

# EENET asia newsletter

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*“My daughter has a physical impairment. When she enrolled in school she was shy and didn’t even dare to speak when she was spoken to by her teacher or her friends in class. Now, after a few months in the inclusive school she talks all the time, almost too much! And she does not seem to be shy about her disability anymore. She even walks much better now after she started school. It makes me so happy to see that my daughter is in school, that she has friends and that she is finally enjoying her childhood.”*

Quote from a parent in an inclusive primary school in Kabul



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Bangkok  
Asia-Pacific Programme of  
Education for All (APPEAL)



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## Editorial

***“My daughter has a physical impairment. When she enrolled in school she was shy and didn’t even dare to speak when she was spoken to by her teacher or her friends in class. Now, after a few months in the inclusive school she talks all the time, almost too much! And she does not seem to be shy about her disability anymore. She even walks much better now after she started school. It makes me so happy to see that my daughter is in school, that she has friends and that she is finally enjoying her childhood.”***

This quote from a parent in an inclusive primary school in Kabul highlights the importance of making schools more inclusive and child-friendly. In the last few years education planners in government and non-government organisations are finally putting inclusive education on the agenda. However, we still struggle with a lack of understanding among key stakeholders about what inclusive education really is! Inclusion is about more than disabilities. Inclusion is about access to quality education for all, regardless of gender, backgrounds, circumstances and abilities.

With the EENET Asia Newsletter we are trying to highlight successful practices in countries throughout Asia. In this issue we cover drug prevention and response education programmes in Afghanistan and we report from an HIV prevention programme in Vietnam. We debate the need to include mother-tongue education and local culture in school curricula, and for the development of Sign language dictionaries using modern technology in Afghanistan. From Pakistan we can read about how links are created between health, nutrition and education, while a young man with hearing impairment from Indonesia tells us his life story. We report about an Indonesian project that offers persons with physical impairment freedom of movement by adapting and individualising wheelchairs, about the development of inclusive and child-

friendly schools and systems in Australia, India and Pakistan, and how gender and peace is portrayed in schoolbooks in Maldives. For the first time we have a contribution about education for sustainable development, where a small organisations in Tajikistan highlights the need to think about environmental protection when we plan, build and renovate schools.

Highlighting programmes related to the environment comes timely as our region again has been devastated by natural disasters over the past few weeks. The Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia and China have been pounded by typhoons. Hundreds have died and thousands more have lost their homes, schools and livelihoods. Indonesia has again been hit by earthquakes and landslides. In Padang and the villages of the West Sumatra and West Java hundreds have died and thousands live in makeshift shelters. While a Tsunami brought death and fear to Samoa and the islands of the South Pacific.

Tens of thousands of children, youth and adults die every year at the hands of young men and women at war from the dry fields of Helmand in Afghanistan to the streets of Lahore and Mumbai.

Developing education systems that help future generations live in peace with each other and in harmony with nature is therefore more important than ever before. Teacher education programmes must be reformed so that we can start educating teachers for tomorrow’s schools and stop preparing them for the schools of the past. In efforts to address the needs for innovation and reform, lecturers and student teachers from universities in Afghanistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia and Pakistan have been introduced to the philosophy of inclusive education over the past few months. More of these programmes are needed and more will follow.

A young man enrolled in a Bachelor Degree Programme in Special Education at Kabul Education University who vehemently and very vocally opposed the idea of inclusive education when he was introduced to it in December last year is now writing his thesis about inclusive education and has joined the team that adapts 'Embracing Diversity – Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments' so that it can be used in Afghan schools! This transformation of minds must spread to all schools and universities throughout our region.

The next newsletter will be published in collaboration with our colleagues from Africa. It will be the first EENET Asia-Africa Newsletter commemorating the meeting between the leaders of the South in Bandung more than 50 years ago. We need your success stories, as well as your thoughts and ideas so that we can

continue to learn and gain courage from each other! If you do not feel comfortable writing in English send us your stories in your own language and we will find someone who can translate it for us. So please write to us.

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## Preparing Tajik Schools for the Winter

**Timur Idrisov**

A Child-Friendly School has to be warm in the winter so that children are not freezing. One of the six dimensions of a child-friendly school is healthy, safe and protective environments. Freezing classrooms with fumes and smoke from poor quality coal and wood-fired stoves is neither safe, nor healthy. Little Earth, Friends of the Earth Norway (Norges Naturvernforbund) and UNICEF are three organisations who have been working for alleviating this problem for the past few years.

Heating schools is one of the most serious energy problems we face in Tajikistan. A lot of energy is wasted during the cold winter months. Energy losses in schools far exceed the norm. This is often due to the poor structure of buildings and poor quality of materials used for school construction. Most of the energy is used in vain because most schools are not insulated. For heating one square meter we spend 5 to 8 times more energy than what would actually be needed. Where does all the heat in our schools go? What are the reasons for this wastage?

In many ways, this problem is caused by the poor structure and quality of materials used to build schools. During Soviet times many schools were built with bricks or cement panel blocks. All the schools in cities and major towns were connected to an elaborate system of central heating, using natural gas or coal as a source of energy. There was no shortage of fuel and the schools were heated. Therefore little or no emphasis was placed on insulation.

New school buildings in remote areas (which are built by government agencies with the support of donors) do not meet even the most basic existing rules and regulations on construction, not to mention the best practices and standards in contemporary architecture and construction, or universal design to ensure that they are accessible for all children. Therefore school buildings are still being built with single-glass-windows, too short roof edges, no system of collecting and diverting of rain and snow water, poor quality stoves, stove

pipes that are crudely put through cracks in the windows, etc.

The most common reasons for the loss of heat in schools during the cold winter months are among others: poorly winterised windows and doors (with cracks or broken glass), as well as exterior walls (especially in cement panel buildings), floors and ceilings without any form of insulation. All of this leads to schools being forced to use much more energy, and money for coal and firewood than they actually need.

In the major cities and towns of Tajikistan electricity is the main source of energy for heating (as coal and wood-burning stoves are often forbidden as their use causes air pollution). The most common electric heaters solve the heating problem only partially, while still consuming large amounts of energy.



In the winter months, when energy consumption is increasing dramatically, accidents and malfunctions in electricity supply and distribution system are common, and blackouts happen all the time, as the capacity of the infrastructure is stretched beyond limits.

Squandering electricity in public institutions, including schools, aggravates the already acute shortage in the cold season. However, the most severe situation is in schools in remote rural areas. Here, there are strict, permanent limits on the electric power. In district areas, schools are heated by “dirty” fuel (coal, firewood and sometimes dried dung or cotton stalks), often using thin plated iron stoves. These inexpensive but also energy inefficient stoves (because they thin plated) are placed directly in the classrooms, where people are forced to inhale toxic corrosive fumes and are exposed to serious risks of getting asthma, allergies, sore eyes and throats and other health problems. Schools receive firewood and coal through local “hukumats” (district authorities). Some schools pick and stock firewood themselves, or the children would have to bring firewood from

home. Several schools in mountainous villages are forced to temporarily shut down during the winter because conducting classes in buildings with a temperature below zero is not possible.

The situation in schools vary from year to year due to changing weather patterns and availability of fuel and funds. Government officials and school administrators often complain about lack of funds for heating and about problems of preserving the heat and insulating classroom walls from the cold.

Even after getting fuel and heat, most schools do little or nothing to preserve it and use the fuel effectively. Donors provide huge amount of funds and “dirty fuel” every year without making any effort to conserve energy, and children continue to freeze and get sick in smoke filled classrooms. Why is donating coal and firewood fuel more attractive than investing in replacement of windows or improving building insulation?

There is significant potential to save energy consumption in schools and at the same time improve air quality. According to specialists,



modernisation and improvement of heating systems can reduce energy consumption by up to 40-60%. Competent planning, the use of double insulation and double-glazed windows, energy-saving lighting in school buildings will improve energy efficiency further. This is confirmed by a number of small-scale projects on the insulation of schools, conducted by the environmental organization "Little Earth" with the support of Norges Naturvernforbund (Friends of the Earth Norway), as well as projects of other organisations working in this field.

It is hoped that these efforts will help to solve part of the social and environmental problems at local levels related to air-pollution, soil erosion and avalanches (from cutting down protective forest), energy shortages, health problems, and generally improve the teaching-learning environment in schools. These necessary measures will also significantly reduce the schools' dependency on energy and support from donors. It will also help children understand their responsibility to conserve and protect the environment.

District education authorities and schools should therefore create incentives and encourage energy saving schemes. Donors should invest more in insulation initiatives and in the development of clean energy, using solar and wind energy, and thereby develop sustainable solutions to the problems of Tajik schools. Of course, this is not a simple challenge. It requires an integrated approach and broad involvement of all concerned stakeholders; government departments, international donors, civil society organisations, local NGOs and community organisations, school administration as well as child clubs.

Environmental protection is a powerful incentive for children to act. Development and implementation of innovative and practical training programs on energy conservation in schools, actively involving youngsters in the discussion and solution of energy issues must become an integral part of the educational process. And, perhaps, only when the lessons and exercises within the framework of these programs are memorable and interesting, and

the school turns into one large laboratory - the education ceases to be a part of the problem and becomes the key to its solution.



courtesy of IDP Norway / Terje Magnussønn Watterdal

School no. 69 in Rudaki district, on the outskirts of the capital Dushanbe, is one of five schools that UNICEF has worked with during the year for improving classrooms. New floor and ceiling insulation was added, windows and doors were refurbished as a precaution after the last winter with record low temperatures disrupting regular classes. In all, five of 10 classrooms at the school of 500 students were completely renovated. UNICEF-funded improvements to the school in previous years, included new toilets and clean water facilities, as well as a school library; all a part of UNICEF's Child-Friendly School programme.  
UNICEF Tajikistan 12/2008

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# Going Beyond Language - Including Local Culture into the School Curriculum

Marc Wetz

Outstanding achievements have been made during the last few years in our region in promoting the use of Mother Tongue as language of instruction, mainly using the argument that this will lead to higher academic achievements. These are very important achievements as it makes a huge difference to children in early grades to actually understand what is being taught in schools.

Now it is time to use the achieved momentum as an entry point and make the link with the fundamental right of all human beings to celebrate and enjoy their own culture as it is done in various international rights frameworks, as for instance Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

*Education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values ...<sup>1</sup>*

What we can see clearly in these various fundamental rights is that language is never separated from culture, that it is just one part of the entire cultural heritage and cannot be separated. We should start to do this as well, not just because it is a fundamental right of children and communities but because it is very beneficial for them and for our Quality Basic Education Goals.

The Education System can play a crucial role in this and go beyond providing education in Mother Tongue and include local culture into the curriculum as various model projects have been successfully demonstrating in our region during the last 10 years.

## Why is the inclusion into the school curriculum so effective?

### **1. It gives instant value to local culture and knowledge**

Especially ethnic communities, mostly having a high adult illiteracy rate, consider the school

to be the venue where the most valuable knowledge is being taught, the knowledge from the outside world, the knowledge which will give their children a ticket to get a good job, a ticket for a better future. Children themselves have generally lost interest in local knowledge and culture as they see it as not important for their future and the traditional ways of knowledge transmission have not been adapting themselves to the changing world, are considered by children as boring and non-attractive.

Including local knowledge into the school curriculum gives instant value to the knowledge as it shows communities and children that their own knowledge and beliefs are actually something worth. Children themselves are being automatically exposed to the cultural heritage of their own communities and learn to respect and value them.

### **2. It generates higher self esteem in children and communities**

This higher value of their own culture and knowledge does generate a higher esteem of their own cultural identity, lower levels of feeling of inferiority, self-denial and loss of identity, basically generates a higher self-esteem.

For children it is obviously very helpful for their overall development but as well crucial in their inevitable exposure to members and the culture of the national majority which are omnipresent in mass-media and the school curriculum. It will help them when they are adolescents and young adults to be less lured to substance abuse and other self-destructive and risk behaviors to which they are highly exposed especially once migrated temporarily or permanently to urban centers of the dominant ethnic group. Communities profit from this higher level of self-esteem as it contributes to higher social cohesion.



### **3. It helps revitalize traditional knowledge transmission systems**

This higher value generated by the inclusion into the school curriculum creates an interest for knowing more in quite a few children which can be satisfied through more traditional knowledge transfer systems. On the other hand, the ideally consultative and participatory development of the adapted school curriculum generates a reconsidering process in communities on how their knowledge could be transmitted most effectively and through it revives the traditional knowledge transmission systems.

### **4. It helps achieve main quality basic education goals**

Quality Basic Education is best illustrated by the widely accepted Child Friendly School Concept with its 6 dimensions [worded 'Inclusive Education' by UNESCO]. Dimension 3 is looking at the teaching/learning methodologies and the relevance of the taught subjects to the life of children, Dimension 5 gives importance to the participation of students, families and communities in school affairs. Both of these dimensions are highly supported and enhanced through a consultative and participatory process of including local culture into the school curriculum.

Ideally children are equal partners in the consultative and decision making process and are actively involved in identifying and documenting local culture using active learning methodologies, which are widely promoted in Quality Basic Education. Most of the children of ethnic minorities will lead their adult life as farmers in their own communities; including local culture does therefore provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills for their adult life.

As already mentioned, most ethnic communities have an immense respect towards the school and teachers and do not dare to get involved in school affairs. The school is basically an alien place and

participation is limited to contributing labor and in-kind support. Community members are not only consulted and involved in the decision making process of the local curriculum development but are as well actively involved in the teaching-learning process, either as resource person and/or as teacher of local culture. Experience shows that doing this is a very powerful and effective way to bridge the huge gap between the school and ethnic communities and leads to various mutual future benefits for the development of the school and the communities.

### **Some tips from practitioners to consider for the development of a local curriculum:**

- Include education authorities in the consultation process right from the beginning and ensure their crucial support throughout the process
- Make together with children and community members a community map on what local knowledge is present in the community
- Consult with community members and children on what particular local knowledge they would like to include
- Let students identify local knowledge and document it, however contribute technical support to them, especially at the beginning
- Organize community meetings for validation of documented local knowledge by students
- Involve community members and children in producing reading materials
- Organize the curriculum following existing cycles in the communities, may it be their yearly cycle or the life cycle
- Make sure you give technical support to community members helping transmitting local knowledge in schools, they do hardly know any teaching techniques
- Conduct regular assessment/evaluation with the community and children on achieved results

**Mr. Marc Wetz is an Education and Ethnic Minority Specialist, active for many years in the Region [mostly in Thailand and Vietnam] and a member of the EENET editorial team: [marcwetz@yahoo.com](mailto:marcwetz@yahoo.com).**

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<sup>1</sup> Other related main rights frameworks are: Article 30 of the CRC, ILO Convention No 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal People (Art. 5,27+28) and of course the recent UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (mainly Art. 11-15).

# Reducing Stigma - Ensuring Education for Children Affected by HIV in Vietnam

UNESCO Hanoi

The HIV epidemic in Vietnam continues to grow, with the virus detected in all 64 provinces and all cities. The number of people living with HIV has doubled since 2000 and reached an estimated 300,000 by the end of 2006. Estimates are that each year, some 40,000 people are infected, majority among drug users and persons buying or selling sex. A wide range of national and international organizations are supporting the Vietnamese government to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010 to which Vietnam is committed by the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS adopted by the UN General Assembly in June 2006.

An important factor hindering the achievement of all four components of Universal Access is the presence of stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV and those affected by HIV. Stigma and discrimination occur everywhere: at the work place, in health centers, in community life and also in schools. As the common cause of HIV is directly linked to “drug use” and “prostitution” which are so-called “social evils”, the status of people living with HIV is therefore attributed to their “bad behaviors” - in the case of children to the bad behaviors of their relatives. As a result the people living with HIV tend to be doubly marginalized in Vietnam.

“Being a person living with HIV, I experienced a lot of difficulties, among which stigma and discrimination are the most serious”, says Ms. Pham Thi Hue, voted Asian Hero in 2004 by TIME Magazine, “It’s not HIV, but stigma that kills me”

The Vietnamese government considers, according to international standards, the following children as being ‘affected by HIV’: children who tested positive for HIV, children of who one or both parents are infected with HIV or died from AIDS and children who are at high risk for HIV infection. The latter group includes children who or whose parents are involved in drug use and/or sex work, children who

are victims of human trafficking, orphans and children who stay in social protection centres.

Every year a number of children affected by HIV is refused schooling either by teachers, head masters or pupils’ parents mostly due to people’s limited knowledge on HIV and the resulting fear. The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) often receives requests for advice from provincial level authorities related to problems with HIV affected children. Most schools do not want to exclude any child - including HIV affected children - but the pressure from parents makes them sometimes decide otherwise. The situation is even more difficult at kindergartens where children are considered to be too young to control their actions while teachers could not observe all children continuously. Many parents of HIV affected children are forced either to move their children to another school or to keep them home because of the experienced pressure from other parents.

In January 2007, the Law on HIV prevention and control came into effect in Vietnam. The Law articulates the rights of people living with HIV and assigns roles to different government entities in the HIV response. The Law states that “Education establishments shall not be allowed to refuse to admit, discipline or expel a student or learner on the ground that such person is infected with HIV”. To facilitate the implementation of the HIV Law in the education sector, the MOET, with technical inputs from the UN, prepared a Directive which was signed by the Vice-Minister for Education in November 2008. Educators from provincial and district levels were involved in the preparation of this directive which created a stronger sense of ownership in the sector. As a next step, the MOET and UN plan to develop a Questions and Answers handbook based on the Directive as a practical tool for educators at the local level. The UN introduced a local NGO to undertake the work on the Directive and the Questions and Answers handbook together with the MOET. This NGO,

the Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS) gained a lot of practical experience with this issue in Vietnam. The organization has been promoting its “School without stigma and discrimination” concept in selected primary and lower-secondary schools in the provinces Quang Ninh and Can Tho. ISDS tries to create supportive attitudes towards people living with HIV and their environment with teachers, pupils and their relatives. Teachers are trained on how to integrate supportive messages in

relevant subjects while a competition was set up for pupils to write stories and draw pictures about reducing stigma related to HIV.

For more information please contact Mr. **Hans Lambrecht**, who is the National Programme Officer for HIV/AIDS and School Health at UNESCO’s Hanoi office, via email [h.lambrecht@unesco.org](mailto:h.lambrecht@unesco.org)



**Avert**

## Stigma: The Way Forward

HIV-related stigma and discrimination severely hamper efforts to effectively fighting the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Fear of discrimination often prevents people from seeking treatment for AIDS or from admitting their HIV status publicly. People with (or suspected of having) HIV may be turned away from healthcare services and employment, or refused entry to a foreign country. In some cases, they may be evicted from home by their families and rejected by their friends and colleagues. The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS can extend to the next generation, placing an emotional burden on those left behind.

Denial goes hand in hand with discrimination, with many people continuing to deny that HIV exists in their communities. Today, HIV/AIDS threatens the welfare and wellbeing of people throughout the world. At the end of the year 2007, 33 million people were living with HIV and during the year 2 million died from AIDS-related illness. Combating stigma and discrimination against people who are affected by HIV/AIDS is vital in the process of preventing and controlling the global epidemic.

So how can progress be made in overcoming this stigma and discrimination? How can we change people’s attitudes to AIDS? A certain amount can be achieved through the legal process. In some countries PLWHA lack knowledge of their rights in society. They need to be educated, so they are able to challenge the discrimination, stigma and denial that they meet. Institutional and other monitoring

mechanisms can enforce the rights of PLWHA and provide powerful means of mitigating the worst effects of discrimination and stigma.

“We can fight stigma. Enlightened laws and policies are key. But it begins with openness, the courage to speak out. Schools should teach respect and understanding. Religious leaders should preach tolerance. The media should condemn prejudice and use its influence to advance social change, from securing legal protections to ensuring access to health care.”

**Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations**

However, no policy or law can alone combat HIV/AIDS related discrimination. The fear and prejudice that lie at the core of the HIV/AIDS discrimination need to be tackled at the community and national levels. A more enabling environment needs to be created to increase the visibility of people with HIV/AIDS as a ‘normal’ part of any society. The presence of treatment makes this task easier; where there is hope, people are less afraid of AIDS; they are more willing to be tested for HIV, to disclose their status, and to seek care if necessary. In the future, the task is to confront the fear-based messages and biased social attitudes, in order to reduce the discrimination and stigma of people who are living with HIV or AIDS.

Excerpt from AVERT’s website  
<http://www.avert.org/aidsstigma.htm>

# Success is not Impossible Because of Deafness

Wahyu Irianto

Birth and death are mysteries that are fully under God's control. A baby cannot choose in whose womb it will be nurtured. A baby can never choose in (or under) which condition it will be born. I was born into a big family as the 7<sup>th</sup> child out 8 brothers and sisters. God created 4 of my siblings as persons that can hear and I am born deaf like 3 of my other siblings. The duty of our parents to raise children is surely not easy. When I was still small I never knew what my parents felt when they got 4 deaf children. I never knew if my parents complained or not, because since I was small I could never hear the voice of my parents. The childhood of a deaf child is the embodiment of total silence. **I never knew the sound of crying, laughter, singing, radio, TV or bird's whistle. The only sounds I could here were the thunder of a lightning and the explosion of fireworks.**

My academic education starts with the age of 7 in a special kindergarten for deaf children. My kindergarten education took 2 years without any worth mentioning language development. I entered elementary school in the same special school when I was 9 years old. I still couldn't read and did not understand many lessons the teachers were giving. My language development as well as other knowledge continued to develop very slowly because the teachers taught in an inappropriate way even though they were special teachers for children with hearing impairment. Pupils at this school were asked everyday to write a lot of words without being explained the meaning of this words. Deaf student's understanding of the meaning of the words was very minimal. **Deaf students had a very limited vocabulary and underdeveloped grammar because of the teaching approach of the teachers.**

My parents and siblings carefully watched my language development. My father was not satisfied with the results achieved by the teachers. Everyday my older siblings and my

parents gave me additional lessons at home in a way that was easy to understand. My older siblings drew pictures of items around me and wrote down the word for it. This way of teaching might look strange, but my family with their own style were much more effective than the teachers in the special school. I started to read and understood the meaning of words after the explanations of my father and older siblings. **The family has to understand, that a deaf child learns more through its vision sense. The use of different kinds of media like drawings and written words is the best way to teach language to a deaf child.**

One day my father said in front of me and all my siblings that he actually feels very sad and burdened with raising a deaf children in his family. My father was worried about the future of his children who are deaf. His complaints though became a motivation for me to move forward. My father's frustration became a fire in me that lit my spirit to prove that even though I am deaf I can achieve something. **The challenge that deaf children face is only that they cannot hear but we are born with the same functioning brain as children with good hearing.**

This was my spirit since 4th grade of elementary school and my thoughts became fuller with the great ambition to prove to my father that my birth was not a disgrace. I would have done everything to be successful. Ideals grew in my thoughts even though my body was still small. Teachers that taught in an inappropriate way became the first targets of my protest. The fighter in my soul made me asking the headmaster to change my class teacher with a better teacher. It might look weird but it really happened, me 4 years old dared to ask this. At this time I was eager for knowledge and my efforts in learning were not a waste. I became third best of my class at the end of elementary school.

In 1994, my parents decided to move me to a regular school because they felt that the special school is not the ideal place for a child to gain knowledge. **My parents put me in a regular school even though they knew that learning there is not easy for a deaf child.** I became the only deaf child among 41 students with normal hearing. Even though I was among the best when I graduated from elementary school, the situation I faced in the regular school was very unexpected. I became a dwarf among a group of giants. When our junior high school teacher wrote something on the black board I was wondering about the meaning that I did not understand. The vocabulary and knowledge I have received in the special school was so minimal compared to the vocabulary and knowledge my friends with normal hearing have received. But I wasn't afraid or felt inferior, learning with children with normal hearing turned out to be fun.

**In the regular junior high school class room I have learned a lot of words that helped me to enrich my vocabulary. It is a much more fertile ground for learning. I was sure that the regular school is the gate that will lead to achieve my dreams.** I always asked my school friends a lot about the lessons our teacher taught us at school. I invited them to eat and drink or paid them so that they explained again the content of the lessons. I learned very enthusiastically and was very thirsty for knowledge. **Learning at a regular school was not always fun. Onetime a child from another class said: "Wahyu, your voice is ugly, when you speak it sounds like an animal or ghost!"** Insults like this made me angry. Sometimes lost my control and I sought revenge with beatings. My learning enthusiasm over the last 3 years was not useless. I managed to graduate as the best pupil among 41 others with normal hearing in my class. I was sure that at this time my parents were proud of me and not lament about my deafness anymore.

After graduating from junior high school in 1997, I was encouraged by my arts teacher to sign up at a Senior High School with focus

on arts because I won 5 times a drawing competition on provincial level. My academic performance at this school was also not disappointing. In 2000, I graduated at I managed to enter the Indonesian Arts Institute and took a course on visual communication.

Observing the education opportunities for children with hearing impairment created the wish in myself to help to improve the situation of the Deaf. I joined Matahariku Social Voluntary Group in Jogjakarta. My colleagues and I are doing a lot of activities to support the Deaf community. We are organise and support seminars, theatre plays, demonstrations, language development programmes, design workshops and other activities voluntarily. We have good connections with Deaf communities in England, Japan, France, USA, Pakistan and other countries. In 2006, I managed to get my bachelor degree after being one leaf form university from 1 year.

In 2007, I was part of a national competition and finally got the opportunity to get a internship at the Hong Kong Society for the Deaf that co-operated with the the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I worked and learned together with deaf friends from Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines. One of the programmes I am currently working on is the a research on sign language development. The traineeship will last for 5 years and I hope that in the future the quality of education for children with hearing impairment will improve. **A lot of things have changed since I was a child that does not have a language until I became an adult with an academic degree. But one think never changed and that is that I cannot hear any other sound than the thunder of a lightning and the explosion of fireworks. However I am destined to be deaf but I am able to prove to my parents that my life is not a disgrace.**

For more information please contact [Mr. Wahyu Irianto](mailto:wahyuiriantot@yahoo.com) via email: [wahyuiriantot@yahoo.com](mailto:wahyuiriantot@yahoo.com)

# Afghan Sign Language Video Dictionary: A Tool for Inclusion

Justin and Ina Power

The Afghan Deaf community has, despite decades of war and with few very resources, been able to organize a national association (ANAD). The Afghan National Association of the Deaf (ANAD) has with help and support from the Afghan Ministry of Education, UN agencies and several international organizations produced two dictionaries comprising 4000 signs. This is a remarkable achievement worthy of honour. And while we honour this achievement, we also seek to build on its foundational work and to recognize where the foundation can be further strengthened.

## The current situation

Imagine reading a book in a foreign language and coming across an unfamiliar word. You search for the word in your pocket dictionary and find the translation. Unfortunately, though, you don't know the word in your own language either and there is no other information in the dictionary to help you - no definition, no example sentences, and no parts of speech - nothing but the simple translation.

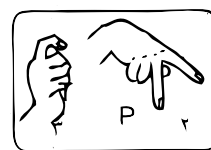
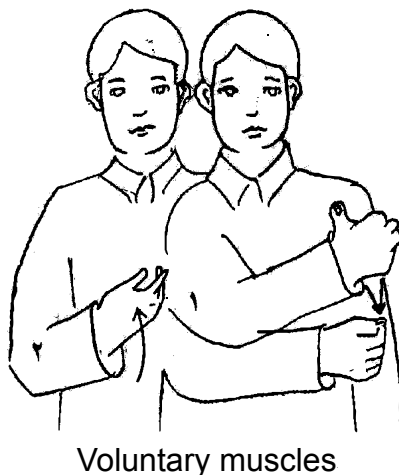
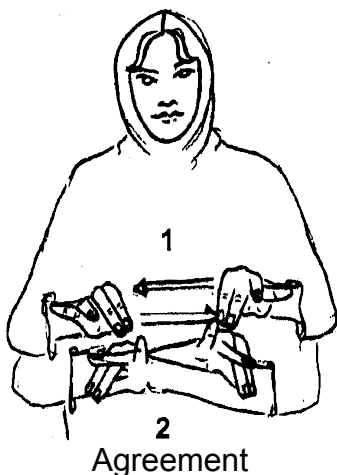
Imagine trying to learn a foreign language with no help or only sporadic help from a native speaker. No textbooks are available, no grammar, no recordings - just a dictionary. To make matters worse the dictionary is written in a script you are not completely familiar with and it contains little pronunciation guidance.

Imagine you are then asked to express complex ideas in that foreign language.

Imagine a young Deaf student in Afghanistan seeing a conversation between their Deaf peers and not understanding the signs that are being used. Later they consult their sign language dictionaries but quickly realize the impossibility of their search. Their dictionaries are only searchable by topic in Dari, Pashto and English and are indexed in those languages as well. The students only know what the signs look like and are not sure of the topic. Even if they do know the topic and are lucky enough to recognize the drawing of the sign they are searching for, they probably won't understand the translation.

These situation describe some of the barriers to literacy in Dari or Pashto facing young Deaf students as well as the near impossible task facing hearing teachers with Deaf students in inclusive classroom settings in remote areas far away from any support system. All three situations force us to ask some questions about the design and function of the current Afghan Sign Language dictionaries.

In looking more closely at these questions, we will see how a video dictionary of Afghan Sign Language could supplement the current dictionaries and be an important for tool for inclusive education.



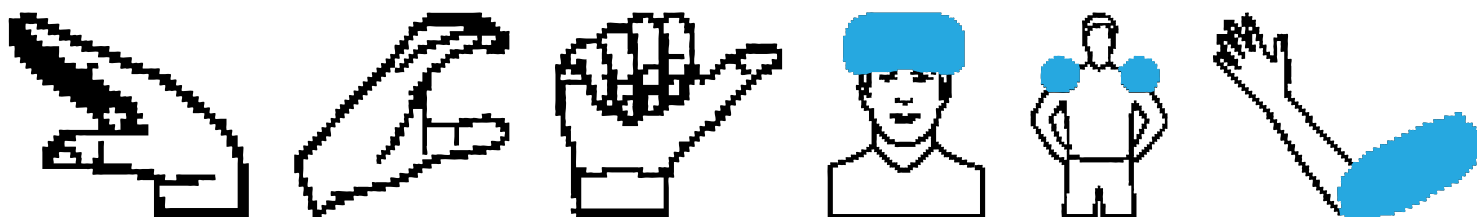
*Examples from the Dari version of the newest dictionary, printed February 2009 in Kabul*

## Questions and possible solutions

### 1. Who are the current dictionaries designed for?

We see clearly from our third situation above that they are not designed for a young Deaf student, nor for a illiterate Deaf adult who is not able to read or write. The dictionaries are organized and indexed in Dari, Pashto and English. Therefore the target audiences are obviously fluent users of those languages.

But even for these target audiences we recognize several limitations. The second situation describes fluent users of Dari or Pashto who has little trouble finding the sign they are looking for. However, what they find is only a sketch of the real sign - four dimensions reduced to two. They will be lucky to produce the sign correctly on his own.



Next we use a typical dictionary as a model and include the following:

1. A video clip of the sign
2. The part of speech
3. Another video clip of a definition of the sign in Afghan Sign Language, with written translations in Dari, Pushto and English
4. A third clip with an example sentence using the sign in a natural way, again with translations
5. Sign variants, related signs, etc.

Video clips of signs would enable teachers and interpreters to learn signs on their own and to sign with less "accent": it is much easier to learn a sign correctly from a video than from a drawing. Definitions in Afghan Sign Language would help young and illiterate Deaf to learn the meanings of new signs in their own language. This would then help them to learn the meanings of Dari and Pashto

### 2. In which settings can the current dictionaries be used?

We see from all three situations that the dictionaries have only limited use for learning outside the presence of literate and skilled signers.

### 3. How could we design a video dictionary so that we broaden the target audience to include the semi- or illiterate Deaf and the unskilled hearing signer?

First we make the video dictionary searchable not only by Dari and Pashto but also by elements of a sign, such as the hand shape used in the sign and the location of the sign in relation to the signer. A Deaf signer would easily recognize these elements - simply how the hand(s) look(s) in the sign and where the sign is made. See the examples below taken from an online Danish Sign Language video dictionary.<sup>1</sup>

words. Example sentences with translations would help both the Deaf and hearing to notice differences in grammar between the languages and to see how signs are used naturally.

A video dictionary designed in this way would give more of the Deaf community access to the spoken languages around them and would be an invaluable tool for teachers and interpreters, especially those with only periodic access to sign language teachers. Perhaps more importantly, it would show respect to the Deaf community by making them the target audience of a dictionary of their own language.

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<sup>1</sup> [tegnsprog.dk](http://tegnsprog.dk)

# The Australian Inclusive Education Journey: Celebrating the Potential of All Students

Alison Atwell

In attempting to track where Australia currently sits with inclusion it is essential to review what pathway Australia took along its journey for students with special needs. Like so many educational communities around the world Australia chose a segregationalist approach in its first attempts to support students with special needs. The reasoning for this separatist style was that it was considered advantageous to have one specialist facility where all students with special needs could be catered for as a group in one designated facility. A major flaw of course in this thinking is that it doesn't take into account that students with special needs are also incredibly diverse in their needs and that bundling them together in one facility means that they forfeit the right to learn how to manage in a broader community which will in the long term be their community.

This was all about isolationist support, which involved public school systems meeting the needs of those who were deemed to be able to be educated and "Special Schools" designated to attend to the needs of those who sat outside this realm. Isolationism was never the full answer but it must be acknowledged as being a beginning on the journey and an actual recognition of needs that must be attended to. Yet isolationism was also seen both in Australia and the global perspective as fulfilling a secondary purpose. If you remove the students who have any special needs from the main school universe then it is so much easier to meet the needs of students within the school.

Certain milestones in the journey towards change can be recognized in the Australian setting. In Australia the Karmel Report in 1973 was devoted to equality of outcomes in schools by making the 'overall circumstances of children's education as nearly equal as possible'. It consequently made recommendations for funding issues in Australian schools. Within two years, Commonwealth spending on schools grew

from \$364 million to nearly \$1.1 billion. Australia's perspective on spending the educational dollar was beginning to change. However although the conversation was beginning to change little was altering in reality.

In 1981 the International Year of Disabled persons did see a concerted initiative within Australia to integrate people with disabilities in all community areas, which of course overflowed into a need for school inclusion. This was described as the integration era in Australian schooling.

Although the format varied widely across the Australian states in many areas this meant that a separate and autonomous educational facility was established on the site of an original school. The two educational institutions would then work hand in hand to ensure that while students with special needs were primarily catered for in the Special Needs Unit or Education Support Centre as some of these specific sites were known, students would also be integrated into the main school for certain classes. Thus integration was interpreted as the practice of bringing children with special educational needs "closer to their main-stream peers, through curriculum adaptation or the provision of differentiated work and support, whereas inclusion is frequently located within a broader human rights discourse, and is concerned with issues of social justice and of consciously putting into action, values and approaches based on equity, entitlement and respect for diversity" (Moran, 2007, p.124).

The next step in the journey towards inclusive schooling is spoken of as the main-streaming phase. This differed from the integration phase. Under main-streaming students were actually enrolled in the regular school and attended classes but were withdrawn from these classes for certain periods to be given additional individual support. The term main-



streaming implied the practice of integrating students into general education classes when appropriate. Main-streaming did not imply total integration into general education classes but rather the establishment of a partnership with regular education.

The journey from main-streaming to inclusion involved however a significant shift. The move for actual inclusion necessitated the need to boost resources, services and support within the general classroom. This was essential to ensure that students with special needs were not merely entering and exiting these classes, but rather were fully-fledged members of the classroom environment. Inclusion necessitated total school restructuring so that all students could have access to the full range of educational and social opportunities offered. Such a major restructuring involved a renegotiation of power and a renegotiation of strategies to establish a new balance between general and special educators.

For all the positive connotations that came with the notion of inclusion there was also one underlying fear that a “one size fits all” policy was being established which could result in some students with special needs not having the specialized learning input that they required. Was it simply going to become too generalist? Were teachers in generalist classrooms even with the best of intentions to provide appropriate learning and additional support structures going to be able to meet the needs of all students? The answer to this is not that we must rethink the notion of inclusion but rather that we should rethink the broader picture of generalist education. This goes back yet again to the need to effectively restructure and rethink the whole school environment which of course includes professional development and support for teachers as well as adequate pre- teacher training programs.

In the eastern Australian state of Queensland the term inclusion had seemingly been taken one step further. In 2000, Education Queensland produced a policy for students who were considered to be at educational risk, “SM-17: students at educational risk Education Queensland, Brisbane”. This was the beginning of the shift away from the language of ‘social justice’ and ‘target groups’, towards ‘inclusion’ and ‘students at educational risk’. This term ‘students at educational risk’ refers to those students whose experience of schooling, makes them vulnerable to not completing schooling nor achieving their full potential.

The idea is that if you address these risk factors for each and every student then you are able to accomplish full inclusion. In other words within the broad scope of this interpretation of inclusion you no longer have specific groups whose needs have to be addressed. Instead you are addressing the needs of each and every student within the entire schooling system. It is a new target group! What you need to do is “focus on ‘kids as complex human beings’, and therefore produce professional development workshops that capture the whole rather than ‘slices’ of students’ ‘humanity’”. What this implies as a consequence is a move away from centralized policies and a move towards the school itself as the management centre.

The article is an excerpt from a paper presented during a conference in Bandung, Indonesia in April 2009. Dr. **Alison Atwell** is currently working as a Module Development Consultant for LAPIS [Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools] in Jakarta, Indonesia. She can be contacted via email [alison.atwell@centrin.net.id](mailto:alison.atwell@centrin.net.id)

## School Mapping on Nutrition and Health in Balochistan

Wajid Iqbal and Terje Magnussønn Watterdal

The boy's school in Malozai village has been selected as one of four government primary schools to participate in a pilot programme on inclusive education. The programme is the result of collaboration between the Education Department of the Government of Balochistan and IDP Norway, and funded by the Norwegian Government. The school is located on the outskirts of Quetta, the capital city of the Province of Balochistan in Pakistan. The population of the village is exclusively Pashtun. The income of the families in the village is meagre and there are many mouths to feed as families are large in this part of Pakistan. It was difficult to find out exactly how many children there were in each family, because the boys were very reluctant to discuss any information about the female members of their families with strangers, as this is considered impolite in Pashtu culture.

We conducted a study to map the nutrition and health status of the children in school. We avoided sampling to make sure that the results were as accurate as possible. Therefore all 197 children who came to school on the two days we spent in the village, were measured, weighed and interviewed individually. Answers and data were recorded on individual questionnaires. The interviews were held in Pashtu, the mother-tongue of all the children in the school, and not in Urdu (the national language) to avoid any misunderstanding. Some of the older boys helped to measure the height and weight of their friends. Together with the age of the children these data helped us to calculate the Body Mass Index (BMI) for each student in the school. The age correlated

BMI graph you will find on the poster in the middle of the newsletter was used.

The measurement of BMI in the school revealed the following results:

- 24% of the children were underweight (with more than 47% of these children being extremely underweight with results below 1 percentile)
- 76% of the children were within the normal range
- None of the children were overweight

The prevalence of children who were underweight varied from 20% in Nursery Class to almost 30% among boys in 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade.

The lack of nutrition has also affected the growth (height) of the boys in the school. We found that 17% of the 7 year old boys had a height that fell below the fifth percentile for height for age on a growth reference curve that reflects normal growth within the Pashtun population. These children are therefore defined as growth-stunted. Among the 12 year old boys stunting (less than "normal" height growth) had increased to affect 56% of the children.

Few boys seemed to be able to progress to 5<sup>th</sup> grade and complete their primary education. Many dropped out after nursery Class, or first and second grade, or they had to continue to repeat fourth grade until they gave up and dropped out of school.

The age range among the children in the different grades was therefore enormous:

Grade	Number of Children	Youngest Boy	Oldest Boy	Average Age
Nursery	61	5 years	11 years	7 years
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade / Prep	43	6 years	11 years	7.9 years
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	35	7 years	12 years	8.3 years
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	20	7 years	15 years	10.9 years
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	29	8 years	15 years	11.6 years
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9	12 years	14 years	12.6 years

The age difference is caused by children starting school quite late as well as by exceptionally high repetition rates. How much the lack of nutrition and poor health has affected drop-out and repetition rates is not evident from the data we were able to collect. However, the fact that 25% of the boys in the school are underweight as a result of malnourishment, and untreated stomach and skin infections, must have influenced their ability to succeed in school.

The vast age-span of children in the different classes is not ideal for the social, emotional, intellectual or physical development of the children. We observed that most of the older boys acted dominant and aggressive towards the younger boys, while the boys in the higher grades teased the older boys who were “stuck” in the lower grades. The general level of violence and bullying among the boys in the school was high. The school has only three teachers, who are struggling to teach between 60 and 70 children in two separate classes at the same time. The boys are therefore often left to cater for themselves. They usually arrive long before their teachers and take on the responsibility of their teachers when they are sick or unable (or unwilling) to come to work.

In spite of the dire conditions in the school most of the boys said they were happy to be in school. But they also seemed to envy their friends who had dropped out and were helping their fathers and older brothers in nearby markets, but none of them envied the boys who had to collect garbage or scrap metal for a living.

The students were asked to describe what they ate during their two or three daily meals. Most children said they had breakfast before coming to school. What children in this part of Pakistan would normally eat for breakfast is bread, tea and ghee (clarified butter). We soon gave up on this part of the study as the children were fiercely defensive of their parents ability to support and feed their families, and therefore made up stories about having milk, eggs and meat with their breakfast, even if they showed visible signs of being under-nourished.

Similar tales were told about the second and third meals (lunch and dinner) have similar composition. However, what we do know is that in most households meat (if it is available at all) is cooked only on Fridays. The children also reported buying biscuits, cakes, candy,



apples, cucumbers, and popsicles from local vendors. We didn't observe any vendors with fruit and vegetables but we do know that the children were given a few Rupees by their parents and that they mainly bought candy, biscuits and popsicles, all with little or no nutritional value.

The children told us that the village has ground water supply and that almost all the houses have access to water. The school has a water connection but there was no water in the toilets and a purified drinking water tank was not available in the school. We observed that children were passing stool and urinate out in the open around the school premises, and few if any of the children washed their hands after going to the toilet.

Most of the students had skin lesions. Most common were Eczema, Impetigo, Scabies, Coetaneous Leishmaniasis (parasitic infection), Pityriasis Alba, Dermatophytosis (fungal infection), but the children also suffered from a number of other disfiguring skin conditions. Most of these are relatively easy to prevent or to treat, but may lead to permanent disfigurements or in rare cases be even fatal if left untreated.

So what can we, as education planners, teachers, and parents do?

1. We need to start to measure the Body Mass Index (BMI) of children in schools. This can be done without any major investments. The only equipment needed is a simple scale. The measurement for height can be painted on the wall and be part of the classroom decoration. The regular measuring of BMI can easily be incorporated into mathematics and science classes and thus become a helpful tool in making these subjects more practical and fun. It can also become a regular activity that will help teachers make their classes more participatory. At the same time children will learn to see the practical benefits of mathematics and science which are otherwise seen as rather abstract.
2. If a child has a low BMI teachers and school administrators need to contact the parents. The teachers should discuss this problem with the parents and find out why, as a low BMI can also be the result of sudden growth spurts! These teacher-parent meetings can be used as important tools in creating awareness about the importance of nutrition, locally available and affordable nutritious food and family planning, as well as of the dangers of malnourishment to the physical, social, emotional and cognitive (intellectual) development of children. If BMI is monitored over time by teachers and parents it may help prevent stunted growth among the children as well as other serious effects of malnourishment.
3. Schools should introduce basic health education programmes. Children should be taught about the importance of washing their hands after going to the toilet and before taking food. To invest in a bar of soap for each class or even for each child is a small investment that most schools (and parents) can afford. The costs of treating stomach and skin infections resulting from poor hygiene are certainly much higher. Practical health education can easily be incorporated into science, language or religious classes and thus also become another important tool in making the school more inclusive and child-friendly.
4. Nutrition education could be introduced to help children (and parents) understand the importance of a balanced diet. This should be part of basic science education or even language and religious education. Poverty is something that schools, children and even parents can do relatively little about short term. But how to optimise the use of scarce financial and food resources can be taught in schools. Children need to learn to take more responsibility for their own growth and development. If they are given some small pocket money by their parents to spend on snacks they can learn how they should spend money more wisely on tasty seasonal locally available fruits and other food items.

5. Teachers should observe the health condition of the children in their classes. If they see that children are developing skin rashes and infections, or seem lethargic and show a sudden lack of concentration, they should talk to the children and try to find out why. It is important to realise that practical solutions to these problems do not always have to be difficult or expensive, and that by responding to them in the initial stages will reduce the long term costs and consequences.

These are just some of the activities that can be introduced in schools to reduce the barriers that poor nutrition and health create for millions of children in Pakistan and throughout Asia. We need more practical ideas on how to start practical health and nutrition education programmes in schools so please send us

your thoughts and ideas by email. Remember that schools are not inclusive and child-friendly unless they respond effectively to the nutrition and health issues that exist among their students and other children in their communities.

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# Drug Prevention and Response in Afghanistan

Recent studies have shown that more one million Afghan adults are addicted to drugs. There are no statistics regarding drug abuse among children 0 to 18 years but we know that most drug addicts start long before they are 18. These staggering numbers do not include the millions of Afghans who use hashish. This means that more than 6% of Afghans over the age of 18 are addicted to “hard drugs” (heroin and other opiates).

## Introducing Programmes in Schools

**Shamsul Islam Jamali**

Drug abuse among children and youth is a grave concern for all of us who work with education. Although schools have a vital role to play in drug prevention, it is also important that parents, families, schools and the government work together to prevent drug abuse among all the members of our community, but especially among children and youth.

Afghanistan is unfortunately one of the world's largest producers of opium. Both opium and heroin abuse appears to be more severe in areas where drugs are cultivated and produced than in other parts of the country. Without doubt, education has a key role in the prevention of drug abuse through mainstreaming and incorporation of drug prevention messages in text books in all levels. A number of surveys in Afghanistan have shown that many school students are addicted to drugs, particularly in areas where

the poppy cultivation rate is high. This is a big challenge for the education system in Afghanistan. The Afghan government in general, and the Ministry of Education in particular therefore have an enormous responsibility to respond effectively to the vision circle of drug abuse among school students. A plan should be made to reduce the availability of and demand for drugs in the schools, and thus provide a drug free, healthy and inclusive education environment for student all over the country. Inclusive and child-friendly practices should be introduced as these will help prevent high-risk behavior among students.

The Ministry of Education in Afghanistan has a strong commitment to implement the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS). One of the aspects of the ANDS is the implementation of counter narcotics (drug





courtesy of Parween Azimi, UNESCO / Ministry of Education

prevention) strategies on all levels of the education system in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Education has taken some significant steps on this pathway, but more steps remain to be taken.

In August 2007 the Ministry of Education established a two-year project by the name of Drug-Free and healthy Education Environment through Counter Narcotics Trust Fund (CNTF). The project aims to reduce the harm of drug abuse and addiction among school students through the mainstreaming of counter narcotics messages in textbooks for grades 7-12, distribution of posters, TV and radio spots, documentary films, TV programs, newsletters, etc.

The Curriculum Department has mainstreamed and incorporated short counter narcotics messages on the covers of 17.8 million secondary grades textbooks that were printed and sent out to the schools over the country. Millions of students received the counter narcotics messages and spread these further to their families and to the society.

The second step is the incorporation of counter narcotics (drug prevention) information into the content of the text books of the new national curriculum from grade 7-12. The new books are ready and will be distributed in the next education year. In the new books the harm and dangers of drug abuse is explained from different point of views such as: the Islamic perspective, health perspective, negative social impacts of drug abuse, as well as the many economic effects.

The Ministry of Education has also been developed a procedure for schools on how schools administrators respond to those students and/or teachers who abuse drugs, and/or distribute drugs among school students.

These valuable efforts will help and support the prevention of the drug abuse in Afghan schools. Hopefully, as a result of these efforts, and through the implementation of the counter narcotics strategy in the education whole system we will have a drug-free and healthy school environment in future.

## Stories of Children and Youth Affected by Drugs

**Terje Magnussønn Watterdal and Fareed-ud-Din Noori**

The Ministry of Education is, as Shamsul Islam Jamali describes above, starting to respond to the threat of drugs (narcotics) to children and youth in Afghanistan by including drug prevention education into the school curricula and textbooks. To highlight the importance of an increased focus on drug prevention education in schools we have spoken with 3 young men, who either have never been enrolled in school, or dropped out of school before they finished their education. They never learned about drug prevention at home, in school or in the mosque and as a result they

all started to experiment with drugs during their youth. However, after years of drug abuse they are now getting help with their addiction by the Nejat Rehabilitation and Training Centre (Nejat means protection and blessing both in Dari and Pashto languages). With support from UNESCO and other donors Nejat offers children and youth drug rehabilitation, HIV prevention and literacy programmes as well as vocational skills training.

Here are the stories of Rahmatullah, Masood and Abdul:

Rahmatullah is 18 years old. When he was a young boy he lived with his family as refugees in South Waziristan in Pakistan. After going to school for two short years in Pakistan he had to leave for Karachi to work in a shop to help support his mother, father and 10 brothers and sisters. The shopkeeper he worked for was a drug addict, and he was the one that introduced Rahmatullah to drugs. Drugs become a welcome escape for Rahmatullah from the harsh realities of hunger, hard child-labour and abuse. He used diluted heroin which less expensive than pure heroin, however the costs were high and hard to cover through honest means. When he returned to Kabul five years ago he spent up to 4 USD per day on drugs, much more than he could earn collecting scrap metal and plastic for recycling. A friend and former drug user invited Rahmatullah to come with him to the Nejat Centre. The first few days of his rehabilitation he was given counselling by former drug users and a team of doctors and social workers, while he reduces his drug consumption gradually. He has now completed the first part of the programme and is living in the Hostel boarding house of the Rehabilitation Centre while his body is getting

used to life without drugs. This is the second part of his detoxification programme. When he has finished the second part of the programme he wants to learn how to read and write, as well as a trade so that he can earn a living. His dream is to become a car mechanic, get a job and start a family.

Masood is already 20 years old. He went to school for 7 years and completed his primary education. He liked going to school but never learned anything about drugs, not in the school, not at home and not in the Mosque. When he was 13 his friend convinced Masood to run away from home to go across the border to Iran to get a job and make a lot of money. At least that was their dream. It all didn't turn out exactly the way Masood and his friend has thought. They both worked on construction sites under harsh conditions and spent most of what they earned on drugs. He was sent home to Afghanistan when a relative found out that he was using drugs. When he came home to Kabul he found a job for a security company, but when they found out about his drug addiction, they fired him. His father didn't know what to do with his son so he brought him to the Nejat Rehabilitation Centre where





he is now going through the tough and lengthy detoxification process. If he had known about the dangers of drugs, he said, he would never have tried it because drugs has only brought misery. Masood is embarrassed about going back to finish secondary school as he would be so much older than the other children, but when he finishes his rehabilitation he wants to teach other young people about the dangers of drugs. He says that all parents and teachers should inform their children about drugs to prevent them from following a path that leads only to destruction.

Abdullah is 25 years old. He was beaten by the Taliban when he was a young boy and has wounds on his legs to prove it. To ease the

pain he was given a powder by a “pharmacist” without knowing that the powder contained heroin he was quite happy as the pain was gone. But soon after the pain returned and he had to buy more powder, and the vicious cycle of drug addiction had begun. Abdul spent up to USD 10 per day on drugs, which is a fortune for most Afghans. He never went to school, but worked all his life to help put his younger brother through school. Exactly what he had to do to make enough money to support his family, as well as buy drugs for himself, he is not too open about, understandably enough! But he has a small shop where he charges batteries. All he now wants is to get away from drugs, get married, have children and live a decent life.

## Interview with Mothers and Children Affected by Drugs

**Parween Azimi**

The Nejat Rehabilitation Centre has an outreach unit for women and children in Kocha-e Sang Kashah in Kabul Old City. The centre offers drug and HIV prevention programmes, literacy and vocation training, as well as guidance and counselling. The programme is supported by UNESCO Kabul. Most of the people who live in this are poor and many of the women earn a living through prostitution, while other beg and wash clothes for their richer neighbours.

### **Talking with a Group of Children**

One outreach class consists of 17 children including boys and girls. All are age 11 to 13. The children are not going to formal schools due to different reasons, among others poverty, lack of care by teachers and parents, and cultural and social barriers.

All the families of the children are poor, and families in this part of Kabul are large, with eight to ten children in each. Some of their mothers and father are addicted to drugs. Formal schools are often far away in the richer parts of Kabul so the parents prefer to send their children to the class in the Nejat Outreach Unit instead.

The children come to meet and play with other children, play and tell stories to each other,

and study alphabet. Some of the children are learning reading and writing. Many of them said they hoped that they could go to ordinary school one day with other children. They are happy to come to the outreach school; “in the school we have a lot friends.” Many parents do not allow their children to go the regular school because they are afraid of fighting between the children. The security situation is not good in this part of Kabul, also in schools children suffer from lack of Security.

“I would like to go to school but I don’t have time for school, in the morning I am collecting paper, then I am selling water to different people, because the families living on the mountain has no water in their houses. I need money for my family therefore the whole day I have to carry water to the mountain so when I would I have time to go to school?” The water well is more than a kilometre away and the little boy has to climb a steep mountain to reach his house.

Often boys would attend a regular school but not the girls. A little girl said that “If I had the chance to go to school I would like to become a doctor, or a teacher so that I can teach other children like my self, or a nurse, I want do some thing to bring some money home to my family.”

### **Who is Shakila?**

She is a 32 years old woman, and she has 5 children. "I had very happy life with my family. My husband loved me and our children. When we left Afghanistan for Iran our life changed. My husband struggled to find work, he slowly changed his attitude and became mad and wants to be alone, and not with us. He would beat the children and would beat me - most of the time he was angry. I was wondering what had happened to him. I become sad because he didn't take care of any responsibilities at home. I am not educated I cried and asked him why he had changed. Sometimes he didn't want to answer and other times he said it was none of our business. He was sitting on the street and used drugs and wanted to be left alone. Finally I understood that that my husband was using Brown sugar, Heroin, and Opium. Every morning and evening he would use drugs, slowly he pushed me to smoke and use drugs as well. For me it was difficult to say no because he would beat me, hard and for a long time. When I started using drugs my health become as bad as his and I become like him! All my children would bread in this smoke so they become addicts too."

Her children are not going to school. Her oldest son is only 11 years old and is selling scrap in the plastic bazaar. She said she wanted to die because of her hard life, and because her husband is still deep using drugs. She is now under drug rehabilitation at the Nejat Outreach Centre. She is learning how to sow to make a living, and she still begs and manages to earn 30 to 40 AFS per day (60 to 70 US cent). She said: "I hope one day I could go back to the life I had before. This is my wish."

### **The Story of Little Bibi Hanifa**

Bibi is only 4 years old. She comes to the Nejat outreach unit with other members of her family. All of them are addicted to drugs. Her father and her two uncles are now under treatment. Bibi is suffering. She seems a bite dizzy and clumsy, and she vomits and has headache most of the time. When the father is smoking and using drugs she is not afraid of being near to him because when he is "happy" it makes her happy. She understands that the atmosphere at home is not good, because her family is always fighting. She thinks that crewing gum and anything that is wrapped

in cling film is drugs, because she is used to see drugs like "brown sugar" or hashish and heroin wrapped in the same kind of paper. She said "I know the colour of these things. I hate it because when my father is using these things he beats us and he doesn't know any thing. I am afraid of this paper. I don't want chewing gum, or sweets or anything else that is wrapped in this shiny paper."

These are just some of the many stories about children and young people being affected by drugs in Afghanistan. We are sure that many children in other countries suffer just like Bibi, Masood, Shakila, Abdul or Rahmatullah.

It is therefore important that schools start to teach about drugs and how drugs destroy lives as early as possible. We can not wait until secondary school to talk about drugs because young children and even infants are being affected and suffer from addiction in many countries throughout our region.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Afghanistan has made a few first steps. However, but more efforts are needed to prevent future generation from falling into the same trap as the people we have spoken to Kabul over these past few days. Let us all work for a drug free world and for schools that help children resist the temptation of drugs.

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# The Inclusive World of Children

Jo Chopra

**It is essential that children get their space to grow in the home and school environments, and be understood for who they are as individuals.**

Thank God for weakness we can see, for special needs which are obvious, for the chance we've been given to turn this wretched system on its head and make it work for all our children.

Disability turns the world upside down. Thank God. That's exactly what the world needs. In yoga, a wonderful, holistic approach to life which takes body, mind and soul into account, the headstand is called the king of asanas. Upside down, blood flows to the brain automatically, with no need for the heart to work against gravity to provide the vital life-force.

Yoga teachers say that regular practice of the headstand creates a sharper memory, a clearer vision and a more balanced life. And the best thing is that, having made the effort to get the feet up in the air, everything else happens automatically. That's how inclusion works too.

## **System of exclusion**

Bringing children with special needs into mainstream schools turns the whole education system on its head. With the fresh energy flow their arrival guarantees, we begin to look at everything differently. We begin to see what school is actually about. The system of education practised throughout most of the country is a system of exclusion. But we are so accustomed to its exclusive processes that we accept them without question.

At every stage of a child's learning, we put obstacles in her way: admission tests, interviews, registration and security deposits, tests, exams, and, in many schools, a foreign language of instruction; it's as if someone sat down and actually planned a system to ensure failure.

We've all seen the bright, curious little children in our neighbourhoods go running off to join school on the first day of term. They are so eager to wear that uniform, carry that bag, eat from that tiffin box. Those children come plodding home in the afternoon, their sparkle gone, their curiosity squashed. They've got no imagination! They are dull and weary all the time.

How does this happen? As parents and as educators, we take the child who is and measure him against some mythic "typical" child who does not actually exist. And the child in question, the living, breathing, quirky little child in front of us slowly disappears.

So thank God for disability! Thank God for weakness we can see, for special needs which are obvious, for the chance we've been given to turn this wretched system on its head and make it work for all our children.

I have three children - the youngest one has a disability. I only wish I had had her first, because she's the one who taught me to stop looking at the charts, to stop comparing her to a milestone list, a development sheet, or to the other children her age, and start looking at her. And that's what inclusion offers us: a chance to see our children - all of them - as they are: unique, precious, whole.

## **Accommodate is the word**

A child with a disability - particularly a learning disability or a mental handicap - entering a typical school automatically becomes a problem, starting with the admission process itself - how do you test a child with a mental handicap? You don't have to! Let him in!

Why should any child's first encounter with organised education be fraught with anxiety? Why should a child have to fear rejection? If seats are limited, let the admission policy be a lottery. Every child can understand concepts like "the biscuits are finished".

But no child should be asked to swallow the idea that she isn't good enough for a particular school. (Indeed, show me a child who isn't "good enough" for a school and I'll show you a school which should close its doors and admit that it hasn't a clue about education.)

Now bring that child with a disability into the maths class. Here it gets a little trickier. The difficulties, however, are still not with the child but with the system. The child with a disability holds up a mirror for us, showing us what we are really doing. And what are we doing?

Our classrooms are not communities of learners. They are arenas where competitors vie for prizes.

Children are not encouraged to acquire knowledge for its own sake but for points, and their classmates are not their collaborators but their rivals. It's like the classic game of tug of war.

And have you ever noticed? In a tug of war, one side wins and one side loses, but more often than not, everyone ends up falling over.

In a typical classroom, children are humiliated. Teachers turn mean, saying things to kids they wouldn't dream of saying to another adult.

Cooperation and sharing are neither taught nor valued, and in fact, they are often actively discouraged (Don't share your work, don't copy, don't talk in class!)

But when there are kids with disability there, somehow these wonderful human qualities become essential. Because disability turns the world upside down.

This is too short a space to describe all the ways an inclusive classroom works, but here are some things to consider:

**Kindness:** the simplest to describe; the hardest to practise. The Dalai Lama says kindness is his religion. Its importance cannot be overestimated. No teacher can ever be excused for being unkind to a child, yet

belittling and sarcasm are so common we hardly notice them.

Creating a classroom atmosphere of kindness and respect is a teacher's first responsibility, and it is the single most important step toward inclusion.

**Group work:** Children need to learn to work in teams. It's a critical skill for life as an adult and it makes the best use of the range of talent and skills in every class. Nothing in adult life is possible without team-work, yet we actively discourage children from practising the vital skills of consensus building, turn taking and appreciating others' contributions.

**Scoring:** Turn the concept on its head by scoring kids both individually and as a group. If an individual child scores higher than the group, she needs to be taught to think about who else she could have helped. If she scores lower, she needs to ask herself whom she could have approached for help. Let the kids decide what to do about lazy team members.

**Random buddy-system:** Pair children up so that each one has something to offer the other as well as something to learn - there is no one who doesn't have a positive contribution to make.

**Realistic expectations:** Don't expect the same things from each child. You wouldn't expect a house painter to do your electric wiring or a doctor to write your advertisements. We are all hard wired with our own individual capacities.

**Substitutes:** Everything is adaptable. Yet we behave as if the syllabus arrived in our schools straight from God and can never be tampered with. Different kids have different learning goals. So why not adjust the curriculum, the time allotted, the skill level, to suit the individual child's needs? Once we get away from the idea that learning is a competition with winners and losers, all sorts of new approaches are possible.

**Creative participation:** Remember, it's only in school that a person is expected to be good at everything! Children can take part in activities according to their abilities, not according to a pre-set notion of what they should be capable of. If it's Geography, for example, one child can name the countries on a globe while another might be able to name the cities. A third could be the one to hold the globe. All three are participating.

**Praise effort, not intelligence:** There is fascinating new research which indicates that when children are praised for being smart, they immediately begin to fear looking dumb and they stop taking risks.

In any case, intelligence is not in anyone's control - why should we be praised for it? Effort is. And effort almost always trumps intelligence.

Once we change the ground rules, once we understand that learning is cooperative and not competitive and that we are all in this together, inclusion becomes a simple task.

It can work in our schools as it works in our families - we all just learn to adapt to the special needs of each member.

### **Now back to yoga**

There are a few contra-indications to doing a headstand, as any good yoga teacher will tell you. Three that I know are: a bad heart, a detached retina and chronic constipation.

So if you have a school that is neither loving nor kind, where kids aren't happy, where competition rules, the classroom is a battlefield and learning is a struggle rather than an adventure; fix that school's heart before you subject more children to its power.

Inclusion is the hope of the future and as teachers and parents, the future is in our hands.

The author is the executive director of the [Latika Roy Foundation](http://www.latikaroy.org), a Dehra Dun based resource centre for people with special needs. [www.latikaroy.org](http://www.latikaroy.org)

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# Wheel for Independence

Cucu Saidah

Indonesia is one of the countries in the world most frequently struck by earthquakes and other natural disasters. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2004 the Tsunami hit the northern and eastern part of Sumatra. More than 100,000 people died in Indonesia, millions lost their homes and livelihoods and thousands became disabled after severe physical injuries. We also remember the earthquake in Yogyakarta and Central Java that struck two years later in 2006. A few months ago another earthquake struck parts of West Java, and in October 2009 a series of earthquakes struck Padang and the Province of West Sumatra. These disasters have affected the lives of all the victims. People have lost arms and legs, or the ability to walk or move their limbs. Some need wheelchairs in order to regain mobility for their daily activities.

Handicap International (HI) is an international non-governmental organization that works alongside people in disabling situations whatever the context, offering them assistance and supporting them in their efforts to become self-reliant. HI started their work in Indonesia in January 2005 in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province and have responded to the many emergencies since. HI has evolved from an emergency phase to a development phase. However, disaster risk reduction and preparedness remain a priority. The three year strategy (2009-2011) reflects HI's commitment to expand its work to promote inclusive education and continue its work on physical rehabilitation, disability rights, social inclusion and capacity building. Through a right-based approach, HI's objective is to build people's capacities, develop capabilities and create the access needed to improve their own lives and influence their own destinies.

## Rights of Persons with Disability

Having an appropriate wheelchair for persons with disabilities is a right. If a person with paraplegia is equipped with an appropriate wheelchair, she or he will be able to do any

kind of activity both inside or outside the house; such as going to school or work.

In fact, there are many persons with disabilities in Indonesia who do not have a wheelchair for their daily activities. No wonder these people are often left behind from everyday life and almost forgotten as members of their communities. When disasters strike, many people are injured. The authorities do not have the capacity to respond to all the needs people with disabilities have for wheelchairs. Although a lot has been done by the Government for persons with disabilities, no efforts were made regarding providing appropriate wheelchairs.

## Access to Mobility Aids Support Initiative

HI has initiated a project on manufacturing adaptive wheelchairs for people with disabilities in Indonesia. This project began in 2009 in collaboration with the Surakarta Orthopedic Hospital in Central Java. The aim of this project is to improve the access to quality assistive devices for people with disabilities in Indonesia. It includes several components such as the setting-up of an assembly workshop, the training of rehabilitation professionals to ensure a proper medical approach to mobility and the actual furnishing of adapted wheelchairs.

## Hope

On March 30, 2007, Indonesia signed the International Convention on the Right of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and is still going through the ratification process. This project supports the government to better acknowledge the rights of people with disabilities in Indonesia. The HI Programme is also working on a feasibility study in order to develop an inclusive education project Indonesia. Starting in 1998 HI is already working for promoting inclusive education in 14 countries (Nicaragua, Cuba, Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Togo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somaliland, Kenya,

Rwanda, Madagascar, Cambodia, Vietnam and Afghanistan). We will look for synergies between the two projects to support the education of children with disabilities by facilitating their mobility. Thanks to an adaptive wheelchair, a person with a disability can enjoy life, contribute as every other member of the community, work or go to school AND the dream of an inclusive society will come true!!!

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### Adapted wheelchairs means:

- Adapted to the needs of individuals. Knowing that the purpose of a mobility aid may be different from one user to the other (for sport, long trips -tricycles- mobility inside a small area, ...) the project will focus on the design of wheelchairs.
- Adapted to the capacities of individuals. Special modifications to the wheelchair will be done to adapt to the diagnosis of each individual (hemiplegic, high level of spinal cord injury, ...) and to the size of different individuals such as models for adults and children will be proposed.
- Adapted to the context of living environment of individuals, for instance, regarding the design of the house or the area. The wheelchairs will be adapted to allow and maximize each person's independence. Also, care will be taken to ensure that all the materials are available in the local area.



## Inclusion – The Only Way Forward for Achieving the EFA Goals in Pakistan

Prof. Muhammad Rafique Tahir

Pakistan is the signatory of the Conventions on The Rights Of Child 1989, Education for All (EFA) 1990, The Dakar Frame Work EFA, Millennium Development Goals 2000 to be achieved by 2015, Salamanca Statement and Frame Work for Action on Special Needs Education 1994, Islamabad Declaration on Inclusive Education 2005, and the UN Convention on the Rights Of Persons With Disabilities 2006.

The main focus of all these international conventions and declarations is to provide quality education to all children without any form of discrimination. A number of measures have been taken to achieve the EFA goals but still millions of children in Pakistan are out of school due to many reasons like poverty, gender discrimination, disabilities etc. Inclusive Education is the only way to meet these targets because it aims to provide education

to all regardless of their abilities, disabilities, health status, language, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender and socio economic background.

Pilot implementation of inclusive education in Pakistan started in 2005 with joint efforts of the Federal Directorate of Education (Ministry of Education), IDP Norway (International Development Partners), Sight Savers International (SSI) UK, as well as the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education. The salient feature of this project is that all the involved organizations are working in a collaborative manner and striving for the same project in Islamabad. These organizations are supplementing each other for achieving the set targets of the program. Federal Directorate of Education initiated Inclusive Education pilot Project in 16 schools of Islamabad Capital Territory having different backgrounds. A number of steps have been taken for effective implementation of inclusion by Federal Directorate of Education, which includes;

- Awareness about inclusive and child-friendly education for teachers and head teachers.
- Need based comprehensive teacher training programmes.
- Printing and publication of information and education materials.
- Development and publishing of DVDs for creating awareness creating.
- School mapping for identification of the children with disabilities.
- Provision of assistive devices.
- Establishment of libraries and small resource centres.
- Construction of ramps and toilets for children with disabilities.
- Organisation of a 2 days National Conference on “Right-Based Approach in Inclusive Setting”.
- Orientation on inclusive education for parents and community.



courtesy of IDP Norway / Terje Magnussønn Watterdal



The project is successfully moving towards inclusion leaving a positive impact on thousands of children as well as on their siblings, parents and teachers.

Keeping in view the importance of inclusive education, the following two significant policy decisions have been made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in recent past:

- Federal Ministry of Education has included the “inclusive education” in the National Education Policy of Pakistan
- The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has issued the directive for introduction and promotion of Inclusive Education at National level which states: *“One school at elementary level separately for boys and girls in each district will be selected by provincial education department. (...) Facilities in these schools will be provided according to the requirements of students and children with disabilities. Physical facilities in the buildings will be provided as per requirements. The major responsibilities for implementation as per directive of President will be on the part of provincial government. Federal government will provide technical assistance and guidance in this regards. Focal Persons from provinces will be nominated for coordination and implementation of this programme effectively”.*

There are certain challenges in the way of full-fledged programme for large-scale implementation of inclusive education in main stream schooling need to be addressed:

1. Attitudinal change of parents, teachers, headmasters/mistresses, professionals, politicians, services providers, and community members towards the children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education (including children with disabilities).
2. Parental awareness’ about disabilities and children’s potential.
3. Accessibility to school buildings, class rooms, ramps, stairs, toilets, play grounds and transportations.
4. Curricula, pedagogic, as well as assessment and examination system.
5. Limited financial resources.
6. Inadequate support system including trained and qualified professionals, medical and paramedical staff.
7. Continuous follow up and monitoring of the activities.

All the stakeholders must join hands, share experiences and provide supports for implementation of the project of inclusive education in letter and spirit.

**Prof. Muhammad Rafique Tahir** is the Director of Training and Programmes at the Federal Directorate of Education at the Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He can be contacted via email [rafiq\\_59@yahoo.com](mailto:rafiq_59@yahoo.com)



courtesy of IDP Norway / Terje Magnussønn Watterdal

# The Mystique of Maldives: A Study of Gender and Peace

Gouri Srivastavar

The present study has been made in the Republic of Maldives, a unique archipelagic state, endowed with 1192 tropical islands of which only 199 are inhabited. The Maldives is a Sunni Muslim nation. Dhivehi is the spoken language of the people. The Republic has a high literacy rate and a well developed unified national education system with a common national curriculum. It has also the distinction of having achieved the goal of universal primary education. The goal has now shifted to ten years universal basic education by 2010.

The present study examines the factors that have contributed to attaining the current gender status and focuses on analyzing textual materials.

## Role of Textual Material

Textual materials are popular teaching aids. Despite the technological revolution and use of computers in many schools, printed textbooks continue to play a crucial role in the teaching and learning process. The content and form of school textbooks is determined by a number of social factors, such as the socio-political order, the level of modernisation as well as the traditional culture and value system. The manner in which knowledge is constructed in each subject impacts on the attitude and values of children. It also leaves enduring images in their minds regarding their country and the world at large. In the context of gender and peace the manner in which textual materials weave the role of men and women in a society either strengthens stereotypes and biases, or promotes values of gender justice, harmony and peace.

## Positive Discrimination in Textbooks

In the Republic of Maldives textual materials include the education policy, curriculum, syllabus, and aim at strengthening of national identity and Islamic values in children. Gender and peace are woven in the textbooks and interestingly most textbooks in English, Environmental Studies and Social Studies have been authored by women. The study reveals that textbooks written in the Dhivehi

script are context specific and based on the life and experiences of children and the people of the Republic and covers the natural habitat and historical monuments. None of these textbooks depict violence in the text or illustrations. The textbooks written in English language have visuals that are mainly gender neutral representing the environment and natural surrounding of Maldives and depict boys and girls playing, studying, eating, reading and enjoying vacations.

All the textbooks analyzed use gender inclusive language and terms like you, yours, they, them, us, we, he/she, his/her, etc. Proper names are mentioned according to the context. Textbooks written in English language depict; women achievers; the changing status of women from homemakers to professionals; contribution of men and women in keeping the traditional crafts of Maldives alive; women having equal property rights; women as heads of government in known history, and; Islam stressing the acquisition of knowledge by both men and women. The textbooks also show women questioning their status and not wanting to be treated as second class citizens. In the context of Environmental Studies visuals portray boys and girls eating a healthy diet, enjoying leisure and jointly handling modern means of communication. The Social Studies textbooks mention women as legislators, historic leaders and in contemporary times, beaching a dhoni (boat). Illustrations also show both boys and girls engaged in conducting scientific experiments.

## Stereotyping in Textbooks

The analysis also reveals elements of stereotyping in all the textbooks examined. In the English textbooks the adjectives used for men are smart, active, energetic, enthusiastic, and daring. On the other hand women are described as beautiful, lovely, tall, slim, silly, lazy, reasonable, worried, adorable and elegant. Women are described as wonderful cooks in the Environmental Studies textbooks. In the Social Studies textbooks, men are associated with qualities such as famous,

successful, fine and wise. On the other hand women are linked with charitable qualities. In English textbooks sometimes the selected stories such as Robin Hood, Cinderella and Little Mermaid also reflect stereotyping. The roles mentioned in textual materials reinforce masculine and feminine traits such as household chores being women's domain and income related activities being associated with men. A similar trend of stereotyping is found in Environmental Studies and Social Studies textbooks. In Environmental Studies textbooks women are shown as teachers and nurses and men as shopkeepers, policeman and fishermen. The Social Studies textbooks depict men as doctors, workers and tourists, whereas women are shown associated with mat-making, a traditional craft of Maldives.

The focus of all the textbooks was more on peace as a value and Islamic religion as its repository. Conflict management and social tensions are mainly addressed in the context of related to the environment, while contentious social issues are only partially handled in the textbooks.

During the study, when asked, the teachers and students were of the opinion that some content areas that need to be included to strengthen the component of gender with sensitivity towards peace are:

- Inclusion of women role models.

- Continuity and change regarding the status of women.
- Gender disaggregated demographic data (educational, social and economic indicators).
- History.
- Culture and Tradition of Maldives.
- Life and Condition of the people of the Atolls.
- Conservation and preservation of nature.
- International and regional alliances in the context of learning to live together.

The readers will agree that the findings of this study show that issues related to gender and peace, are woven into textbooks in a varied manner. The analysis reveals both positive discrimination and stereotyping. We look forward to hearing from you. It will be interesting to get your views and learn about your contexts.

In the next issue we will discuss the schooling processes as revealed by the findings of this study.

This article is written by **Dr. (Ms.) Gouri Srivastava**. She is a Professor & Head of Department of Women's Studies at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, India. She can be contacted at: [gourisrivastava\\_7@rediffmail.com](mailto:gourisrivastava_7@rediffmail.com)



## Events ...

# Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments (ILFE): UNESCO Bangkok Launches New Specialised Booklet on Teaching Children with Disabilities

### Excerpt from the introduction to the booklet:

“We have designed this booklet so that readers can identify and successfully remove barriers to learning, development, and participation faced by many children with disabilities. We are not ignoring all the abilities children with disabilities have; however, our main focus within this booklet

has been to offer comprehensive information about different disabilities, as well as how parents, teachers and education planners can respond effectively to the needs these children have. After most sections, we have listed a number of practical tips on how to teach children with different disabilities in inclusive settings. Children with disabilities are not a homogeneous group, where “one solution fits all.” It is therefore important that we try out different strategies to find the ones that work for us, and for the children in our classrooms.

We all know that every child is unique and different. They have different abilities, learn in different ways, and at different paces. Inclusive, learning-friendly, and barrier-free environments should therefore be created in every school and community throughout the world so that all children will be enabled to develop to their full academic, social, emotional, and physical potentials. It is important to remember that a child’s academic potential can not be developed separately from her/his social, emotional and physical potential, as they are interdependent aspects of a child’s development.”

The ILFE toolkit including this booklet is available for download on UNESCO Bangkok’s website: <http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/032revised/>

For further information on the ILFE toolkit please contact Mr. Johan Lindeberg via email on [j.lindeberg@unescobkk.org](mailto:j.lindeberg@unescobkk.org)

Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating  
Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments  
Specialized Booklet 3

## Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings



## Announcements ...

# Regional Conference on Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Bangi Selangor, Malaysia

### Background

The effort to improve the educational quality and equity for all requires the active participation of all stakeholders in implementing inclusive education in our schools. This is in line with the proposal which was agreed in the 48<sup>th</sup> UNESCO International Conference on Education (Geneva, 25. - 28. November 2008). Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners, including the following:

- Learners with disabilities (sensory, cognitive, physical and motor)
- Learners who are gifted and talented
- Learners with autism spectrum disorders
- Learners who have problems in reading, writing and mathematics
- Learners with emotional and behavioral problems
- Learners with multiple disabilities
- Learners who lived in remote rural areas
- Learners who are at risk of school failure

The Regional Conference on Inclusion and Special Educational Needs 2009 is a platform for an in-depth and open discussion on the policies and strategies that can successfully overcome exclusion, both from education and within education, thus contributing to build more inclusive, just and equitable societies.

### Objectives

- To share and disseminate experiences and best practices in inclusion and special needs education
- To identify opportunities and challenges in the effort to improve the the quality and equity in the education of children with special needs
- To develop regional networking among educators, researchers and practioners in the effort to build inclusive learning environment

### Speakers

- Dr. Manisah Mohd. Ali, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
- Associate Professor Levan Lim, The National Institute of Education, Singapore
- Dr. Sujinda Phongaksorn, Thailand Ministry of Education
- Mr. Bukit Bin Hidup, University of Brunei Darussalam
- Associate Professor Dr Vivian Heung, Hong Kong Institute of Education
- Dr. Jina Noh, Kongju National University, South Korea
- Dr. Toshiro Ochiai, Hiroshima University, Japan
- Dr. Jill Bevan-Brown, Massey University, New Zealand
- Dr. Eden Orosa Kelemen, Philippine Women's University, Republic of the Philipines
- Dr. Anupam Ahuja, EENTE Asia
- Dr. Zaenal Alimin, University Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

For further information please visit the conference website an <http://pkukmweb.ukm.my/rcisen/> or contact Mr. Mohd Mokhtar Tahar via email [rcisen2009@gmail.com](mailto:rcisen2009@gmail.com)

or post:

RCISEN2009 Secretariat  
Faculty of Education  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
UKM, Bangi  
Selangor  
43600  
Malaysia

## Useful Publications

HIV and AIDS

**HIV Preventive Education Information Kit for School Teachers**, Bangkok: UNESCO, <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/education-units/harsh/>

**Toolkit for Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the Education Sector**, Paris: UNESCO, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001566/156673E.pdf>

**International Guidelines on Sexuality Education: An evidence informed approach to effective sex, relationships and HIV/STI education**, Paris: UNESCO, [unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001832/183281e.pdf](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001832/183281e.pdf)

Statistics

**Global Education Digest 2008 - Coparing Education Statistics Across the World**, Montreal: UNESCO Institut for Statistics, [http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2008/GED%202008\\_EN.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2008/GED%202008_EN.pdf)

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All links to the publications are available online via <http://www.idp-europe.org/eenet>. Just click the newsletter where you have found the publication and again click "Useful Publications". Should you still have challenges please contact us via [asia@eenet.org.uk](mailto:asia@eenet.org.uk).

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