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Partnering for outcomes

Public-private partnership for school education in Asia

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Public-private partnership for school education in Asia

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Education, especially primary and secondary education, is critical to empowering people in the low- and middle-income brackets in countries around the world. However, quality education outcomes continue to remain elusive in many emerging countries, with low- and middle-income families facing the greatest challenge.

Some countries in Asia have made significant leaps in education. Singapore, for instance, is considered to be among the top-performing countries in the world in terms of its school system. The top seven scorers in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings in 2012 were from Asian economies, with Singapore and Shanghai (China) having further extended their lead since the last PISA test.[1] However, several Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia and Indonesia were ranked within the bottom third of the 65 participating countries in PISA 2012. And not only do some South Asian countries (e.g., India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) not even participate in PISA, they do not have any annual national assessment of their education systems either, making it challenging to assess the quality of education delivered. Local surveys in some of these countries (e.g., the ASER[2] survey by Pratham in India) clearly indicate that huge gaps exist in terms of quality outcomes.

About 55 per cent of the estimated 350 million "out of school" children globally are in Asia, and a staggering 136 million children are in the South Asia region.[3] Despite increased spending on education,[4] the majority of developing Asian countries struggle with enrolment and retention as well as declining education outcomes. Well over a third of the 550 million "failing children" are in the Asia region (Exhibit 1). This suggests that countries may not be allocating their budgets to the most appropriate drivers of learning outcomes that are relevant for delivering improvements in the performance journey of their education systems (e.g., teacher training on instructional delivery).

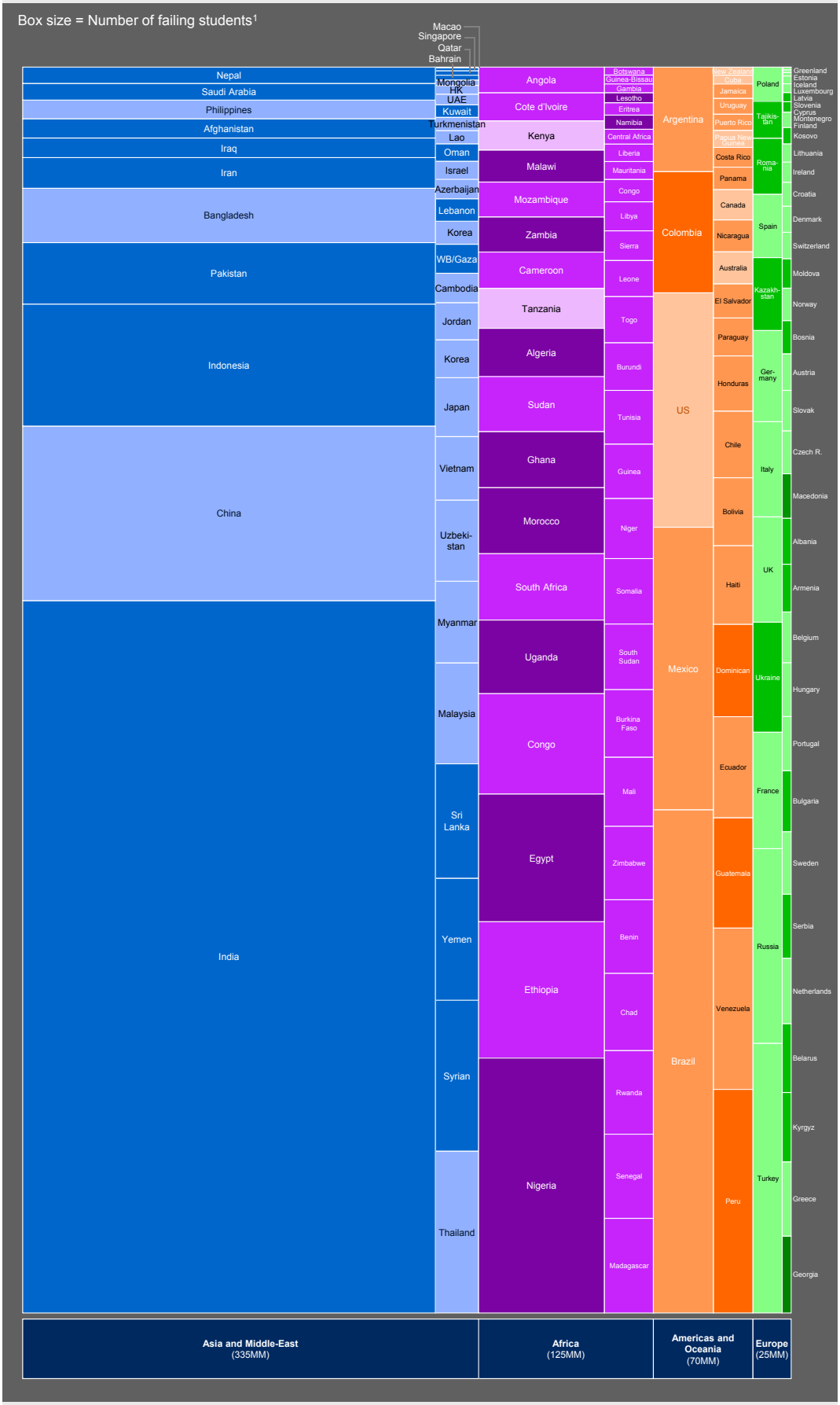
At the same time, many of these countries also have pockets of higher quality education, in some cases managed by the private sector. Mostly, though, this higher quality capacity is not accessible to low-income children.

In this paper, we describe why public-private partnerships (PPPs) should be considered as a potential approach for improving education outcomes in Asia. We highlight several interesting models that are emerging across the region, including case examples from Malaysia, Pakistan, Hong Kong and India, as well as the neighbouring geographies of Australia and New Zealand. Further, we describe the challenges that PPP models often encounter, especially in Asia. Finally, we outline some key success factors to consider as government and private players increasingly engage in such partnerships, drawing on learnings from within Asia and other parts of the world.

1 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000–2012 rankings (www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts); Shanghai (China) scored an average 2–8 points higher and Singapore scored 1–5 points higher than the next ranked country in 2012 versus in 2009 across Math, Science and Reading. Most other countries have a smaller score difference than the next ranked country.
2 Annual status of Education Report (Rural) by the non-profit organisation, Pratham.
3 World Bank Education statistics, 2012.
4 UNESCO estimates on government education expenditures on K–12 education.

Exhibit 1

Over 35 per cent of the 550 million “failing” children are in Asia



1 Calculated through the number of students in school multiplied by the passing rates on international exams, categorised by “failing” thresholds

SOURCE: World Bank EdStats, UNESCO; OECD, SACMEQ, UNESCO and ACER. Regional averages used in some cases where individual-country

WHY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION?

In recent years, we have observed the emergence of private sector involvement in a number of government-led education systems through PPPs in Asian countries. With public resources often failing to meet the demands of access to high quality education, governments are beginning to rely on the capabilities of the private sector. The objective of PPPs in this sector is typically to improve the delivery of services in a manner that is high quality, efficient and effective, thereby increasing access and equity across the system. In some cases, the objective is also to improve financing and capacity creation. In such a partnership, the private sector offers an opportunity for increased efficiency, productivity and, most importantly, improved results, while the public sector brings the scale, often the financing, policy amendments, quality assurance and a public mandate focused on social good.

Education systems in many Asian countries exhibit several features that make them relevant for PPPs, for example:

- **Significant government infrastructure, resources and on-going budgets:** Most Asian countries spend 2–3 per cent of GDP on education, investing largely in infrastructure. For example, in Indonesia, 65 per cent of government expenditure has gone towards increasing the number of classrooms, building new schools, rehabilitating old buildings, and introducing flexible school hours to encourage attendance.

- **Strong opportunity for private sector collaboration for quality outcomes:** Government schools currently serve the majority of low-income children at the primary level and can benefit from private sector experience in teacher training, pedagogy, performance management (including incentives, structured reviews, outcome metrics), and extra-curricular activities.

- **Unviable business model:** While some affordable or low cost private schools have high quality learning programmes, they are often unable to achieve the required scale with a financially sustainable model. In such situations, collaboration between the government, social sector and private sector players may be needed to provide financially viable solutions.

Increasingly, private players are partnering with the government and capitalising on the scale and reach of the existing system to focus on delivering superior outcomes at more affordable rates. In turn, government schools will benefit from the efficiency, innovation and technical expertise that private players can contribute. Some models of PPP schools that already exist, such as aided schools (private schools that receive substantial government contributions) could further benefit from improved norms, such as well-structured selections of private operators and performance evaluation mechanisms. In most countries, PPPs are necessary for both access and quality to secondary education. However, it should be noted that PPPs are challenging to execute and may not be the most optimal solution in every context.

There is a growing interest among different stakeholder groups in setting up more PPP schools. In a recent effort in India, interviews with more than 100 stakeholders, including state and city governments, private players, aided schools and large donors across more than 20 cities indicated that there was a significant and growing interest in PPPs—18 out of 20 city or state governments as well as seven out of 12 donors indicated their willingness to engage in PPPs to further school education.

POTENTIAL MODELS FOR PPPs IN ASIA

Typically PPPs in education can be structured along six dimensions:

- School ownership (government or private);

- Infrastructure provider (government or private);

- Type of teachers (government or private);
- Extent of government funding (full, part, nil);
- Fee model (fees allowed, fees not allowed);
- Operating model (running schools, providing services).

We studied various combinations of these dimensions through different models, and have classified some of the more interesting examples in Asia into three categories of potential PPP models.

1. Private management of government schools

This is the most common PPP model, where a private school operator runs and manages an existing government school, with either private or existing government teachers. The private school operator implements a number of capability-building and performance-management processes to improve learning outcomes. This model may also receive additional funding from government or donors to cover school fees and, in some cases, also charge students additional fees.

Case example: Malaysia Trust Schools

The Malaysia Trust Schools are public schools that are managed jointly by qualified private partners and civil service school leaders, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. The first set of pilot schools was set up in 2011 with the objective of improving holistic student outcomes and school management capabilities and with the aim of having 500 such Trust Schools in place by 2025. The schools focused on the four major goals of developing high quality school leaders, improving pedagogical practices of teachers, maximising student potential and achievement through holistic development, and involving parents and a community of stakeholders in supporting student learning. The transformation journey for each school begins with a five year intervention and support programme intended to help schools progress along the path to success in a sustainable manner.

Substantial changes have since been implemented in the pilot schools to meet these objectives. School leaders and teachers were up-skilled and provided support in developing their school improvement plans to align all stakeholders. Continuous teacher training and professional development, particularly on pedagogy, have positively contributed to the school learning environment, leading to students developing a greater sense of independence and teamwork. Further, through community engagement, more parents are actively seeking to be part of the schools' activities, including reading to younger students and coaching students in sports. These early indicators of substantially better processes and increased engagement by teachers, students and the community are quite encouraging.

Case example: Akanksha, India

In many Indian cities, basic physical infrastructure is available but primary school education is quite poor. The Akanksha Foundation uses government school infrastructure along with its own trained teachers and management to deliver instruction in English to low-income children in two cities, Mumbai and Pune. They rely heavily on donor support and strongly advocate for good quality infrastructure support from the government and complete autonomy in school management. However, due to the dependence on donor funding, this programme is a relatively small-scale model.

Six guiding principles are at the core of what Akanksha believes drives the success of its schools:

- Teachers and staff are competitively paid and given intensive professional development to ensure high quality teaching standards.
- A progressive pedagogy is applied with a skills-based approach and rigorous standards that encourage student learning.
- Frequent, comprehensive assessments are carried out to gauge achievement at all levels of the organisation.
- Parents actively participate as partners through Parent-Teacher Associations and literacy classes.
- The cost per child is pegged to the current government expenditure per child.
- School days run for longer than municipal schools to bridge learning gaps.

Case example from a neighbouring geography: Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy, Australia

The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy's (CYAAA) comprehensive school programme was initially conceptualised in 2010 to focus on improving outcomes for indigenous communities in the remote areas of Cape York.

The CYAAA, funded by the government and private donors, operates within the state education system, and with teachers that are appointed by the education department. The programme operates primary schools in the Cape York communities of Auruken, Coen and Hope Vale. The pedagogy and curriculum at the CYAAA schools involves the "Direct Instruction" methodology for literacy and numeracy, targeting students with diverse skills and a range of backgrounds. It incorporates five distinct but inter-related learning domains:

- **Childhood:** Aims to close the early childhood development gap, covering antenatal to three years, through focused interventions, and includes support programmes for maternal and child health;
- **Class:** Ensures mastery of literacy and numeracy using Direct Instruction that is aligned to the Australian curriculum, through a minimum of 20 hours per week of reading, writing and mathematics; allows for a higher learning curriculum for students who have mastered the basics;
- **Club:** Partners with specialist organisations to introduce students to high quality sports, arts and music programmes for a minimum of 4.5 hours per week;
- **Culture:** Builds knowledge about cultures and history of family, community, country and people, aligned to the Australian curriculum in Science, Society and Environment, Arts, Technology and Language;
- **Community:** Focuses on supporting student attendance and well-being along with case managers and medical officers, as well as working closely with parents to save for their children's educational needs (e.g., through a Student Education Trust).

While sustained reform takes time, progress has been observed through internal data as well as performance in national and international assessments (e.g., Australia's NAPLAN, DIBELS[5]) indicating improvements in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and numeracy. At the start of the programme, there were almost no students at year level in any school. However, in three years, more than a third of the class is now at or above their year level for numeracy.

5 The National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in years 3, 5, 7, and 9; Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is a series of short tests that assess early childhood (K–6) literacy.

In 10 out of the 15 NAPLAN test areas between 2008 and 2013, CYAAA has mean scale score progress rates well above the national and state averages. CYAAA's Coen Campus achieved 100 per cent at National Minimum Standard in every parameter (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, numeracy). The programme has moved the schools from a "poor to fair" performance and shown learning outcome improvements, with the focus now on moving the schools from a "fair to good"[6] performance. Variability across schools in the pace of progress still exists, but the improvement trajectory is encouraging.

2. Government support to high quality affordable private schools

In this model, a private school (typically in the "affordable" category) will receive some government support (e.g., a subsidy or government payment for a significant percentage of students) or use existing government infrastructure at nominal rates, for example. The extent of government support determines whether the school can also charge fees or not. In some geographies such as India, private schools that receive government support and typically have fee restrictions are known as "aided schools".

The quality of such schools can be monitored closely through rigorous performance management and governance, such as tracking performance metrics linked to both inputs and outcomes (e.g., third party assessment of learning outcomes), linking funding to delivery of student learning outcomes, building formal incentive structures for teachers, putting in place consequence management for poor performing schools (e.g., stopping aid, introducing salary penalties for underperforming teachers) and establishing an independent governing body to oversee operations. Such performance management and governance is often missing currently, but can be a powerful tool to fully leverage such schools.

Case example: Aided and direct subsidy scheme schools, Hong Kong

Over 90 per cent of Hong Kong's public schools are privately managed by more than 100 sponsors, of which about 30 operate large networks of schools. A large majority are "Aided" schools that are fully funded by the government and have the autonomy to appoint and promote staff, deploy funds and influence admissions for 50 per cent of the students.

In the early 90s, the government introduced "Direct Subsidy Scheme" (DSS) schools that receive partial government funding, but have some autonomy over curriculum, school fees, teachers' salary and admissions. To qualify, existing schools must demonstrate a track record of exemplary performance and a distinctive value proposition. The government has put in place several governance mechanisms to ensure that DSS schools are governed in a responsible manner. For example, there are no caps on the fees that DSS schools can charge. However, above a certain threshold, they must set aside money for financial aid. Further, all DSS schools enter into a service agreement with the government, with renewal subject to the satisfactory performance of the school's quality of teaching and learning, as well as management.

Case example: Gyanshala, India

Though not an "aided school" as per the typical categorisation, Gyanshala runs low-cost private schools under the Special Training Programme (STP) of the central government, targeting "out-of-school" children between the ages of six and 14, with the intent to mainstream them within two years. The organisation uses donor funding to establish the school and operate it for a year or two before seeking government funding (at 30 per cent of operating costs per student). In exchange, Gyanshala students are subject to comprehensive third-party assessments annually before government funding is renewed. They operate across nine cities and four states in India, reaching about 34,000 students. In three different comparative assessments by independent parties, the Gyanshala model has achieved superior learning outcomes, and as much as 35 per cent improvement in multiple subjects and across multiple grades.

6 "How the world's most improved schools systems keep getting better", McKinsey, 2010.

The key success factors for Gyanshala's model include:

- Low-cost equitable education, achieved through dispersed rented or donated classrooms in urban slums that are also accessible to students, four-hour school days at most, and lowered restrictions on hiring teachers;
- Restructured teacher roles with highly standardised instruction materials, supported by a Design and Management team that designs curriculum and trains teachers;
- Innovative curriculum and pedagogy that includes learning material and aids that are adjusted to meet local context and national/state curriculum standards and tailored for short modules (no more than 20 minutes each).

The high dependency on the donor model makes it challenging for Gyanshala to achieve scale. Funding and procurement processes currently vary from state to state. In such cases, more structured, formalised and well-defined processes will be required to achieve greater scale.

Case example: Education Voucher Scheme, Punjab Education Foundation, Pakistan

The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) is a quasi-private independent central body which seeks to promote affordable high quality education in Pakistan. The Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) is one of the three PPP school models that they are experimenting with.

Under the EVS, PEF selects private schools based on pre-defined performance criteria to enrol "out of school" students, who in turn are handed education vouchers directly by the PEF. The schools typically have a mix of voucher-funded students as well as students that are charged the regular fee. The schools have complete autonomy over school operations, teacher selection, hiring and retention.

In addition to the funding role, PEF also tracks school performance—every student is required to take a state-wide assessment test that measures pre-defined learning outcomes. PEF has the reputation of maintaining high standards with stringent quality checks and a rigorous performance evaluation system. It accomplishes this by having two supporting independent departments (reporting to a different Board, separate from the PEF)—the Monitoring & Evaluation arm is in-charge of the performance evaluation process and the Academic Development Unit is responsible for holding and grading the standardised state-wide tests.

With the EVS model's success, PEF may consider scaling up the voucher-based system further as well as supporting entrepreneurs with seed capital for constructing the schools in under-privileged areas to enrol "out of school" students.

Case example from a neighbouring geography: Partnership schools, New Zealand

Partnership schools are government-funded schools that are accountable to the government for improving student performance, and are bound by a contractual agreement. The funding model intends to give the school operators sufficient flexibility to manage their resources, and is similar to the funding model for schools managed by the government. Funding may be provided in some combination of property support, staff salaries and operating costs, annual per student payment, or initial funding for setting up the school, with additional ongoing support in the early years of establishment. The partnership schools have flexibility in deciding staff, salaries, length of school day and year, and curriculum.

The operators, called "sponsors", come from a variety of backgrounds, including philanthropy, businesses, community organisations, other private schools, and may operate multiple schools. They have a fixed-term contract with the Education Ministry, and continued support is tied to school-level targets for student achievement (e.g., meeting national standards) and engagement (e.g., student attendance).

3. Targeted private services to government schools to enhance school performance

In this model, the private player or a consortium of private players enters into an agreement with the government to transform the school education landscape through several targeted interventions such as teacher training, pedagogy creation, and ICT services and performance management. This may be focused on a select service (e.g., headmaster training) or a wide range of services, where the private player may need to further partner with additional foundations and service providers for the right capabilities.

Case example: School Excellence Programme, Mumbai

The School Excellence Programme by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) aspires to increase student learning outcomes significantly and make Mumbai the benchmark for Indian government primary school systems within a five-year period, by significantly improving average learning levels of children, and enhancing the capabilities of the existing system to ensure sustainable, continuous improvement. The programme currently runs in more than 220 schools (where Marathi and Urdu are the language of instruction), addressing close to 2500 teachers and 200 headmasters or principals and approximately 75,000 children.

The programme consists of five central initiatives: activity- and group-based pedagogy or teaching-learning methodologies; teacher training and on-the-field coaching support through rigorously selected coaches from within the support; coaching for headmasters so that they act as “school CEOs”; regular assessment of learning levels, including an annual third party assessment; and streamlining of key systemic processes.

The programme has had great impact. Over the last four semesters, centralised assessments show an improvement of 15–20 percentage points in children’s average learning of basic competencies. More than 60 per cent of schools and classrooms showed strong visible change in processes and behaviours.

Multiple private partners—three implementation partners selected through a rigorous process and an overall design and programme management partner—came together to deliver the programme with the MCGM as “programme owner” and in-charge of day-to-day operations. The primary change agents, known as “Sahyogis”, are teachers from within the system, selected through a rigorous three-stage process and trained and supported extensively. The model relies on government infrastructure and funding for operations, with organisations such as UNICEF and the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation providing additional support and catalytic funding for select activities (e.g., programme management, initial selection of partners).

PPPs CAN BE CHALLENGING TO STRUCTURE AND OPERATE

While there are emerging models and a growing interest for governments and the private sector to engage in PPPs in school education, making this partnership function effectively is not easy. PPPs are complex to structure and require considerable public sector capabilities to design, implement and monitor. This is of particular concern in Asia where there is often limited experience with PPPs and, therefore, setting up the partnership successfully carries with it a high element of risk.

The following challenges need to be addressed in order to set up the right ecosystem for PPPs to thrive in:

- **Insufficient at-scale high quality private school operators:** While the models described have potential, they are still relatively small in scale and need to show substantial improvements in delivering superior learning outcomes in a financially viable manner. If the government is to contract services from the private sector, sufficient private sector capacity will be required. There is also sometimes a mismatch in the geographic interest of

governments versus the private players (e.g., rural vs. urban); a match-making mechanism that can bring government, private players and donors together to focus on the most needy areas is often absent.

- **Continuous requirement of philanthropic capital:** Most PPP models are likely to require gap funding (after accounting for government funding and donor funds) and government payment delays can lead to an additional working capital crunch.

- **Lack of conducive PPP policies:** Most countries and states/cities do not have a PPP policy for school education that provides details on player selection, funding mechanisms, outcomes assessments, and overall governance. In general, policies for pre-primary, secondary and technical and vocational education encourage private participation in most Asian countries; not so at the primary level. This is a result of the belief that primary education should be free and compulsory and, therefore, a responsibility of the state.

- **Limited standard metrics and assessments for performance review:** There are few standardised assessment entities for defining performance metrics, ranking schools, evaluating outcomes, monitoring and providing overall governance.

There are additional considerations within the Asian context that further challenge the PPP ecosystem:

- Government structures are often complicated and multi-layered (e.g., central, state, city) resulting in governance challenges.

- The capabilities of the public sector in terms of structuring collaborations and partnerships in education with private sector entities are often underdeveloped, therefore also limiting their ability to leverage private capacity well.

- The immense scale and diversity of cultures, language and geography (e.g., rural and remote locations) requires customisation at local levels.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS FOR PPPs IN EDUCATION

Despite these challenges, the benefits of setting up successful PPPs can make it worthwhile to consider employing relevant practices and lessons from successful models. Based on an understanding of successful models in various parts of the world, at least six key success factors emerge.

- **Well-defined and sustainable funding models:** Most successful PPPs, in our experience, are financially sustainable with governments offering clear, well-defined and stable funding terms (frequency, amount and metrics). To illustrate, an escrow account with upfront transfer of the entire year's funding that is released on pre-agreed terms can help raise the confidence that payments will happen in a timely manner. For schools that use a combination of government and private funds, there needs to be a robust upfront value-for-money analysis (including number of students required for viability) to ensure that the school is financially sustainable. This analysis needs to be part of the funding terms required by the government and donors, providing further opportunity to hold the private operator accountable. The intent should be to ensure long-term sustainability to the extent possible. A voucher system (as in the case of the Punjab Education Foundation) helps direct funding to the most needy as well as encouraging cross-subsidisation, where the school obtains funding from students who can afford to pay. Yet another in-kind funding arrangement that helps the economics is the availability of government land for school construction or permission to run private schools on government school premises.

- **Autonomy for private players in school management:** Private operators need to have adequate flexibility in recruiting and retaining teachers and head masters based on performance, salary, training opportunities, pedagogy and curriculum delivery, as well

as day-to-day school operations. This gives them the opportunity to innovate. The New Zealand Partnership School model and Hong Kong DSS schools allowed operators the freedom to recruit teachers including setting their qualification entry requirements, and allowing complete flexibility over pay scales, the length of the school day and curriculum delivery. The CREDO study in the US has identified teacher quality and school culture as the two most important determinants of charter school success. Similarly, each country needs to decide the extent of autonomy offered based on its local context.

- **High quality selection process to attract the best players:** International experience has shown that getting low-performing players to exit from schools is a complex process with significant costs involved. Therefore, the best PPP models tend to be those with high quality selection criteria. These criteria are ideally a combination of quantitative measures (e.g., number of years of school management experience, number of graduated students, measured learning outcomes, scale of operation) and qualitative measures (e.g., commitment to social objectives, quality of management team). In the United States and United Kingdom, there are specific state entities which are responsible and accountable for private player selection. The specific local Authoriser (in the US for charter schools) and the Department of Education (UK) define the selection criteria, invite applications from private players and select the players based on quantitative and qualitative criteria in a transparent and timely procurement process. Some US states have allowed multiple entities to act as "Authorisers" (e.g., Minnesota and Michigan) though some studies show that the presence of multiple authorisers could lead to a mixed quality of charter schools.

- **Strong accountability through rigorous measurement of outcomes:** A standardised process for conducting outcomes assessments with proper tracking and monitoring of learning has been shown to be critical in ensuring accountability. For example, Pakistan's PEF has two separate independent departments (the Monitoring & Evaluation arm and the Academic Development Unit) that assist in maintaining day-to-day school operational quality as well conducting state-wide learning outcomes tests. For the initial two or three years, the process is usually assessed by qualified professionals for factors such as teacher attendance, pedagogical process, training programmes and new skills introduced in the classroom, along with sufficient external stakeholder engagement to showcase progress. Subsequently, annual third party learning assessments are conducted and linked to the funding disbursed, along with a cascaded set of consequences that are clearly defined (e.g., written feedback, financial penalty, contract duration reduction, termination). To illustrate, US charter schools and Hong Kong DSS schools have a multi-year renewable contract. If the schools fail to meet certain performance targets, the contracting authority can terminate the contract.

- **Enabling regulatory frameworks:** There is a strong need for a regulatory framework that not only encourages PPPs in primary and secondary schools but also ensures robust quality assurance. Several Asian countries have to clarify the role of PPPs in the national education agenda; streamline and simplify school registration processes and criteria that are objective, transparent as well as output-focused, rather than based on fixed norms or ratios; provide clear guidelines on the extent of autonomy being granted to the private operator as well as the limitations (e.g., curriculum, pay scales) being imposed; establish a quality assurance entity that will provide independent assessments of schools across public and private sectors; and develop the government capacity to design and implement PPPs in education. While some countries have begun this journey (e.g., Vietnam, the Philippines), there is still much that needs to happen for meaningful PPPs to be established.

- **Tri-sector partnerships will be the norm:** PPPs in the education sector are increasingly becoming a partnership between the public, private and non-profit sectors. Philanthropists, foundations and corporate social responsibility initiatives are donating goods, services and funds to improve schools and broaden education programmes. India's Bharti Foundation, for example, committed an initial endowment of USD 40 million to the creation of strictly no-fee, high quality private Satya Bharti schools for underprivileged children in the nation's rural areas. Bharti Foundation currently runs more than 250 schools across six states in India, has entered into a partnership with two state

governments that includes 54 schools, and is piloting a third model of PPP for improving the overall quality of government schools by bringing in best practices through a mentoring methodology. The Philippines' Adopt-A-School programme, meanwhile, mobilises support from private and non-profit sectors, preferably to schools located in the poorest provinces of the country. As PPPs evolve in this sector, they will need to increasingly manage the complexities of governance and engagement across the three sectors.

As the success factors show, to make PPPs successful, a large number of stakeholders need to come together. In India, for example, a PPP coalition called The Education Alliance was recently formed with the mandate to shape PPP policies, seed new private operators, set up an endowment fund for gap funding and working capital flows, and bring together stakeholders from the three sectors to engage in PPPs. Within six months of being established, The Education Alliance has facilitated several PPP-related activities in school education, including generating interest from several state and city governments as well as private operators, and launched an extensive research project to evaluate the current PPP experience across multiple models, addressing 5,000 children.

While still early days, PPPs in school education are currently viewed as a promising approach. However, there are legitimate concerns about how best to use them in order that they are truly effective and these must be considered carefully, in the appropriate context, prior to large scale implementation. Building on the few examples that have shown early success, there is an opportunity for private players to work hand-in-hand with government as well as the social sector to raise the quality of student learning outcomes across Asia.

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