9.1.15	School community members, composed of a school's personnel and students' parents, participate in decision-making and the execution of actions for the benefit of the school.
9.1.16	School community members practice self-evaluation, promote external evaluation and use results of evaluations as a tool for improvement and not for sanction.
9.1.17	A school is open to society's supervision and is accountable for its performance.
9.1.18	A school improves its infrastructure in order to accomplish its teaching goals by having classrooms in good conditions, adequate furniture and modern laboratories for teaching in addition to having proper lighting in classrooms, pedagogical material, security and clean spaces.
9.2	External efficiency and educational indicators are measured by results, such as: 9.2.1 Increases in students' abilities for logical-mathematic reasoning as measured by the national examination standards.
9.2.2	Improvement in students' communication skills as measured by the national examination standards.
9.2.3	Students experience less repetition.
9.2.4	Student drop-out decreases.

The states selected as examples of states where the programme was not having the expected results were Aguascalientes and Estado de México. Baja California, Campeche and Zacatecas were selected as states where QSP was having better results.[27] The total amount of interviews was 118 as shown in *Table 4.1*.

Table 4.1 Total number of interviewees per state

Aguascalientes	23
Baja California	24
Campeche	29
Estado de México	21
Zacatecas	21
Total	118

In each school the school's director and representatives of teachers and parents in the School Council were interviewed. We took care to ensure privacy during interviews to reduce the influence of peers and this helped to create an environment of confidence in which actors expressed their opinions and perceptions about the QSP freely. In addition, confidentiality of identity was assured.

A second group of actors interviewed were the linkages (or *enlaces*) between education authorities and school communities such as the School Sector Chiefs, School Supervisors and Supervisors' Technical and Pedagogical Assistants.

To learn about the context in which each one of the schools analyzed is embedded, it was necessary to interview the State QSP Co-ordinators in each of the five states selected. It was also considered relevant to interview

27. In *Appendix 3* the QSP schools in all states of the country are shown.

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state and municipal representatives dealing with QSP implementation, however these last types of interviews could not be obtained in most of the cases mainly due to electoral agendas in the states analyzed.

2. Variables of analysis

This research focuses on the analysis of the variables of transparency, accountability and social participation during QSP implementation. The research also obtained information on other variables such as efficiency and effectiveness during QSP implementation, but an analysis of these last two variables is not included here. In *Appendix 2* the topic guide that assisted interviewees to express their point of view in an ordered and sequential manner is presented.

A total of 31 questions, out of 66, are related to the main variables of analysis in this research, however the remaining questions were useful for identifying elements of the context and way in which actors in policy networks relate to each other in each school. *Table 4.2* shows those factors included in the interviews undertaken and related to the three main variables of analysis of this research mentioned above.

Table 4.2 Factors included in each variable

Variables of analysis	Impacts on QSP implementation	Question numbers related to each variable of analysis (see *Appendix 2*)
Social participation	How are members of the School Councils chosen? And who selects them? Who intervenes in the formulation of a school project? Who decides how to allocate resources during school project implementation? Who promotes linkages between a school and its environment? And by which means?	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 24, 50, 51, 55
Transparency	What is the level of knowledge and information of the interviewed actors about relevant issues during a school's project's formulation, execution and evaluation?	22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 43, 44, 45
Accountability	How is a school community informed about the use of all types of resources? How often is information about a school project delivered to the school community? Do school community members know about the use of additional resources donated to the school project by the social community?	23, 25, 26, 42, 46, 48, 49, 60

The variables of analysis in this study are relevant *outcomes* of the negotiation processes established during QSP implementation in each school. These outcomes are also influenced by those regulations established by the National and State QSP Co-ordinations as well as by the practices developed in each school. For example, in question number 27 of our topic guide (see *Table B* in *Appendix 2*), members of School Councils are asked about *who decides where to buy materials and services related to their school's project*. This question must be answered by at least three members of a School Council. These separately obtained answers could indicate some of the following situations:

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- a school where either only one or more, but not all, of the School Council members interviewed know about its school's acquisitions and the rest of the members of the Council do not have information about this issue, or there are contradictions on their answers. If either of these two situations are observed, then there is a possibility that School Council members are not observing QSP rules related to supervision of the use of their project's financial resources;
- When School Council's meetings are used to discuss acquisitions, then the school is following, or complying with, the rules;
- Where there are mechanisms in place to foster an active participation on behalf of all the School Council members for goods and services' acquisitions, then this type of school will be one that is not only complying with the rules but is going beyond rules compliance and improving QSP functioning.

To make an assessment of the answers obtained in each school we will assign a score to each of the answers to match them with the cases described above. A value of zero will therefore be assigned in the first case and values of one and two in the last two cases mentioned respectively. Interviewee answers must be consistent or non-contradictory to make sure that we are getting the right description of a Council's dynamics in each school. This scoring system is a way to offer a quantitative interpretation of qualitative information as proposed in a publication of the United States General Accounting Office (1992). This could assist us in building an index that emphasizes qualitative aspects of each of the case studies.

It is expected that the variables under analysis will show different levels of attainment in each of the schools to be analyzed. We therefore applied our three-value system mentioned above to each answer obtained according to the following criteria:

- A value of *zero* will be assigned to those answers that denote low performance or performance below the standards set by the QSP national operation rules, or when actors contradict each other when explaining the same fact;
- A value of *one* will be assigned if actors' answers reflect performance according to the QSP national operation rules and if there are no inconsistencies among the actors' (or members of the School Council's) versions of the facts.
- A value of *two* will be given to those answers that relate to high performance or performance above the standards established by the QSP rules and where actors' versions of the same facts is not contradictory or, in other words, where there is consistency amongst different actors' versions.

Each of the actors' answers is related to a relevant variable of analysis. In practice the variable of social participation is related to 13 questions (see *Table 4.2.*) whose answers may have a score of 0, 1 or 2. An average of the values of the 13 answers will give us a measure for the social participation variable in a determined school. For example, if four answers were assigned a value of zero, five were assigned a value of one and four were given a value of two, then their average (which in this case is one) constitutes a measure that tells us where that school is located in relation to social participation according to QSP rules compliance. This procedure will also be followed for those variables related to transparency and accountability in a total of 25 schools.

The usefulness of these quantitative indicators mentioned above is to offer a simplified version of each of the 25 schools' performances in relation to the main variables under analysis during QSP implementation. This simplified version will easily portray each school situation, allowing identification of those factors that produce higher or lower performance in relation to QSP standards in each of the schools analyzed.

Chapter 5
Research findings

It is important to mention that our questionnaire was adjusted during the fieldwork stage according to the time available for each interview and to the need for clarification on the meaning of the questions for the interviewees.

As expected, in each analyzed school the levels of attainment of each variable analyzed were different. *Figure 5.1* shows the average per school of those answers related to accountability and social participation (see *Section 1*) while *Figure 5.2* adds to these averages mentioned the average for those answers related to transparency (see *Section 2*). This makes it possible to compare each of these three variables per school or per case study. Finally, *Figure 5.4* groups the averages of two of the variables introduced before (in *Figures 5.1 and 5.2*): those of accountability and transparency by school, which allow measuring schools' performance by setting aside the variable of social participation.

1. Social participation: intensity of negotiations during QSP implementation

Social participation is a variable to measure the level of compromise of the school community and the capacity to exert checks and balances to guarantee an efficient use of resources and as a consequence limit corrupt practices. Participation is expressed when both teachers' and parents' representatives for Schools Councils are elected as well as through actors' participation during project formulation, approval and implementation. There is also social participation when levels of expenditure are decided on, sources

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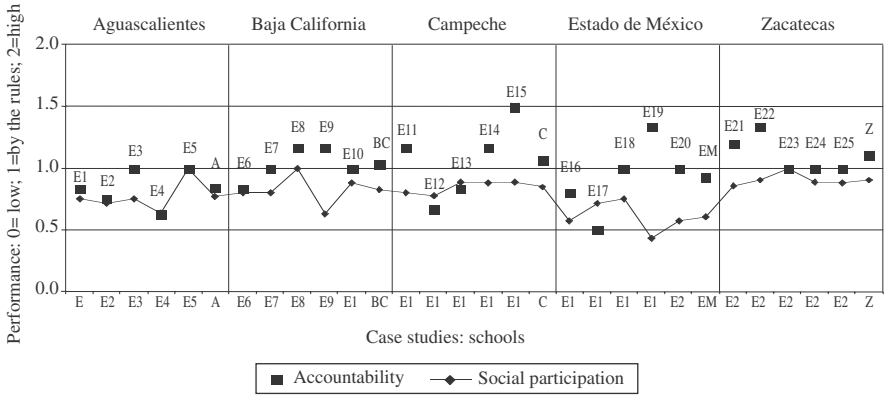
of income are explored and when special events are organized by the school community to collect funds for a school project. All of these activities imply intense negotiations among a school's director, teachers and parents. *Figure 5.1* shows results of levels of social participation in each of the schools analyzed, including the accountability variable in order to compare both variables.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates that most of the analyzed schools have social participation levels that are under the value of one, which is under the level established by the QSP national operation rules. This is in part a consequence of the following factors: parental apathy towards becoming involved in school issues and some teacher apathy towards committing to the school project's implementation by dedicating some extra working hours. These situations mentioned were found in the following schools: E4, E6, E7, E9, E11 and E12.

Figure 5.1 Accountability and social participation level by school in five states



Source: Data collected by the authors.

These results are not atypical considering that the schools in the QSP are located in low-income zones and therefore parental involvement in school activities is limited by economic and social conditions. Lack of extensive social participation in Mexico is a product of a centralized political system in which access to policies was restricted at every stage of the policy process. Mexican politics cultivated this culture of social exclusion during several decades. Despite this fact, it must be acknowledged that most of the school communities organized themselves around special events to collect additional funds for their school project. These events are their main source of income as they sometimes do not receive donations from municipalities or the private sector.

The situation described above does not imply the absence of policy networks. On the contrary, these have emerged since the beginning of the QSP. Although in many cases different types of leadership, such as that of parents or community leaders, have activated (together with school authorities such as directors, teachers and school supervisors) those latent networks. QSP implementation is establishing policy networks, however in most cases these are of narrow membership, even when the intention of QSP is to make them all embracing or extensive. The fact, however, is that narrow networks do not imply absence of plurality, openness and democratic practices.

Figure 5.1 shows the highest value of accountability in relation to social participation in the schools analyzed. In general, QSP implementation is activated in each school by its School Council members who request support from all parents and teachers. Thus accountability is needed to trigger broader participation in schools. As a result, negotiations in networks fundamentally depend on pre-existing relationships inside each school between active parents, the school's director and teachers.

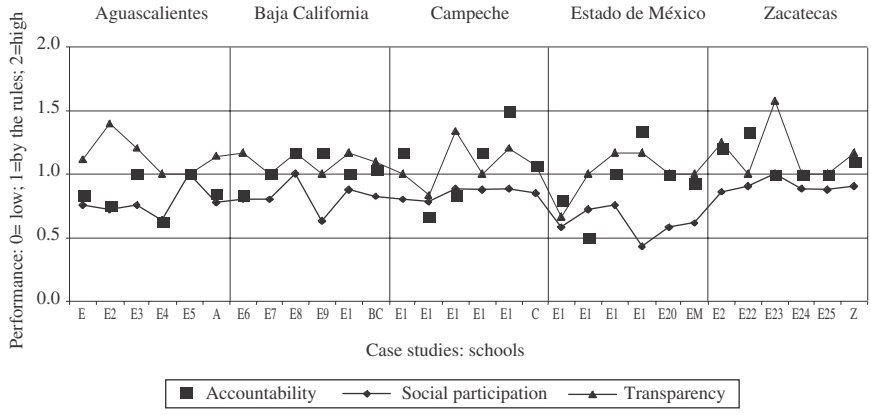
2. Transparency and accountability

As mentioned above, QSP implementation requires the participation of several actors, not only in the school project's design stage but in the variety of activities that participation in the QSP implies. A school community must collect funds to achieve the financial support required to enter the QSP. These funds should represent one-quarter of the total budget of the school's project. The main activities to collect funds are events organized by parents or parents' voluntary work that is valued as pecuniary support. These are some of the reasons why a school's director and teachers require the support and assistance of parents.

Parent representatives in Schools Councils are also the most active parents in school communities. Active parents do not only do what they are told to do by the school director or teachers, they instead demand more transparency in decision-making, which results in an increase in the flow of information among actors or an increase in transparency. The same could be said of accountability as active parents also demand reports on school activities in order to encourage the participation of passive parents. Active parents, in some of the cases, constituted a link between the school and its environment as they had the initiative to promote their project objectives with possible donors of resources.

The QSP requirement of parental support (in the form of financial assistance or voluntary work) fostered higher measures of transparency and accountability than social participation in most of the schools' analyzed, as shown in *Figure 5.2*.

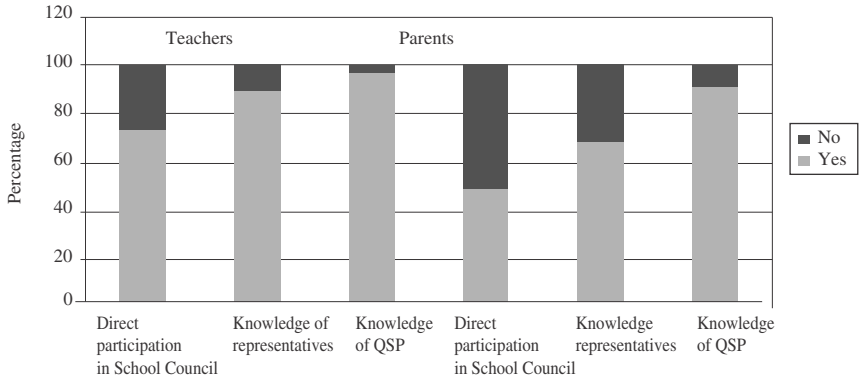
Figure 5.2 Accountability, social participation and transparency measures



Source: Data collected by the authors.

The *Secretaría de la Función Pública* (2003) conducted a survey that confirms higher levels of transparency and accountability than of social participation during QSP implementation. This survey shows that both teachers and parents have knowledge about their school project's development, which is considered in this research an indicator for transparency and accountability at the school level. Social participation was measured according to teachers' and parents' direct involvement in School Councils. *Figure 5.3* below shows that parents' and teachers' knowledge of their representatives on School Councils and their knowledge about the QSP are higher than their direct participation on School Councils. These results support those found in the present research, where accountability and transparency indicators in schools were higher than social participation indicators, as shown in *Figure 5.2*.

Figure 5.3 Survey applied to school communities



Source: Data collected by the authors.

3. Performance by school

It was mentioned in the methodological section that QSP State Co-ordinators selected schools for analysis and that some schools had Councils that were functioning well, while others were having difficulties operating theirs. That selection obviously was based on what each State Co-ordinator considers a success, which is not easy to define. Thus the basis of their selection does not necessarily coincide with the criteria used in the present analysis to qualify good or regular performance during QSP implementation.

Most of the schools analyzed in the present research have been following QSP national operation rules, however differences among schools consist in the way in which the rules are executed. These variations in the execution of QSP rules execution are a dependent variable of interactions, or negotiations, observed in each school policy network.

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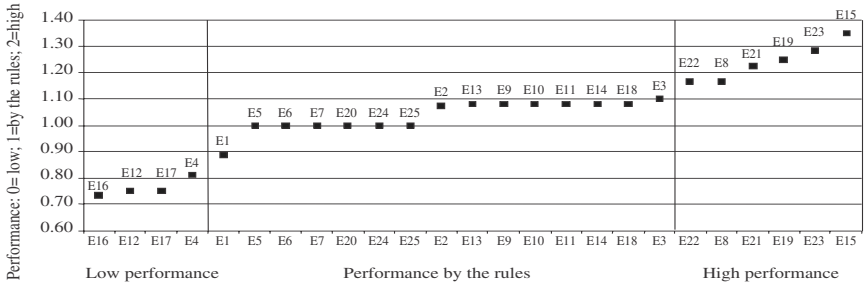
Figure 5.4 below shows all the case studies undertaken according to their average mark for accountability and transparency, presented above in *Figures 5.1 and 5.2*. Schools were ranked in increasing order and grouped within the following three categories: *high performance*, *performance by the rules*, and *low performance* (as shown in *Figure 5.4*). This classification served the purpose of assisting the explanation of school characteristics.

Figure 5.4 Accountability and transparency measures (average)



Source: Data collected by the authors.

The group of *high performance* schools and that of *low performance* schools represent opposing ends of this qualification of activities to comply with school project implementation as conceived by QSP national operation rules. Some characteristics that assisted in identifying levels of compliance with QSP regulations among the schools analyzed are shown in *Table 5.1*.

This research revealed that *high performance* in schools, measured by the observation and improvement of QSP rules, was the rule in 6 out of 25 cases. These schools are characterized by their joint development of work, such as creating commissions to comply with different requirements of the school project and the fact that the school community is constantly informed about the achievement of project objectives. In this sense, while observing the rules, those schools with high performance in the development of their school projects also strengthened transparency and accountability mechanisms.

Table 5.1 School characteristics during QSP implementation according to high and low performance as revealed by the interviews undertaken

High performance in QSP	Low performance in QSP
Actors • Parents are encouraged to verify each new acquisition. • Parents support the school with financial resources. • Parents have done some voluntary work in the school.	*Actors* • Parents are not informed about their school's project. • There is low financial support from parents. • Few parents attend parent meetings. • Some parents think that by mandate they cannot be deeply involved in their school's project. • There is lack of training for parents and teachers. • Some teachers show apathy in relation to the QSP. • In some cases the school's director shows apathy towards the school project.
School Council • The School Council is functioning and when a parent cannot attend a meeting a written report is sent to him/her. • School Councils are arranged by commissions to engage in different activities related to the school project.	*School Council* • The school director asks for support from only the most active parents. • There is no information about School Council members' responsibilities. • The School Council does not work properly.

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• There is agreement between the director, teachers and parents before project resources are expended. • Decisions are taken by consensus of the School Council's members. • The school's director, teachers and parents have learnt to work as a team.	• There are no planning activities. • The school director decides where to buy items to achieve the school project's objectives. • There is only one financial report about the school project at the end of the school year. • There is no real evaluation of the school's needs.
Execution of a school's project • Parents, teachers and the school's director compare products' prices and their quality before buying. • Parents know some results of academic evaluations that measure their school project's objectives achievement. • School Council's members consider they have maximized the use of their resources by exchanging ideas in the school council. • Financial information related to the school project is posted in open places, such as the school entrance. • There are meetings to inform about the project at least three times a year. • There is feedback of teachers' experiences during school project implementation. • The school's supervisor or his/her technical pedagogical assistant shows interest in the programme. • Some of these schools have had experience in the programme *Gestión Escolar* or School Management.	*Execution of a school's project* • There is no systematic evaluation of the pedagogical aspects of the project. • In some of these schools there were no parent or teacher attempts to obtain additional resources for the project; therefore they did not obtain the maximum amount of resources possible for their project. • In some of theses schools there was a history of financial resources mismanagement. • There is no assistance from the school's supervisor. • The school supervisor is not aware of common procedures related to the school project.

Most of the schools however showed performance levels that indicate compliance with QSP design requirements. There were only four cases in which the situation observed was far from the QSP National and State Co-ordinations' expectations; this is due to the lack of commitment of some actors towards their school project. Examples of this last situation are

supervisors that are not interested in or committed to their school's projects, school directors and teachers that are not sensible or do not have the necessary training to perform a more open and efficient role in the QSP and parents that are not interested in or not informed of their new role in the Schools Council.

In relation to acquisitions, *high performance* schools search for prices and compare products' quality so they can evaluate their options before buying. In this activity, teachers and parents share responsibilities or take turns to find out prices and decisions are made in School Council meetings and parents' association meetings. In these meetings, the work done and to be done are also set out. In contrast, in some of the *low performance* schools, teachers and parents do not know who was responsible for certain decisions and how these decisions were made. Examples of important decisions not made collectively in School Councils were those pertaining to acquisitions, elaborations of diagnoses of school needs and formulation of the school project.

It is important to note, however, that not all schools analyzed deliver written reports of resources allocation to financial resources' donors such as municipalities or local entrepreneurs.

The variables analyzed are composed of factors derived from the formulation, execution and evaluation of the school projects. As a result, positive and negative aspects of each of the variables were found in all the schools' analyzed. Given differences among groups, it would be useful to transform low performance schools and schools performing by the rules into high performance schools by increasing the amount of information delivered to them by the State QSP Co-ordination and by promoting the exchange of experiences amongst schools at different performance levels that are located in the same territory.

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4. QSP links or *enlaces* with schools and other actors related to school policy networks

QSP links or *enlaces* are a support for QSP implementation in schools. In part, the success of the programme depends on their activities that include timely delivery of information, advice on schools' pedagogical and organizational issues and authorization of working hours for collegiate work in schools.

The nature of the supervisors' tasks and their position in the education system's structure means that they have a direct relationship with the schools' directors and teachers. Their relationships with parents, however, are rare or inexistent. As a result, from the parents' point of view, education links (such as supervisors and their technical pedagogical assistants) are unknown to the school community.

This explains why if the QSP programme has the support of education links as part of the hierarchical structure of the system, their relationship with parents should be of a different nature. This is because in a programme such as the QSP, where decisions are made by a collegiate body, supervisors and their assistants must combine their responsibilities as hierarchical authorities, where schools' directors have to inform them, with an institutional relationship with the QSP. This latter type of relationships implies close contact with School Council members where, besides education authorities, there are parents and former students.

Fieldwork results demonstrate that the opinions of education sector links or *enlaces* are divided on the QSP. A group of 10 of the education links interviewed have a positive perception of the QSP while another 9 have a negative perception about the programme, the main reason for this last point of view being the extra working hours that they must allocate to comply with the programme requirements.

Schools E21, E22 and E23 that have a high performance mark also have supervisors with a positive perception of the QSP. This fact, however, is not common to other high performance schools such as schools E15 and E19, whose supervisors have a negative perception of the QSP. This indicates that a supervisor's role is important but not determinant for QSP development. This is because some schools that were not supported by their supervisors achieved high performance through the work of their School Council's members. This confirms the importance of a good functioning of the School Council for the development of a school project.

Chapter 6
Conclusions

QSP implementation is part of a reform process in the education sector in Mexico that began in 1992 with the National Agreement for Education Modernization. The QSP seeks to overcome the limitations of a vertical structure in the education sector by emphasizing the emergence of horizontal relationships in which school authorities, teachers and parents are *mutually responsible* for their schools' functioning. The purpose of QSP is to develop capacity in schools so they can solve their main and urgent problems, which should be identified by members of the school community.

The QSP is part of the *new public management* movement that fosters transparency, accountability and social participation in the delivery of public services. The QSP fosters two main objectives: i) on the one hand, school community supervision of their project's implementation through social participation as a mechanism to oversee operations, and ii) an extended social participation that results in the requirement on behalf of school community members of transparency and accountability.

The QSP is implemented through School Councils made up of the school's director and teacher and parent representatives. These Councils are the social unit that supports QSP functioning. Negotiations between these actors promote the integration of public policy networks for implementation at the school level. Policy networks at QSP depend not only on the conditions of reception and the type of mechanisms and instruments required by the QSP, but also to a large extent on local conditions, the culture or social conventions as regards community involvement and legitimate leadership in school communities.

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This research had the objective of evaluating those levels of transparency, accountability and social participation (our main variables) achieved in each of the schools analyzed. The level of development of each of these variables depended on the policy networks' functioning. It was also observed that the characteristics of the context in which networks operate contributed to shaping a structure of dependencies among actors in the school networks analyzed.

Our findings indicate that social participation is a variable that shows less development than that of transparency and accountability in schools. This is due to parents' passivity in most of the schools analyzed. This, however, has not affected the development of transparency and accountability, as School Councils are compelled to inform the community of their activities, with the purpose of obtaining the support of parents and the local community. This leads to an improvement in accountability and transparency, which is a way to overcome parents' passivity. Social participation in QSP schools has not fostered transparency and accountability development, as would be desirable. If the QSP continues in the long term, relationships among the variables analyzed should work both ways, in other words with social participation demanding transparency and accountability and with these two factors fostering social participation.

Three factors were identified as determinant for the emergence of school policy networks: committed supervisors aware of the needs of a school project, directors and teachers with both awareness of their programme requirements and training in school and education management and the existence of parent leadership or active parents. When all these factors are present, QSP is implemented successfully and at the same time transparency in school management is increased and accountability mechanisms enhanced on a daily basis.

There were four main difficulties faced during QSP implementation in the schools' analyzed.

First of all, planning requires the building of agreements among school members on issues such as the setting of goals. Thus, QSP requirements imply an increasing amount of negotiations to come up with a plan for action accepted by school members. Negotiations, however, require time for explaining and convincing others about what every member in a School Council should do. In most cases, teachers were not used to negotiating among themselves or, in other words, negotiations among colleagues were not common. Each teacher used to have a high degree of autonomy in planning his/her activities. Thus, planning requires not only more negotiations among a school faculty but also knowledge about the tasks and compromises of each one of them, so that the school as a collective body can reach its objectives. For these reasons, it is advisable to institutionalize *mutual responsibility* by providing information about its benefits. This could be part of a more aggressive strategy of the State Co-ordinations to make clear the benefits for schools of complying with QSP requirements.

Secondly, searching for funding takes time away from the director, teachers and parents at the school level. This does not please directors and teachers who have a teaching agenda to cover set by the federal and state education authorities and reduced time to comply with it. In some states, the QSP State Co-ordination assists schools by promoting them in their municipalities so that municipal authorities become aware of the implications of a school being in the programme, such as social participation, social supervision of funding allocation and the completion of an annual working plan. In this way, some municipalities are becoming interested in supporting QSP schools, facilitating these schools' search for funding. State QSP Co-ordinations should have a strategy to inform all possible donors and bring them closer to schools. Social recognition of donors' actions on behalf of the state education systems could motivate them to get closer to schools. Furthermore, the State QSP Co-ordinations could help schools to receive donations by making these free of taxation.

Thirdly, parental involvement has not been easy as in the past they were always left out of the schools' activities and concerns. In some schools, teachers have devoted some time to explaining to parents how they can help at home with their children's education. It is only through parental guidance that collaboration has been possible, as most of the parents in the QSP schools did not complete their elementary education. It is crucial to strengthen QSP State Co-ordination communication with parents so that they may feel a crucial part of this policy.

Finally, most teachers were used to having a 'closed doors classroom'. What QSP is doing is to open a dialogue so that teachers explain to other teachers (and to parents) their plan of action, what they are trying to achieve and how are they going to achieve it. In this way, teachers receive feedback from other teachers and parents understand better the complexity of teachers' tasks. The State QSP Co-ordinations could provide an incentive to create an 'open classrooms policy' by offering official recognition (a QSP diploma) to those teachers that are fostering change.

As we have seen in these research results, some of the schools analyzed have reacted efficiently and some have gone further than initial expectations, as intense participation was identified among members of some schools' communities. Furthermore, school directors are interacting actively with their immediate environment and teachers are abandoning hermetic attitudes by opening channels to exchange experiences with other actors and reach agreements. An important group of schools – most of the schools analyzed here – have made significant progress and are incrementally accepting QSP as equivalent to an efficient and open networking situation. In this type of school, parents are adopting dynamic attitudes.

In all types of schools described *mutual accountability* is being practised; transparency mechanisms are being adopted and as a result corruption and *clientelismo* could be fading away. It is of relevance that in

those cases where practices have been improved and policy networks made their way, consolidation comes in the short term. To achieve this, the QSP could identify best practices to support and publicize them.

The main lessons offered by QSP to other public policies in Mexico and in other countries is that delegation of responsibilities to school communities and the sharing of responsibilities inside school communities create incentives to overcome limitations imposed by bureaucratic structures in the education sector to solve material and pedagogical issues in each school. QSP implementation created a mechanism for *mutual responsibility* that fosters supervision and monitoring of school communities in their school's activities. This generates transparency and accountability as intended by the QSP and in general by new public management principles.

Those cases where QSP practices have not flourished, which correspond to the low performance schools identified in this research, represented only a limited number in our sample, however these schools send us a warning signal about the potential problems confronted by QSP execution. It will be useful to transform low performance schools into high performance schools through deploying actions such as: improvements to keep parents informed in order to trigger parent and teacher participation; promotion of collective decision-making by emphasizing that resource allocation under QSP is the responsibility of all parents and teachers; informing school communities that QSP objectives are the improvement of children's education; fostering support from the QSP *enlaces* to the School Councils; and increasing the information delivered by the QSP State Co-ordination to schools. One important action would be the exchange of experiences among schools at different performance levels that are located in the same territory or even within the whole country.

Finally, in all the schools analyzed it is necessary to promote the need to report use of resources to donors such as municipal governments and the private sector. Elaboration of reports could improve schools' external actors'

perception about their management. However, an important restriction to receiving external funding nowadays is the fact that donations are not tax-deductible.

There are still many challenges to overcome and supplementary actions to implement, however it is very gratifying to see progress in a programme that radically changed schools' perceptions of their possibility to contribute to the education system in Mexico. The fact that the QSP is able to put an end to inefficient routines that lasted decades makes us certain of the feasibility of introducing innovations in the education system and gives us confidence that efficiency, social participation and effectiveness will be achieved in Mexican schools if practices such as those promoted by the QSP continue.

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Appendix 1
School project assessment, school year 2002-2003

QSP operation rules set out the following procedures for assessing school projects.

6.1 School project assessment and assessment of the annual working plans to achieve them are the responsibility of State Project Selection Committees, which are established according to the rules set out by each State QSP Co-ordination. All those working in areas that have an effect on school performance such as those working in jobs related to teacher training, school evaluation, social participation and annual planning as well as supervisors and technical pedagogical assistants in elementary education, should be invited to these Committees.

6.2 QSP Project Selection Committees follow the standards established in point 9 of the QSP National Operation Rules. In addition, these Committees should follow the following criteria:

6.2.1 A school project should be based on a diagnosis of the school's situation. Special attention should be given to education indicators, to the school's mission as established in article 3 of the Mexican Constitution and in the General Law for Education and to the objectives for education established in the national plan and its programmes.

6.2.2 School projects should specify medium-term goals (or five-year goals) for the promotion of equity and quality in education. Achievement of these goals will be possible through the improvement of retention of students and graduation indicators and the decrease of rates of repetition.

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6.2.3 School projects should include strategies and actions for each of the three areas included in school activities, these being: i) classroom teaching dynamics, ii) school management, and iii) relationships between schools and the students' parents.

6.2.4 A school's annual programme should establish its goals and the costs of the actions that it will support.

6.2.5 An annual school programme's actions should be consistent with the school's diagnosis results and the school's project goals.

6.3 Selecting schools for inclusion in the QSP is a responsibility of the State Council for Social Participation, which bases its decisions on the State Projects Selection Committee's report.

6.4 Those schools selected to participate in the QSP and which as a consequence receive its financial support should sign a contract that includes performance goals. This contract contains indicators, goals and a calendar for resource allocation to the school and defines the responsibilities of the school community and State QSP authorities. It should contain the signatures of the school's director, teachers and all members of the School Council for Social Participation.

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Appendix 2
Interviews undertaken

Interviews were undertaken in some schools that, according to the QSP Co-ordinators interviewed, have School Councils that are working well and in others that are experiencing problems. This allows us to compare successful schools with unsuccessful ones. In this way, it was possible to have diverse objects of study enabling the researcher to test some assumptions about the School Councils under QSP regulations. Among these assumptions are the idea that School Councils produce collegiate decisions that lead to *mutual responsibility* through mutual oversight.

It was necessary to compare successful with unsuccessful cases as unsuccessful cases are useful for confirming (or rejecting) the relevance of certain variables of QSP functioning (Yin (1994: 33) refers to this as *construct validity*). In addition, the diversity of cases enables the researcher to abandon false relationships among variables (or to seek *internal validity*). At the same time, the methodology followed allowed application of concepts from policy networks' literature to provide explanations of policy outcomes during QSP implementation (or to have *external validity*). Finally, the specifications for case selection and the purpose of each section in the interview's topic guide described below will enable researchers that follow the same method to obtain similar findings (or *reliability*).

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Interviews' topic guide

This research focus is the analysis of the variables of transparency, accountability and social participation during QSP implementation. The research also obtained information about other variables such as efficiency and effectiveness during QSP implementation but an analysis of these last two variables is not included here.

The topic guide developed for this research had the purpose of assisting interviewees to express their point of view in an ordered and sequential manner (functional purpose). Each of the eight topics (see *Table A*) in which questionnaires are divided contains questions related to variables that are relevant for the present analysis (analytical purpose).

The *first topic*, actors' perception of QSP, is about actors' awareness of their rights and responsibilities when participating in the QSP. Their answers will help to determine if the actors are interested in their school project and if they consider themselves part of a school community where they can promote their interests through the exercise of their functions and their active participation. All questions included attempt to reveal the density and frequency of interactions among participants in each school network. In other words, they attempt to show the density and frequency of negotiations inside each school community. In addition, questions attempt to reveal the type of resources that each actor possesses and the reasons why interdependencies amongst actors exist.

The *second topic* refers to the process of integration of School Councils. This will serve the purpose of identifying which members of the school communities are participating and determine whether there are dominant leaders inside each school community. It will also help to assess who participated in the formulation of the school project and who was more involved in its implementation. In this way, it will be possible to know the functioning

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of School Councils and the type of negotiations developed inside School Councils.

Other questions attempt to find out about negotiations during project formulation, when the establishment of priorities occurs. Some questions about decision-making processes inside School Councils were also included. This allows identifying those who participated in those decisions that define the development of a school project, which is a way of identifying promoted interests in school policy networks.

In the same vein, *topics five* and *six* look for evidence of the degree of knowledge of interviewees about achievement of their school project's objectives. This enables researchers to know about the effectiveness that school communities are having during their project execution. It is also necessary to know about the type of mechanisms in place to evaluate a school project's development, which is why is important to know what the actors consider to be their mistakes as well as their learning experiences during their school project's implementation.

Table A Topics for interviews on QSP implementation

Topics	Topic's purpose
1. Actors' perception of QSP	To know the interviewees' opinion about QSP functioning. In particular, to know which aspects of the QSP should be modified according to them.
2. Integration of School Councils for Social Participation	To find out how the School Council's members were chosen. It is important to know whether the School Council's members participate in other activities or if they have ever participated in programmes similar to QSP. Is important to identify the level of interest of the School Council's members in the development of the school project.

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Table A (continued)

3. Process of project formulation and priorities establishment in schools	To learn about the development of a school project. In addition, to find out the levels of participation of the School Council's members during project formulation and the setting of priorities. It is also important to know the advisory role of the State QSP authorities in those participating schools.
4. Decision-making in School Councils for Social Participation	To understand how decisions to allocate a school project's resources are made. To know the levels of knowledge, participation and compromise of school community members in those decisions to allocate resources for the school project.
5. School project results	To find out the school project's effectiveness; in other words the level of accomplishment of its objectives. To determine the level of knowledge of the school community about the school project's results.
6. Evaluation and self-evaluation during development of a school project	To learn about school evaluation mechanisms during school project development and feedback information that schools could receive about their project's development.
7. Activities to obtain additional resources	To ask about those strategies in place to promote donations of additional resources (financial or in kind) for school projects. To find out which public and private agencies have donated resources to schools.
8. Relationships amongst schools and other administrative bodies for QSP development	To find out the relationships maintained by actors interested in development of school projects.

Topic seven refers to other important issues related to the strategies used by School Councils to obtain financial resources necessary for their school project. The type of strategy used will serve to identify the integration of school communities within their environment in order to determine whether policy networks could be extended to their immediate environment or the rest of the society, or are in fact limited to school communities.

Finally, *topic eight* refers to linkages of School Councils with other QSP administrative structures such as State and Municipal Councils for Social Participation, School Sector Chiefs, School Supervisors and Supervisors' Technical Pedagogical Assistants. This allows determining the level of compromise of the interviewed actors with their school projects and their integration or lack of integration within school policy networks.

Table B shows those questions included in each topic and also contains the position of the actors that will be selected for interviews. It identifies each of the questions related to the variables of transparency (T), accountability (A) and social participation (P).

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Table B Topic guide for interviews by relevant actor

Questions by number	Topics for interviews / Questions	Actors to be interviewed should hold these positions*						
		SD	T	P	CS	S	TPA	SQSP
	1. Actors' perception of QSP							
1.	Was your school project approved on time or was its approval delayed?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.	Were some aspects of your school project rejected?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.	Which aspects of QSP functioning would you like to change or improve?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.	Do QSP's financial resources arrive on time to your school or should this aspect of QSP operation be improved?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5.	In your opinion do QSP operation rules promote or limit school project execution? Is there any rule that obstructs school project development?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6.	Do or did any programmes similar to the QSP in the State exist?							X
	2. Integration of School Councils for Social Participation							
7.	(P) Could you describe the process of integration of the School Council for Social Participation in this school?	X	X	X				
8.	(P) Could you explain how the parents' representative in the School Council was chosen? Was the Council integrated by direct invitation of its members? Or was each member selected among several candidates? Or were members elected in a general parents and teachers' assembly?	X	X	X				
9.	(P) How were those teachers that are on the School Council chosen?	X	X	X				
10.	(P) Are there students' representatives on the School Council? How were they elected?	X	X	X				

Table B (continued)

Questions by number	Topics for interviews / Questions	Actors to be interviewed should hold these positions*						
		SD	T	P	CS	S	TPA	SQSP
11.	(P) Which other groups or interests are represented on the School Council?	X	X	X				
12.	Do you participate in other activities organized in this school? Or in activities organized by parents? Or activities organized in your neighborhood?	X	X	X				
13.	Have you ever been involved in a programme similar to QSP? Which one/s? What was its/were their objectives?	X	X	X				
14.	(P) Could you describe the process of integration of Schools Councils in the schools that we are going to visit? (The objective is to detect the level of knowledge of the QSP's linkages, or "enlaces", about the QSP's operation in schools).							
	3. Project formulation and establishing priorities in schools							
15.	(P) Who was involved in the school project's formulation?	X	X	X				
16.	What type of assistance did you receive during the school project's formulation? And from whom?	X	X	X				
17.	Were there any difficulties to obtain your project's approval at the State QSP's Coordination?	X	X	X				
18.	(P) Which members of the School Council participated more actively during the school's project formulation?							
19.	Do you know of any difficulty to obtain the approval of the school's project in any of the schools under your authority or supervision?				X	X	X	

Table B (continued)

Questions by number	Topics for interviews / Questions	Actors to be interviewed should hold these positions*						
		SD	T	P	CS	S	TPA	SQSP
	4. Decision-making ways in School Councils for Social Participation							
20.	Are the QSP's resources enough to achieve the school project's objectives?	X	X	X				
21.	(T) Describe the way in which decisions to acquire services and goods for the school's project are made.	X	X	X				
22.	(A) How are you informed about the acquisitions that will be made for the school's project?	X	X	X				
23.	(P) Is your approval necessary before any purchase is made?	X	X	X				
24.	(A) Is the school community informed about decisions to allocate financial resources of the school's project?	X	X	X				
25.	(A) Is a report presented to the school community about resources allocation? What is the frequency of this type of reports?	X	X	X				
26.	(T) Who decides where to buy materials and services related to the school's project?	X	X	X				
27.	(T) How are better quality products and services identified? a. Is there any regular procedure?	X	X	X				
28.	(T) Who is in charge of making purchases of services or products for the school project?	X	X	X				
29.	(T) Is it possible to improve the way of acquiring products or services for the school project in such a way that financial resources could be better utilized?	X	X	X				
30.	(T) Describe how the school community decides how and when to spend financial resources related to the school's project. (It is important to detect the level of knowledge of QSP linkages or enlaces in terms of the procedures in place in school in relation to their projects).				X	X	X	
31.	Is it possible to improve the way of acquiring materials or services to better employ resources related to the school project?				X	X	X	

Table B (continued)

Questions by number	Topics for interviews / Questions	Actors to be interviewed should hold these positions*						
		SD	T	P	CS	S	TPA	SQSP
	5. School project results							
32.	(T) Have you achieved your school project's objectives? a. Could you mention some situations that prevent your school project objectives from being fulfilled?	X	X	X				
33.	What are the problems you have had to overcome to develop your school project?	X	X	X				
34.	Did you receive training to develop the school project?	X	X	X				
35.	Has the training received improved the functioning of the school project? Could you mention an example where improvement is evident?	X	X	X				
36.	Where do you ask for assistance when you are in doubt about the school project's management?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
37.	What type of problems have you had?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
38.	Who was able to give you advice or assistance?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	6. Evaluation and self-evaluation during development of a school project							
39.	From your point of view what have been the main mistakes made during administration of the school project?	X	X	X				
40.	Could you mention some learning experiences?	X	X	X				
41.	(A) Through which mechanisms are you informed about the progress and outcomes of the school project?	X	X	X				
42.	(T) What is your opinion about your project's results?	X	X	X				
43.	(T) How are the outcomes of your school's project evaluated in your school?	X	X	X				
44.	(T) Nowadays, what actions are taken to continue with development of the school project? What actions are planned next?	X	X	X				

Table B (continued)

Questions by number	Topics for interviews / Questions	Actors to be interviewed should hold these positions*						
		SD	T	P	CS	S	TPA	SQSP
45.	(A) Do the school's authorities provide information about development of the school project? Who do they inform? How often?	X	X	X				
46.	If you still have some financial resources to spend just before the end of the annual period of a project, how do you decide what to do with those resources?	X	X	X				
47.	(A) How is the school community informed about the development of the project? Is the community informed in parents' meetings and/or by notice sent through the students?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
48.	(A) Is the community informed about the expenses related to the school project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
49.	(P) Has the school community complained about management of the project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
50.	(P) Does the school has any mechanism to collect complaints?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
51.	Are aspects of the development of the project discussed with school community members?				X	X	X	
52.	Is the School Council informed about the opinion that the State QSP Co-ordination has of the development and results of the school project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
53.	Is the School Council informed about the State QSP Coordination's opinion of the way in which resources have been used in the school's project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	
54.	(P) Has the School Council sought resources from private or public sources for the school project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
55.	Who has donated resources for the school project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
56.	What have been the main problems in obtaining additional resources for the school project?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
57.	Is there any type of project that easily obtains additional resources?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table B (continued)

Questions by number	Topics for interviews / Questions	Actors to be interviewed should hold these positions*						
		SD	T	P	CS	S	TPA	SQSP
	7. Activities to obtain additional resources							
58.	In your opinion is there any other way to obtain resources for the school?	X						X
59.	(A) Is the school held accountable for resources that have been donated?	X						X
	8. Relationships among schools and other administrative bodies for QSP development							
60.	For better functioning of the QSP, what would you request of the following agencies or people?							
	a. Municipal Council for Social Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
61.	b. State Council for Social Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
62.	c. State QSP Co-ordinator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
63.	d. School Sector Chief	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
64.	e. School Supervisor	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
65.	f. Supervisors' Technical Pedagogical Assistants	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

*SD= School Director; T=Teachers; P=Parents; CS= Chief Sector;
S= Supervisor; TPA= Technical Pedagogical Assistant; SQSP=State QSP Co-ordinator

Appendix 3
QSP schools by State and school year

States	School year 2001-2002	School year 2002-2003	School year 2003-2004 (estimated figures)
AGUASCALIENTES	21	82	137
BAJA CALIFORNIA	48	246	428
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	8	40	50
CAMPECHE	14	93	109
COAHUILA	47	265	331
COLIMA	25	55	67
CHIAPAS	122	402	535
CHIHUAHUA	76	309	470
DISTRITO FEDERAL	143	719	1,002
DURANGO	64	200	300
GUANAJUATO	104	418	745
GUERRERO	59	241	550
HIDALGO	49	241	322
JALISCO	129	614	815
MEXICO	265	1,500	2,001
MICHOACAN	90	419	713
MORELOS	35	100	203
NAYARIT	21	95	126
NUEVO LEON	112	343	771
OAXACA	100	310	455
PUEBLA	163	637	1,040

QUERETARO	32	159	295
QUINTANA ROO	16	127	426
SAN LUIS POTOSI	50	317	393
SINALOA	52	260	299
SONORA	60	107	249
TABASCO	41	209	275
TAMAULIPAS	51	258	540
TLAXCALA	21	88	88
VERACRUZ	152	647	990
YUCATAN	33	166	295
ZACATECAS	37	153	191
National	**2,240**	**9,820**	**15,211**

Source: Statistics of QSP at http://www.escuelasdecalidad.net/pub/escuelas/escuelas.html
Note: Highlighted rows correspond to the states analyzed in this research.

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