



We believe that no school can be inclusive unless it is child-friendly and no school can be child-friendly unless it is inclusive

from EENET Asia Strategy

EENET asia newsletter

Enabling Education Network Asia

Fourth Issue - June 2007



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From including learners with disabilities to wider issues of social inclusion, Child Friendly Schools [CFS] and Rights-Based Approaches [RBA] to education.....

This is the 4th issues of the EENET Asia Newsletter. It has a special focus on equal rights and opportunities in, to and through education. The contributions relate to this topic from different perspectives - both theoretical and practical - from policy makers as well as programme staff and teachers. We have invited a guest editorial about rights-based education from the director of Human Rights Education Associates [HREA], while we hope you will also enjoy reading about the need for more Child Friendly Schools [reflecting and implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child] in Cambodia, education reform to ensure the right to Education for All in Balochistan, and inclusive practices [addressing social exclusion] in Vietnam.

The article on social exclusion and the Animal School Fable may help you to reflect on the different issues and remaining challenges in education throughout Asia in order to provide education for all which is relevant and empowering for different learners. Together we can do it and build more inclusive, tolerant and peaceful communities and schools.

Teacher education is more than technical training and must make future teachers aware of the broader social contexts in which they teach while strengthening their belief that they can make a difference to the learning of all their students. The article on empowering teachers highlights some important approaches.

A number of articles also reflect on important conditions for successful inclusion of learners with different impairments, ranging from accessibility of children with physical disabilities to children with visual impairment.

Afghanistan is represented with a story of success of girls demanding education in community-based initiatives, while you can read about inclusion issues in Japanese schools and about the transformation process of existing schools in Pakistan into inclusive and child-friendly school.

In the middle of the newsletter you will find a self-assessment tool which can be pulled out. It has been published in UNESCO's ILFE [Inclusive, Learning Friendly Environment] toolkit and will provide you with an idea on what your school is already doing to create an inclusive, learning-friendly environment.

The EENET team has met for the first face-to-face meeting [supported by UNESCO] at the end of May in Bangkok, where a draft EENET Asia strategy document was developed. An EENET Open Meeting was held on the last day with participation from different UN agencies and (inter)national organisations working in the field of education to discuss EENET Asia developments and to invite feedback on the draft strategy. We have now printed the draft strategy in this EENET Asia issue and would like to also invite you as readers to provide comments on this proposed strategy. Please, send your feedback to: asia@eenet.org.uk

We have again collected a great number of useful publications for you, and the editors wish you some pleasant reading hours. Hopefully, we will receive inputs from you - readers - for the next EENET Asia newsletters. We are especially interested in also reflecting the voices of children and parents, teachers, teacher educators and student-teachers who are going to be our future teachers.

Happy reading!

The Editors

Anupam Ahuja, Simon Baker, Chinara Djumagulova, Alexander Hauschild, Els Heijnen, Vivian Heung, Johan Lindeberg and Terje Magnussønn Watterdal



Picture courtesy of Simon Baker

EENET Asia Strategy

The strategy was developed by the EENET Asia Team in Bangkok from 25 May till 28 May. The meeting was supported by UNESCO Bangkok. On the last day an EENET Asia Open Meeting was organised to further discuss and invite input on the first draft of the strategy. More than 30 participants from key United Nations agencies, international and national organisations working in the field of education and child/human rights actively participated and gave their input.

We would now like to have your input on the Strategy Document. Please send us your thoughts on the Strategy Document below to asia@eenet.org.uk.

What is EENET?

It is the **Enabling Education Network**. EENET is an information sharing network focusing on communities, schools and universities that value and recognise the abilities of all children and other learners - promoting equal access to quality education for all. EENET Asia is a network of individuals and organisations with different backgrounds and from different parts of the region with a set of common values. It is facilitated by a team of volunteers with a diversity of perspectives representing inclusive and child-friendly education initiatives in different countries throughout Asia. Our goal is to involve all the countries in Asia and possibly in the Pacific in our efforts and activities. The EENET Asia office in Jakarta is currently responsible for printing the newsletter as well as reporting to donors and partners.

EENET Asia Vision and Mission Statement

Encourage and support the sharing of information, ideas and experiences among all those involved in improving the access to and

quality of education in Asia. Promote inclusive and child-friendly education systems and practices to ensure that education for all is really for all - with special focus on education initiatives targeting learners vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion in formal, alternative and indigenous education systems.

EENET Asia Values

- We adhere to the values of EENET.
- We believe that no school can be inclusive unless it is child-friendly and no school can be child-friendly unless it is inclusive.
- We believe that inclusive education is about school and community improvement.
- We believe that education is broader than schooling, recognising that learning takes place in formal and non-formal settings - among others in homes, on play grounds and in community learning centres.
- We believe that all children can learn, that all children have the right to quality education and that they should be valued and appreciated for who and what they are. It is important that assessment systems are also child-friendly and inclusive.
- We believe in the right of children to play, be happy and that this is an important and integral part of their learning process.
- We support and believe in the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC], in the Education for All [EFA] goals and the principles of the Salamanca Statement and encourage the implementation of international conventions guaranteeing the rights of girls, learners affected by and/or living with HIV, children with disabilities, children from ethnic, religious, language and social minorities and all other children vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion.



- We encourage a reflective attitude to all information and ideas.
- We recognise the value of indigenous Asian experiences and potential for mutual learning within and beyond Asia.
- We recognise that all cultures, traditions and religions have elements of inclusiveness and that these should be enhanced and built upon.

What do we do?

- We publish two issues of the EENET Asia Newsletter per year in English and in Bahasa Indonesia. Some articles have also been translated into Russian for Central Asia, Karen, Japanese and Vietnamese. We plan translation of the full newsletter into Urdu later in 2007. We hope that more languages will follow later.
- We collect articles from throughout Asia - trying to highlight initiatives and voices that are not heard or widely publicised - some of these articles are later published in the EENET Asia Newsletter or on our web page.
- In selecting articles for publication we seek a balance between initiatives in different countries, implemented by various organisations and covering a range of themes.
- We distribute the newsletters to pre- and in-service teacher education and training programmes to encourage a process of reflection among teacher students and teacher educators/trainers.
- We distribute the newsletters to teachers, parents and education officials to provide practical examples and illustrations of how inclusive and child-friendly education can be planned and implemented.
- We encourage readers to create and participate in discussions and conversations on a wide range of issues related to inclusion and child-friendly education.
- We create networks between initiatives and actors on all levels and in different countries who would otherwise have limited opportunity to share and discuss ideas - translating policies into practice and finding ways in which practices can shape policies.
- We have launched online 'Food for Thought' discussions involving individuals

from throughout Asia and beyond. Topics have included; discriminating labelling of children, use of terminology in different countries, financial reward for teachers in inclusive classrooms as well as teacher training and education.

- We hold EENET Asia Open Meetings in connection with national, regional and international conferences to promote the sharing of information, ideas and experiences between inclusive and child-friendly education initiatives and key stakeholders.

How do we work?

- Team work through e-mail communication and occasional face-to-face meetings.
- The editing of articles is the result of a collective process between the members of the editorial team.
- Team up with other initiatives to promote inclusive and child-friendly education.
- Involve resource persons outside the editorial team.

Who do we want to reach?

- Teachers, head-teachers and school administrators
- Parents
- Pupils and other learners
- Teacher students [students in teacher education and training programmes]
- Teacher educators and trainers
- Elected officials and legislators
- Education and planning officials
- School supervisors and inspectors
- Education and child/human rights activists
- United Nation organisations
- International, national and local non-governmental organisations and community based initiatives
- Media
- Corporate sector
- All others interested in education and child/human rights

Strategic Objectives

1. Enrich Current Understanding

- Facilitate the development of a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive and child-friendly education in line with a rights-based approach to education.

EENET Asia Strategy

continued ...

- Investigate existing definitions and understandings of inclusive and child-friendly education, a rights-based approach to education as well as quality education to facilitate a wider discussion on these terms in Asia.
- Each newsletter will feature a section that reflects this debate.

2. Networking

- Inspire and support partnerships and information sharing between regional and national stakeholders to promote inclusive and child-friendly education.
- Facilitate networking between different initiatives and programmes to encourage increased collaboration.
- Moderate online discussions on different topics related to inclusive and child-friendly education. Input from these discussions will be featured on the Asia section of the EENET webpage and in the EENET Asia Newsletters. These discussions will at first be in English but will later expand into other languages.
- Work with - learn from and support EENET affiliated networks in other parts of the world.

3. Documenting

- Invite stories on inclusive and child-friendly practices from children, parents, teachers and all others involved in education.
- Invite stories on innovative pre- and in-service teacher education and training programmes.
- Publish information about inclusive and child-friendly policies from throughout Asia.
- Facilitate capacity building among children, parents, teachers and others involved in education to write about their experiences. This will be done through smaller workshops as well as individual guidance and coaching.
- Ensure that all documentation should be accessible and reader friendly, keeping in mind the diversity amongst readers targeted by EENET Asia most of whom have English as their second or third language.

- Encourage the translations of all publications into different languages as English is not always widely spoken or understood.
- Invite contributors to write articles in their own languages - we will then try to facilitate a translation into English.
- Ensure that publications are available in Braille. Online versions should be compatible for screen reader software.
- Publish stories that are thought [provoking] and invite reflection. It is important that many of these stories inspire action and change of practices to make schools and communities more inclusive and child friendly.
- Collaborate with other publications related to inclusive and child-friendly education, child/human rights as well as a right-based approach to education.
- Identify and collect information about training material and research done in Asia that could be redesigned, edited and promoted for wider use.
- Promote useful free publications that may have had limited reach.
- Promote video and audio documentations.

4. Influencing

- Policies - by highlighting inclusive and child-friendly developments in schools, communities and countries throughout Asia.
- Practices in schools and communities - by highlighting socially, emotionally and academically successful as well as cost effective practices. It is important to cover education initiatives that have both short and long term impact.
- Pre- and in-service teacher education and training programmes - by informing about and discussing innovative programmes from throughout Asia
- Networking - by practising inclusive and interactive networking within EENET Asia.
- Attitudes and cultural practices - by highlighting examples of good practices as well as the consequences of a continuation of marginalisation and exclusion often found in schools and communities.

Guest Editorial: The Rights-Based Approach to Education

Felisa Tibbitts

EENET Asia has invited Felisa Tibbitts - director HREA [Human Rights Education Associates] - to write a guest editorial about rights-based approaches (RBA) to education. Inclusive education is a key aspect of a RBA, while Child Friendly Schools (CFS) actually try to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in and through education. To be able to use a RBA we need to know more about human rights and child rights, as well as the implications for educational thinking, planning, and evaluation. It forces us to ask questions such as: **What rights are violated and why? Who is not getting educated - where are they, and why are they excluded? Who should do what to protect, promote and fulfil the right to education? Whose capacity, in what, needs to be developed to ensure the right to education? Who has to do what to ensure this right and how can partnerships assist in this process?**

Legally speaking, the right to education is referenced in numerous United Nations and human rights documents including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 14) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 28 and 29). Other key declarations, general comments and documents have expanded on the right to education, including the World Declaration on Education for All (Articles I, III, IV, VI, VII), the Dakar Framework for Action, and Education for All.

In the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28 defines education as a right and Article 29 comments that education should assist the child in developing her or his "personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential." It seems indisputable that the receipt of a basic education is fundamental to the enjoyment of a range of other human rights. Each child requires a basic education in order to grow up with full development of personality, economic security, and the ability to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Another purpose of schools, according to the Convention, is to develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Certainly, to truly understand and promote human rights, one has to live them out in relation to others. This involves not only learning about human rights, but also to live in and through human rights. Thus a human rights-based approach to schooling includes the opportunity to learn about and practice human rights values and framework in the classroom.

This curricular and pedagogical framework for human rights education has, expanded over the last few years to what is now called a rights-based approach to schooling in general. The human rights-based approach aspires to include the following characteristics, taken from a framework developed by UNICEF.

- **Recognizes the rights of every child.**
- **Sees the whole child in a broad context.** The staff is concerned about what happens to children before they enter the school system (in terms of health, for example) and once they are back home.
- **Is child-centered**, meaning that there is an emphasis on the psycho-social well being of the child.
- **Is gender sensitive and girl-friendly.** Staff is focused on reducing constraints to gender equity, eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting achievement of both girls and boys.
- **Promotes quality learning outcomes.** Students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, express their opinions, and master basic skills.
- **Provides education based on the reality of children's lives.** The students have unique identities and prior experiences in the school system, their community and families, which can be taken into account by teachers in order to promote student learning and development.
- **Acts to ensure inclusion, respect and equality of opportunity for all children.** Stereotyping, exclusion and discrimination are not tolerated.
- **Promotes student rights and responsibilities within the school environment** as well as activism within their community at large.

- **Enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment and status** by ensuring that the teachers have sufficient training, recognition and compensation.
- **Is family focused.** The staff attempt to work with and strengthen families, helping children, parents and teachers to establish collaborative partnerships.

These are abstractions, but they are also an organizing framework that the educator can apply to her or his own school. These principles can also be questions that we can use in evaluating a particular practice in the school. Is our discipline policy child-centered? Does it enhance student rights and responsibilities? Are there sufficient opportunities for student participation in the school? Is this participation meaningful and student-led? I challenge the reader (and myself) to take a few moments to apply the principles of the rights-based approach to education to our own work.

Principle 1. Express linkages to rights

Questions for us:

Are our educational efforts linked expressively to human rights? Do these efforts include the full range of human rights? Do the human rights that are explored in depth have genuine relevance for needs and issues in our communities, or can these connections be made? Are we willing to move beyond our personal “zone of comfort” in linking our work to human rights values?

Principle 2. Accountability

Do those of us who are government representatives or are employed by the state see ourselves as accountable for ensuring education for human rights? In what ways are we accountable? How can children and their guardians ensure such accountability?

Principle 3. Empowerment and participation

Let us think for a moment of those we feel responsible towards in terms of guaranteeing education for human rights. Have we

incorporated the ideas of all those who are affected by our policies and activities? Who is absent during our decision-making meetings who has a stake in our conversation? If they are not here, or not involved in conversations back home, how can we bring them to the table? How can we facilitate their points of view on the when, how, who and what of education for democracy and human rights?

Principle 4. Non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups

Finally, and in relation to the last point, who are the groups that are least likely at the present time to benefit from our educational programming, and how can we help to ensure their participation? The very groups that have their human rights denied on a daily basis – the marginalized, the vulnerable, the discriminated against – are the ones who will benefit most from our educational efforts. How can we identify them, reach out to them, and create educational programs that are genuinely meaningful for them?

Human rights in schools is not merely about education in the classroom, but a way of life in the school. This approach calls us to not only look at the goals and outcomes of our work but how the work itself is organized and carried out according to human rights principles. This is not something created out of the good will of a few teachers. It is a commitment from leadership and a critical mass of teachers in the schools. There are increasing examples of school-wide approaches to human rights implementation across the world but we need to increase these numbers!

Mrs. Felisa Tibbitts is director and co-founder of Human Rights Education Associates [HREA], an international non-governmental organisation dedicated to education and learning about human rights (www.hrea.org). She can be reached via email: ftibbitts@hrea.org or post: HREA - US Office, PO Box 382396, Cambridge, MA 02238 USA



Pictures courtesy of Simon Baker

Inclusive Education in India: A Lot of Talk But Not Enough Action?

India is committed to fulfilling the goal of education for all and 'inclusive education' is now a feature of various government documents and plans. Between 35 and 80 million of India's 200 million school age children do not attend school. In addition, fewer than 5 per cent of children who have a disability are in school. Research based at University of Cambridge (UK) analyses how 'inclusive education' is understood in India and what influences decisions to include or exclude children.

Inclusive education in India is seen by many as a matter of providing education for children with disabilities. However, many more children are excluded on grounds of gender, regional or caste differences, but these are in most cases not considered for inclusive education. While it is recognized that these children need to be included, efforts to do so are not well coordinated. Programmes for pre-school children, child workers, children from particular castes and tribes and those with so-called special educational needs are all run by different government ministries.

The research was carried out in a sample of schools in Delhi recognized as having made progress towards becoming more inclusive. Although all but one of the schools in the sample are private and fee paying this does not mean that private schools are just for the elite: in Delhi and elsewhere in India there has been an enormous growth in private education due to the perceived failure of government/public education. Many of these private schools receive grants from the government.

Through interviews with teachers and head teachers and lesson observation it was found that:

- Schools believe they deserve the label 'inclusive' as they include students who otherwise would be denied admission to the mainstream and are developing a range of responses to meet their more individualized needs.
- Whilst head teachers are familiar with the term 'inclusive education' - and have picked up this term at conferences - most teachers are unfamiliar with the concept.
- Interviewees regard efforts towards inclusive education as being shaped by Western influences, rather than being based on Indian reality.

- Changes have been driven by government and parental pressure: teachers have hardly been involved and the voice of the child has been completely neglected.
- Decisions to include children were governed by issues such as the degree and nature of a disability, perceived 'IQ', and behaviour of the child.
- Teachers received little or no formal training to help them meet the needs of children with different abilities and have made only small changes to their teaching methods: they primarily depend on informal and outside support from home tutors and parents.

Most practitioners seem resigned to the continuation of a system that excludes many children and regards learners' personal inabilities and characteristics of mainstream education as the reasons why they cannot be included.

Arguing that Education For All in India will only be achieved by including all the excluded, not only those with disabilities, but also child workers, children from certain castes and tribes there is a need for:

- The development of a shared understanding of inclusive education which is communicated effectively to and within schools in order to create common goals
- More teachers to be involved in decision-making processes within schools
- Teacher training courses to respond to increased diversity in mainstream classrooms.

Providing access to education is only the first stage in overcoming exclusion from education. There needs to be a shift in perspectives and values so that diversity is appreciated and even celebrated, and teachers are given skills to overcome the cycle of failure and frustration which inevitably results from the present limited teaching practice.

Adapted from: 'We do inclusion': Practitioner perspectives in some inclusive schools in India' in 'Perspectives in Education', No 21(3), by Nidhi Singal and Martyn Rouse 2003

One by One

Jenelle Thornton

The office where I work is in the middle of a small field with a dirt floor, no electricity supply and minimal resources. As I sit at my desk, it is not unusual to be greeted by a water buffalo popping its head through the open window. All this is a far cry from Melbourne, my home city. I am a Primary School teacher from Australia, recruited for two years to work as an Education Adviser in two districts in the remote north-west of Cambodia, as a volunteer with VSO [Voluntary Service Overseas], working on a project called 'Mainstreaming Inclusive Education', which aims to improve the quality and accessibility of basic education in six rural provinces of Cambodia, paying particular attention to girls, children with disabilities and ethnic minorities.



Picture courtesy of VSO Cambodia

My initial school visits left my head whirling with a kaleidoscope of impressions and questions. Why were 'children' aged 18 in the grade three classroom? How many times had they heard the same lesson? Why were they not being promoted into the next grade? Why did some of the students have a pencil and books to write in and others had nothing? Why did the teacher continue to ask the boys in the class to answer questions from the textbook? The girls often seemed invisible as did the few children from ethnic minorities. How many children with disabilities were being kept at home due to lack of wheelchairs or crutches, or hidden away because of shame? Why was blackboard work - pages and pages of copying from the blackboard - the main learning activity

for the day? Who were these school-aged children outside the classroom hanging through the windows? Why were they not in school? It was overwhelming to say the least. 'One by one' is a Khmer saying - essentially, it means working in small, manageable steps. It's important to remember that sustainable development takes time, careful implementation and patience.

Reflecting on the past year it is impressive to see the steps that have been taken by the Khmer authorities towards achieving the project's aim. A major component has been the training of teachers in 'Child-Friendly' methodologies, including Classroom Management techniques for teachers to help them manage crowded classrooms constructively; helping schools to use their local environments to find resources to aid learning - for example, showing teachers different ways of using stones and sticks in Mathematics, or using recycled wood and the skills of local villagers to build an outdoor library accessible to all the students.

Leadership and Management training has been invaluable for the local educational leaders and School Directors. We have discussed ways of using Ministry funding to support the development of their schools, and how to build relationships with parents and the local community to promote the value of education and the importance of school attendance. 'School Mapping' is a technique being used that involves input from the community in order to map the location of all houses in the local area where school-aged children are known to live. The schools, together with the community, can seek to find ways in which they can support the families to get these children into school. Once in school, strategies can be put in place to help prevent them from dropping out again. We have learnt together how to target NGO support in order to supply wheelchairs, bicycles, hearing aids, breakfasts, eye tests or storybooks - and the skills necessary to access these resources without our support meaning that the schools can continue their strive towards inclusion also after our project ends.

Cambodia is a country whose recent history has been tragic, from the massacres of teachers and other professionals by the Khmer Rouge, through the subsequent lengthy civil war to the poverty experienced by much of the rural population. The re-development of education within Cambodia is gradual - many teachers have received little or no training during those difficult years. VSO Cambodia, with its professional volunteers working with counterparts at all levels of the system, from the Ministry to the Teacher Training Colleges to the schools, is taking steps to bridge this gap by sharing skills and changing lives - 'one by one'....

This project is funded by the Japanese Social Development Fund [through the World Bank], the European Union and VSO. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of VSO and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the World Bank or the European Union.

Ms. Jenelle Thornton is an Australian Volunteer with the VSO Programme in Cambodia. She can be reached via email: jenelle70@hotmail.com or: VSO Programme Office, PO Box 912, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

I need more Child-Friendly Schools in my District

Chrey Sam Ean

As a Director of Thmar Pouk District Office of Education, I am proud to be working in partnership with VSO Cambodia. We work hand-in-hand promoting inclusive education and child-friendly schools within our district. We have a joint action plan for school leadership and management workshops. We trained school directors and teachers on inclusive education and child-friendly methodologies.

schools' environment is clean and green. The children enjoy coming to school and participate fully in the lessons. The teachers are more enthusiastic in their work and so are the children. Things have changed remarkably within one year of the Mainstreaming Inclusive Education project.

The pilot schools are a good resource for teacher training. We do not have to travel to another province to see good teaching, which meets the needs of all our children. We now have some good examples in Thmar Pouk. We are starting to encourage children with disabilities to come to school. Now our teachers are able to help many children.

To make these changes sustainable we have a plan to monitor and evaluate the current and future progress. We have our own support groups to help each other to ensure ongoing progress and sustainability in the future. The schools will need to be monitored carefully and consistently.

As a result of a strong collaboration between VSO Cambodia and the District Office of Education, we have an increase in the number of child-friendly classrooms and schools. We have made firm commitments to have more child-friendly schools in our district. We are very pleased with what we have achieved so far.

Mr. Chrey Sam Ean, Director of Thmar Pouk District Office of Education, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia



Picture courtesy of VSO Cambodia

First, we have chosen four primary schools (two urban and two rural schools) to pilot the implementation of Inclusive Education/Child-Friendly Schooling in Thmar Pouk district. The schools were chosen due to the strong leadership, positive attitudes, commitment to learning and change. We encouraged teachers and students to develop Child-Friendly learning materials from resources available locally.

Day-by-day, we can see the changes happening in classrooms and schools. The classrooms are more attractive and lively, the

Education Sector Reform, EFA and Equal Opportunities for Quality Education in Balochistan

Munir A. Badini

The Province of Balochistan spreads over an area of 347,190 square kilometers and covers 44% of the area of Pakistan while, but has only 5% of the total population of the country. It is therefore obvious that people are scattered over a large area and live in many smaller settlements. The road network and infrastructure is not in good shape. Social indicators of the province are not encouraging.

There are not enough primary schools in Balochistan so many children do not have access to Education. The province is facing a problem of high drop-out rates. There are few schools in remote areas and the drop out rate on primary level is therefore up to 60 or 70%. Compared to the number of primary schools the number of middle schools are much less - it poses a challenging task to bridge the large gap between primary and middle schools. After passing grade 5 [end of primary level] many students do not have easy access to middle schools - therefore many children particularly girls leave education after primary level.

Just a few years ago the education of girls was prohibited and against tribal norms, but with the opening of roads and other communications links the centuries old ice had started melting. Today the people of Balochistan realize the need for education and efforts are in hand to bring the Province at par with the rest of Pakistan.

In 2001-02 the Education Sector Reform (ESR) Program was launched in Pakistan to modernize the education sector and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which includes:

- (a) Universal Primary Education by the year 2015;
- (b) Provision of infrastructure like
- (c) Upgrading of Primary Schools to Middle Level
- (d) Construction of new schools;
- (e) Provision of additional classrooms, buildings, boundary walls, toilets - almost all missing facilities - reading writing material, training of teachers, strengthening of Education Management

Information System [EMIS], access and quality issues, addressing matters of higher education and to make it more compatible with the needs of the society.

In Balochistan the Education Sector Reform Program was launched keeping in view the peculiar condition of the province where due to long distances and scattered population, the bulk of it's population had remained deprived of basic educational facilities. Especially the literacy-rate among girls remained discouragingly low. The teachers were not trained and quality had suffered badly during the last two decades. A redundant curriculum had been imposed which had failed to link education with life and its needs.



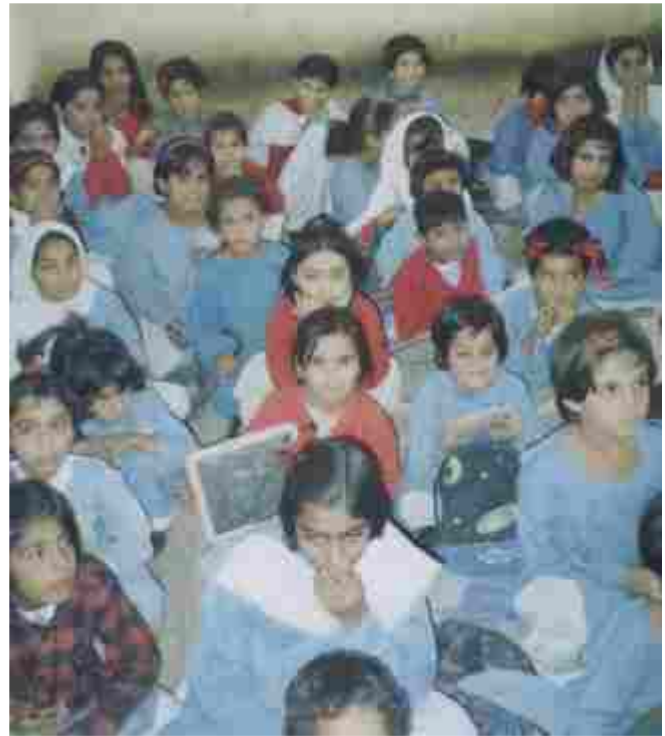
Picture courtesy of IDP Norway

Balochistan receives only 8% of the total ESR funding [because of its small population] which is not enough, considering the huge challenges faced by the education sector in the province. Since the education sector in Balochistan is facing multiple problems the Federal Government as well as donors has focused particularly on the province. Technical education was only available to a few as Balochistan had inherited an old tribal system less exposed to interventions and

modernization from the outside. The tribes scattered in the width and breadth of the province mostly lived a pastoralist and semi-pastoralist nomadic life. The Federal Government has also established TEVATA [Technical Education, Vocation and Entrepreneurship Training Authority] and providing assistance for expansion of technical education in the province in order to reduce the menace of unemployment and poverty. Beside technical education the Federal Government is also providing assistance to students for admission in quality higher secondary and tertiary educational institutes of the country while some 7 community cadet colleges are being established in the Province with the assistance of the Federal Government.

The Federal Government has now finalized a new curriculum with the consultation of the provinces and new curriculum will soon be introduced throughout the country including Balochistan. It has also launched a project to introduce formal education in Deeni Madaris [Islamic schools] from 2001-2007. This project could unfortunately not achieve its targets properly. The Federal Government is therefore planning to revise the project plan [PC1] hopefully with the proposed revision the project will achieve the desired results.

United Nation agencies particularly UNICEF, UNESCO and WFP are playing a commendable role in providing incentives and access for girls to education in the province. Under the World Food Program [WFP] oil was distributed in the girls' schools of eight focused Districts of the Province to attract the girls towards schools. USAID, CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency], JIBC [Japan Bank for International Cooperation] and



Picture courtesy of IDP Norway

ADB [Asian Development Bank] are also contributing a lot to achieve the six EFA goals. IDP Norway is also providing assistance for an innovation and research project on inclusive and child-friendly education.

These are just some of the initiatives that have been introduced through in Balochistan. Much remain to be done before all children in the province have access to quality education but progress has been made. Implementation of a sector wide approach - a comprehensive and holistic approach to education reform - is what the province needs and continue to strive for.

Mr. Munir Ahmed Badini is the Secretary of Education at the Department of Education of the Province of Balochistan. He can be reached via post: Department of Education, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan

Excerpt from the Islamabad Declaration on Inclusive Education

[<http://www.idp-europe.org/pakistan/islamabadDeclaration.pdf>]

1. Ensure that all children regardless of gender, abilities, disabilities and socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds:
 - a. are treated with dignity and respect;
 - b. have equal access to education, health services, work and all other aspects of life;
 - c. are enabled to develop their full academic, physical, emotional and social potential;
 - d. have access to learning material in appropriate media and technical devices; and
 - e. develop confidence in their own abilities, skills and future prospects.
2. Design federal and provincial policies, Plans of Action and provide sufficient resources to match with the development and comprehensive implementation of inclusive education in all public and private schools throughout Pakistan.

Physical Accessibility & Education

Kang Sophal and Sue Fox

Accessibility means that everyone has equal access to the built environment, to a range and choice of transport and to means of communication. All these aspects of accessibility should be non-discriminatory. For some schools in developing countries, having physical accessibility can mean having access to very basic toilet facilities, access to school buildings and access to water supplies (especially wells) and access to the blackboards inside the classrooms.

Handicap International (HI) working in Cambodia has been implementing an inclusive education (IE) project in 2 districts of Battambang province, which is in the north-west of the country. The project aims at enabling children and young people to have access to a quality primary school education, in particular, children with disabilities and other vulnerable children so that they enjoy the same rights as their peers, including the right to participation. The 3-year IE project currently works in 11 primary schools and 19 surrounding villages and during 2006, 181 children with disabilities (69 girls) and 648 vulnerable children (292 girls) - both in school and out of school - were identified at the project sites.

HI collaborates with many partners such as the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to train and strengthen teachers' capacities in teaching students with special needs. It facilitates referrals for children to medical services and treatment and also provides physical accessibility activities such as constructing accessible ramps leading to classrooms and inside classrooms and also leading to school toilets. These are benefiting all children in particular those with disabilities or problems of mobility - as well as other groups accessing schools and who have physical limitations (e.g. the elderly, the pregnant, the sick and parents carrying children) so that they are able to move freely. This also contributes to eliminating behavioural and environmental discrimination against students with disabilities.

Thnoeng Sokha a grade 4 pupil at Sre Andoung II Primary School, Samlot district is 16 years old and she has been paraplegic

since she was 5. She lives with her mother and 2 siblings and the family earns their living from farming and also when necessary they are farm labourers. Sokha never thought she would be able to go to school because she cannot walk on her own, her house is far from school (3km) and the condition of the road to school was very bad.



Picture courtesy of Handicap International

Through HI's intervention and support she got two wheelchairs from the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) - one is kept at her home and the other is kept at school. It is the wheelchair that has given Sokha freedom and means that she can go to school and her younger sister or friends help to push her there and back. At first she had to cross a stream that didn't have a bridge, which was made more difficult during the slippery and muddy monsoon rainy season. Now her journey to school has been made easier because the community has built a basic wooden bridge to cross that stream and the road to her school has also been repaired. She also received a bicycle through HI's social services project and that has also improved her means of transport to and from school, when there is a proficient driver!

Sokha's teachers always praise her because she is an intelligent and hardworking student. She's clever and does well at school and usually always comes first in her class - she wants to be a teacher when she grows up. Her friends love her, play games with her and they never discriminate against her. They are always willing to push her during the break time, on her way to and from school and whenever she needs to go to the toilet.

Her primary school facilities have improved recently because an accessible ramp has been added to the classrooms by HI. A new toilet block with ramp has been built with the support of the Maddox Jolie Project (MJP). Sokha is much more confident and hopes after she completes grade 6 to continue her education at lower secondary school, because now one secondary school is being built closer to her house and which should be fully accessible according to the Ministry of Education standards.

Her wishes will be achieved if the community, local authorities, NGOs and other benefactors

continue to facilitate and support her through providing materials and encouragement for her schooling and future well-being.



Picture courtesy of
Handicap International

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Study on Child Abuse: India 2007

Loveleen Kacker

The Ministry of Women and Child Development [MWCD], Government of India is happy to share the report of the National Study on Child Abuse titled "Study on Child Abuse: INDIA 2007", which was launched by the Honourable Minister of State Smt. Renuka Chowdhury this afternoon.

The aim of the study was to develop a dependable and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of child abuse, with a view to facilitate the formulation of appropriate policies and programs meant to effectively curb and control the problem of child abuse in India. The National Study on Child Abuse is one of the largest empirical in-country studies of its kind in the world. This study also complements the UN Secretary General's Global Study on Violence against Children 2006.

The initiative of the Ministry to conduct this study was supported by UNICEF and Save the Children. A Delhi based NGO, Prayas was

contracted to design and conduct the research and submit a preliminary report. After the submission of the preliminary report, the MWCD appointed a Core Committee to review the complete data, analyze the findings and produce the final report along with recommendations.

The study has provided revealing statistics on the extent and magnitude of various forms of child abuse- an area by and large unexplored. The study has also thrown up data on variations among different age groups, gender variations, state variations and variations within evidence groups. The findings will help to strengthen the understanding of all stakeholders including families, communities, civil society organizations and the state.

Major Findings:

1. Across different forms of abuse, and across different evidence groups, the younger children (5-12 years of age) have

reported higher levels of abuse than the other two age groups

2. Boys, as compared to girls, are equally at risk of abuse
3. Persons in trust and authority are major abusers
4. 70% of abused child respondents never reported the matter to anyone

Physical Abuse

1. Two out of every three children are physically abused
2. Out of 69% children physically abused in 13 sample states, 54.68% were boys
3. Over 50% of children in all the 13 sample states were being subjected to one or the other form of physical abuse
4. Out of those children physically abused in family situations, 88.6% were physically abused by parents
5. 65% of school going children reported facing corporal punishment i.e. two out of three children were victims of corporal punishment
6. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Delhi have almost consistently reported higher rates of abuse in all forms as compared to other states
7. Most children did not report the matter to anyone
8. 50.2% of children worked 7 days a week

Sexual Abuse

1. 53.22% children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse.
2. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Delhi reported the highest percentage of sexual abuse among both boys and girls.
3. 21.90% child respondents reported facing severe forms of sexual abuse and 50.76% other forms of sexual abuse.
4. Out of the child respondents, 5.69% reported being sexually assaulted.
5. Children in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi reported the highest incidence of sexual assault.
6. Children on street, children at work and children in institutional care reported the highest incidence of sexual assault.
7. 50% abuses are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility.
8. Most children did not report the matter to anyone

Emotional Abuse and Girl Child Neglect

1. Every second child reported facing emotional abuse
2. Equal percentage of both girls and boys reported facing emotional abuse
3. In 83% of the cases parents were the abusers
4. 48.4% of girls wished they were boys



Picture from the report,
courtesy of Government of India

The gravity of the situation demands that the issue of child abuse be placed on the national agenda. The Ministry on its part has taken measures such as the enabling legislation to establish the National and State Commissions for Protection of Rights of the Child, the Integrated Child Protection Scheme, the draft Offences against Children Bill etc. These are a few important steps to ensure protection of children of the country. But clearly, this will not be enough, the government, civil society and communities need to complement each other and work towards creating a protective environment for children. The momentum gained needs to enhance further discussion on the issue amongst all stakeholders and be translated into a movement to ensure protection of children of this country.

The report can be accessed from the Ministry's website
<http://www.wcd.nic.in/childabuse.pdf>

For any further queries on the study, please feel free to contact Dr. **Loveleen Kacker** through email loveleenkacker@gmail.com, phone 91-11-23387683 or post:
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Why we need HIV and AIDS Prevention Education in Lao PDR

Philany Phissamay

In Lao PDR the HIV prevalence is low with an estimated rate of 0.05-0.06% in 2000. The first HIV positive case was reported in 1990; and the first case of AIDS was in 1992. By June 2006, the cumulative [total] number of reported HIV cases was 2,003 and 688 people had died from the disease. Even though the rate is low, the official figure is most likely an underestimation, as there is limited access to testing and other health care services, inadequate training of health care providers, and reluctance of people to seek testing due to the stigma and discrimination that often follows a positive test result.

It is likely that HIV rates will increase in the future, mainly due to the high levels of poverty that exist in parts of the country. Income poverty, lack of education and high unemployment rates are often associated with high-risk behaviors and the potential spread of HIV. This is combined with limited access to effective treatment of sexually transmitted infections [STI] and poor implementation of universal screening for HIV for blood transfusions and blood products.

Economic growth may be another risk factor. Rapid socio-economic changes are occurring in the country, with large infrastructure projects, tourism and trade all increasing. Further, both internal and external migration, are on the rise.

Given the growing risks of HIV transmissions the Lao PDR government introduced HIV preventive education for the general population and for vulnerable groups using peer education and life-skills training. The Ministry of Education integrated life skills into the school and teacher training curriculum. Life skills were also integrated into population education and HIV/AIDS/STI preventive education was integrated into health promotion.

With support from UNESCO Bangkok under the OPEC Fund project, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information & Culture through the Lao National Commission for UNESCO also trained school principals and teachers at the provincial level. The aim is to ensure that

- 1) school principals and teachers will be able to transfer accurate knowledge and positive attitudes on HIV and AIDS to students;
- 2) students will see the consequences of

- unsafe sex, including the dangers of HIV and AIDS, and thus be able to solve problems related to their sexuality;
- 3) students will have positive attitudes and behaviors towards sex, enabling them to avoid unsafe sex; and
- 4) teachers can strengthen linkages between schools, communities and parents. These program has used interactive teaching methods, with games, demonstrations, videos, audio-visual materials, quizzes, posters, brochures and pamphlets.

Lessons learnt from developing an affective HIV preventive education program include:

- A multi-sectoral approach leads to an effective response to HIV and AIDS.
- Active participation of all stakeholders in schools and communities is needed to ensure effective HIV prevention.
- Continuing training for teachers is crucial and should go along with providing appropriate equipments and materials.
- Emphasis should be placed on the training of trainers, teachers and provincial and district pedagogical advisors in order to upgrade (and keep up-to-date) their general knowledge of HIV/AIDS/STI education.
- HIV/AIDS/STI education should be thoroughly reviewed and revised to ensure proportionality in the curriculum and to avoid overload and overlap in the school programme.
- Monitoring and Evaluation are crucial

If Lao PDR is to avoid the losses that its neighboring countries have experienced, from HIV and AIDS, it will have to expand its education response to the disease. With no cure for AIDS, education is the best means to ensure that people protect themselves, their families and their communities. To achieve this, further resources, extra trainings for teachers, new materials and most importantly an open attitude from all to ensure that we know how HIV is and is not transmitted.

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Inclusive School Design: Lombok, Indonesia

Ian Kaplan

Space, light, materials, and even colour affect the way we experience education. Schools can make excellent use of these elements in creating buildings and grounds which reflect the needs and desires of their students and staff, but unfortunately, schools are often designed and built without fully considering the needs of the community who use them.

Many people have experienced schools which are too hot (or too cold), dark, inaccessible, or otherwise poorly designed. One way of addressing these issues is to more actively involve the school community in designing (or re-designing) their schools.

It may seem difficult to involve teachers and students in the process of school design as they often lack experience in planning and building schools. However, there are practical ways of consulting teachers, students and other members of a school community in designing school buildings and grounds by asking what kind of school they want and also by considering their needs and the way they use existing schools. A process of inclusive school design not only gives members of a school community a feeling of pride and ownership of their school, but can also lead to the creation of school spaces which are appropriate, accessible and pleasant, enhancing learning and participation. This can provide an opportunity to better fit a school to its community, for example by incorporating elements of local culture and art into a school's buildings and grounds. Tools, such as simple open source design software, can help make this process fun and accessible.

Yusep Trimulyana is the head teacher of SLB Pembina NTB, a special school and inclusive education resource centre on the island of Lombok, Indonesia. When Yusep's school needed a new library, instead of asking the government to build it for them, Yusep believed the school could take charge of the design and create a building which was accessible and took account of the needs of both students and teachers. Yusep consulted with teachers and students to design a space which fit the needs of the school community. He used open source design software to create a basic model of the ideal building and has recently convinced the

government to provide the funding to build it. In the following interview with Ian Kaplan, Yusep explains how he worked with his school community to design and build a new library.

Yusep can you tell me a little bit about the reasons for building this new library?

We are trying to build a new library in the local style where we use a 'beruga'...a kind of traditional gazebo which is very common in Lombok. A 'beruga' provides a raised and shaded platform on which the local people like to sit and chat and do a lot of things. Many people would prefer to spend their time in the 'beruga' rather than indoors in rooms. So we thought why not? We can try to combine the modern building with a traditional building. We hope a design like this will help make it easier for children to enjoy to read and learn in the library.



Picture courtesy of Ian Kaplan

So the building is a hybrid of a new, modern building with the traditional 'beruga' style gazebo.

Yes, of course it is not the traditional 'beruga', but is a little bit modified to fit with the modern building. We can put all of the basic library equipment and supplies like bookshelves and typewriters, inside the modern part of the building, but we will be able to read or do activities both inside and also outside in the 'beruga'. We will not put many chairs in the library, but we will have carpet because many of the children, particularly the younger children, prefer reading and writing while sitting on the floor.

How did you come up with the design for this building?

Children and adults in Lombok like doing things outside more than inside. So we wanted to

make some covered space outside for activities. To make the design, I used an open source software programme by Google. The software is called Sketch Up (<http://www.sketchup.com/>) and is freely available to anyone with internet access. The software is not very difficult to use... its very practical. I discussed the design with the teachers and incorporated their ideas about the colour, the size and other things about the design. We have also consulted with some of the children about the design. We haven't asked all of the children directly, but we have tried to take account of their needs in the planning of the building. Many of our students have disabilities which make communication difficult. It wasn't possible to involve all of the children directly in the planning because of the difficulties of communication, but we have tried to understand what they need and what they do ... for example so many of them like spending time in the 'beruga', we thought 'Why don't we build a 'beruga' onto the library so they can sit outside, but also be connected to the inside space.'

We discussed the placement of the building on the school grounds. Some teachers thought it would be nice to have the building at the front of the school, because it would look nice there, but after we discussed it we decided it would be better to place the building further inside the school grounds so there would be less chance that the students would be distracted by the noisy road outside the school.

Also, most of our children have disabilities and accessibility is a big issue for them and so I consulted with the teachers who know the children best about ways to make the building accessible for the children. Although the basic plans are finished, we need to consider how to make the building even more accessible by adding a ramp for wheelchair users. Even things like the colour of the walls and flooring affect accessibility and so, for example, we have considered what colours and patterns will make the library more accessible for children with low vision.

After I made a basic plan of the building using Sketch Up, I gave the design to an architect who helped turn it into a usable building plan. The new library is now under construction.

Obviously the project will cost some money to develop the plan into an actual building. How have you managed to convince the government to fund this project?

Usually the government has a building plan for schools such as ours, but this year the government asked 'Do you want to build this yourself, or do you want the government to build it for you?' I told them we would try to design it ourselves if we can have an idea how much money we can get to design and build it. We have tried to design this as ideally as possible, but some of our plans haven't matched the funds we've been offered, so we have had to make compromises as well.

Sometimes in the past, the government has made decisions about the planning and design of school buildings which have not always been appropriate for the school, but I think they are changing for the better and not working like that anymore. They are trying to get the ideas from the school community and working in a more inclusive way.



Picture courtesy of Ian Kaplan

Would you use this way of working again to design future school buildings?

Yes, I think we will try and use this kind of working in the future.

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Eye Health Care as a Prerequisite for Successful Inclusion

All children are different, but they all have the same needs for love, care, shelter, nutrition, education and friendship. It is normal that children have different strengths and weaknesses. Accepting that children do not learn the same things, the same way, with the same results acknowledges individual needs. Most children perceived as 'different' do not need 'special' education, but more flexible and individualised education. In that regard inclusive education is about challenging discriminatory policies and practices, whether related to gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, language, religion, HIV and AIDS, social status/caste or disability. Learning environments must be welcoming for every child, while promoting respect, tolerance and acceptance of all forms of diversity. Teachers need to know their students well to help them develop their full potential. It is therefore important that every child when starting school for the first time is assessed for his or her development stage and to identify possible learning barriers - for example chronic illnesses, malnutrition, problems with hearing or vision - as early as possible. This will help teachers and schools to respond to individual (learning) needs of children.

Picture courtesy of Karin van Dijk



Why access to (eye) health care is a must for successful and more inclusive educational approaches: Examples from India and Nepal

Many parents and teachers support the inclusion of children with "special needs" in local schools, and a lot of time and effort is rightly spent on creating a good learning environment to facilitate more inclusive approaches to education. This article outlines why it is vitally important for many children with special needs first to attend healthcare services

in order to be best prepared for a successful education. This is illustrated using the case of eye care.

Every child has a right to an eye check

In 2005, I analysed data from clinical records of children with visual problems seen at 4 eye hospitals (2 in India and 2 in Nepal) over 2002 and 2003. The data concerns 729 children, with ages ranging from 4 to 15 years. I present it here to highlight the importance of children experiencing visual problems first accessing eye care before attending school.

Almost all the 729 children attended formal education. 29% were supported by itinerant and/or inclusive education programmes and 50% attended a local school without receiving any additional support, while 21% attended a special school. Around half used print and 22% Braille. Significantly, many of the children were struggling to learn: 26% (spread over all types of education) were illiterate. They could read neither Braille nor print and depended solely on listening to teachers and/or peers!

Table 1 divides the children into three groups in terms of their best distance vision. Children with mild low vision are likely to be able to use print, read a blackboard from the first row and need little extra support in a local school. Those with severe low vision might need to learn to use a magnifying device to read print and a few might need to use Braille, while most will need regular extra support from teachers and peers.

Table 1: Distance vision before and after eye examination

Distance Vision	Before eye check	After eye check
Less than 6/60 [severe]	55%	37%
6/60 to less than 6/18 [mild]	37%	50%
6/18 to 6/12 [good]	7%	13%

The eye examinations showed that the distance vision of many of the children could be improved with distance glasses. A few needed eye surgery first. Before the eye check 76% of the children did not have usable glasses; as a consequence 53% received a prescription for glasses.

Similar improvements were seen in their near vision - used for tasks such as reading and writing. Clinical interventions gave 91% of the children visual access to print. Most improvements in near vision came simply through the use of distance glasses. In addition, 25% were prescribed a magnifying device; most (92%) of these devices were available locally, costing an average of US\$5.

Many children can gain improved distance and near vision, through a clinical eye assessment, which can be done in the eye department of any hospital. A special low vision clinic can, in addition, assess the need for magnification.

Having an eye check is less than half the story

Firstly, all children should go for an eye check. Parents and schools often cite cost as a reason for not facilitating this. However, transport costs, hospital fees and the purchase of a pair of glasses compare well to the long-term costs of enlargement of print using photocopiers, of the unnecessary use of Braille, of education in a special school or unnecessary support from an itinerant teacher.

Secondly, it is vital that children obtain the recommended interventions. An advice for surgery and/or a prescription for glasses by itself does not improve vision!

A major obstacle to the provision of eye care or low vision services is a lack of cooperation between eye care and education/rehabilitation programmes. Each party believes the other will organise that children come for an eye check and ensure that the children obtain the surgery and/or glasses needed. Both sides wait for each other to act while children miss out. Experience teaches that it is best if the eye care service provider is responsible for organising access to health checks and interventions. In situations where the eye care programme is unable to organise this, education programmes can successfully take responsibility for it.

Thirdly, obtaining surgery, glasses and/or magnifying devices is still not the whole story. In addition, teachers and parents must allow and train children to use their vision as much as possible.

Successful inclusion is more likely when children have their best possible vision

Including children with low vision in a local school requires the close cooperation of all parties with eye care services. Only after eye health interventions can children enjoy their best possible vision and therefore a better educational experience. Many children, who were illiterate and/or using Braille before obtaining eye health interventions, can afterwards learn to read and write print. Children who afterwards have mild low vision can be educated with their peers in a local school, and only require an annual vision check and a minimum of extra support. Children who afterwards have normal vision do not unnecessarily occupy places in special schools or waste the limited resources available for support programmes in inclusive schools.

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Picture courtesy of Karin van Dijk

PERTUNI Low Vision Units - The Right of Children to Quality Low Vision Services

The PERTUNI [Indonesian Blind Union] Low Vision Units in Jakarta and Yogyakarta offer comprehensive services involving medical practitioners (ophthalmologists), opticians, rehabilitation and education specialists, disability activist and other community groups. The aim is to optimize visual function so that children will be capable of using their vision in

Eye Health Care as a Prerequisite for Successful Inclusion

continued ...

learning and in daily activities. The Low Vision Centres provides low vision assists in initiating school and community-based referral systems. We work with Community Health Centres as well as Eye Care Centre in private and government hospitals. Issues we have had to tackle when establishing the low vision centre at local and national level are health, education and social issues. The reason why many low vision programmes have not always run well is because we have insufficient data on children with low vision. When there are no data, there will be no action and no programmes.

Picture courtesy of PERTUNI



There are institutions in local communities willing to take initiative with provision of services and establish cooperation with local community-based organizations. However services in the past have often been less than optimal for children in terms of their medical, rehabilitative and education quality. Examples are lack of post cataract surgery, children are not provided with appropriate corrective devices or intervention therefore full utilisation and improvement of vision has not been achieved and the students' process of learning in special or regular schools is adversely affected.

To create quality services we provide, among others, early detection and intervention towards visual problems, medical assistance (assessment of the eyes and surgery if necessary), referral to ophthalmologists at hospitals and low vision service such as: clinical assessment (using optical/non optical

devices), functional assessment, training on the use of low vision devices, effective vision, and orientation and mobility as well as advice to parents, class teachers or resource teachers and therapists. Functional assessment performed by low vision instructors aims to decide what a child can and cannot do with his/her optimal vision. The result of the assessment will decide whether a child requires training on assistive devices, reading/writing in Braille or a combination of both, and if a modification of environment is needed. To reach an optimum result, regular visits to school by an instructor and/or optician is necessary to find out the real situation in the classroom. Therefore, it requires teamwork with class teachers, resource teachers and the pupil's peers. Low vision services is a continuous process, follow up services are therefore necessary, monitoring and evaluating the visual condition regular check up by ophthalmologists, regular evaluation on functional vision (when necessary) requires good scheduling and structured actions.

The aim of our services is to enable children with low vision to use their residual vision optimally and independently both in class and in daily life with their friends and class mates.

In the current era of decentralisation, local government participation in facilitating low vision service is necessary. If we look at the special schools for children with visual impairment, almost 50% children have low vision. We can also find many children with low vision in the special school for children with development impairment. So our government can no longer justify waiting before they start to deliver and support low vision services for educational and social inclusion.

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The Story of a Strong Desire for Education

Inger Guddal

In Khogyani district of Nangahar Province 4 government schools have been included in the Quality Education Program of Save the Children Sweden-Norway (SCS-N). One of these is the Bar Behar School for girls with 902 students. Khogyani is considered a conservative district situated below Spin Gar Mountain and the Tora Bora caves where heavy fighting took place at the fall of the Taliban government.

Two months later, I mentioned the situation in Bar Behar in a meeting with Bernt Aasen, the Head of UNICEF Afghanistan. He promptly sent his head of Education Department, David McLoughlim, to Jalalabad. At the meeting there we were able to present a letter from the Bar Behar elders, requesting support for the construction of a school building. They promised to provide labor and materials equal to 30 % of the cost of the building, and a signed document of the land already provided by Malek Qayom and his nephew Noorullah, who is the head of the Parent, Teachers, Students Association (PTSA)

Today the school is almost completed, with a well for safe drinking water and much needed latrines. A protection wall - funded by a private Norwegian donor - will secure for girls the possibility to continue their education until the end of grade 12 as well as the recruitment of 4 much needed female teachers.

The increase in the number of community-based and community-supported schools and the increase in enrollment - especially of girls - has been encouraging in Afghanistan. Prospects are good if girls are able to claim equal rights and their communities can provide the protective learning environment they need.

I first visited this school in early February 2006, and was welcomed by about 250 of the students, village elders and all the teachers. They had prepared a nice program for us under some trees in a field near the mosque. The field also served as the school ground for the students.

I was thrilled by the sight of all these eager students who came to the event in spite of the fact that they were in the middle of their winter holidays. And my admiration rose even more when 3 of the elder girls, after reciting a poem about the need for knowledge, claimed their right for education on equal terms as boys, in front of all the elders and officials. They also mentioned how difficult it was to study without a shelter over their head.

Later I learned that one of the elders Malik Abdul Qayom and his family on this occasion decided to donate 2 gerib = 60 square yards land so we could build a proper school for the girls.



Picture courtesy of Save the Children Sweden-Norway



Picture courtesy of Save the Children Sweden-Norway

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Social Exclusion and the Right to Quality Education - Some Critical Reflections

Ensuring quality education for all continues to be challenged by growing inequality, discrimination and exclusion in many Asian societies. Social exclusion and inclusion “describe how people’s opportunities for full and meaningful participation in the main spheres of social life may be differently facilitated or blocked. These processes, in turn, contribute to unequal prospects that people have to achieve socially and economically valued resources and capacities” [Canadian Council on Social Development].

Central to the discussion of the dynamics of social inclusion and exclusion, formal education plays a complex and sometimes contradictory role. On the one hand, public education may serve as a vehicle to overcome marginalization and enhance inclusion and other spheres of social participation. On the other, education systems often seem to strengthen of socio-economic disparities, as well as other forms of discrimination based on factors such as gender, age, health, residence and minority status.

Road-workers in Bhutan tend to come from India and often bring their families. Women - and even children - join the work and contribute to the meager family income. Most of the children are denied their right to education, though Bhutan has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] which clearly states that governments are responsible for All children, also those - legally or illegally in the country. This should include children from migrant workers.

Concern for social inclusion in education has long been associated with a traditional conception of inclusive education aimed at the mainstream participation of learners with disabilities or special educational needs. While important, this group of children only represents a small percentage of marginalized and excluded learners. Many other groups of children and young people - including girls, those who are working, who have a refugee status or are displaced, those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, those living in remote areas, those who belong to linguistic, cultural or religious minorities, and those living in situations of extreme poverty, insecurity and

of conflict - continue to be excluded from quality education.

If we move beyond seeing inclusion as a special education concern, beyond seeing those to be included as those with disabilities, then we have the potential to challenge and transform far more within our schools and society. Social inclusion focuses on All learners!!

“I am the oldest. My father is a farm labourer and my mother works in somebody else’s house. Both my parents are illiterate. I studied up to grade III but had to drop out because my parents cannot bear the expenses of school fees, school uniform and examination fees.”

Rina Aktar [13], Bangladesh

The equity gap is unacceptable and unnecessary. Socio-economic difference should never decide on the kind of education a child receives. Schools have no control on socio-economic diversity, nevertheless, schools can have a powerful impact on the educational success of all children and can greatly increase the achievement of disadvantaged or marginalized learners.

The challenge of enabling and achieving education for all is not just one of access and initial enrolment, but also of regular attendance, retention, attainment and achievement. This implies not only that disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of children and youth have equitable access to educational opportunities, but also, that equitable participation in quality education is ensured for all individual learners and groups. Moreover, a social inclusion perspective on quality education is also concerned with the need to ensure that learning opportunities contribute to effective inclusion of individuals and groups into the wider society.

Focusing on educational and social exclusion implies understanding the range of situations of exclusion that impact on the fulfillment of the right to quality education for all, identifying the barriers to participation for individuals and groups that experience discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, and sharing

experiences in creative and innovative ways of overcoming these barriers. Strategies to promote and implement social inclusion include the following:

- Change the mindset of educators and policy makers: we need to move away from seeing children as being at risk towards seeing them as being at promise. We must identify and build on cultural and personal strengths and accept and support high performance of everyone. Rather than thinking in terms of remediation or compensation, we must insist on high-quality teaching-learning practices sensitive to individual student needs and respond immediately if and when learners start to fall behind.
- Start early: all children start with enthusiasm to learn and quality early child development and pre-primary programmes have an impact on primary school success, especially of those who start disadvantaged in one or another way. Socially inclusive schools can make a substantial difference in the educational success of children placed at risk if we stop the process of falling behind before it begins.

- Holistic approach: identify non-school factors that impact whether and how successfully a child will learn in school (environmental factors; family income; home language; social status; health; nutrition). Include a family support programme to help parents, families and communities to become part of children's education.

"Poor children are recognised as an asset since their presence challenges the school community to live by value judgments based on human dignity and not on money, possessions. Poor children are welcomed into this school and treated with the same respect as is accorded to others. If mathematics can be made compulsory, so can compassion"

Principal, Loretto Day School, Sealdah,
Kolkata (India)

Adapted from UNESCO workshop paper (www.ibe.unesco.org) and Mara Sapon-Shevin "Inclusion: A Matter of Social Justice" in *Educational Leadership* 2003, Vol. 62, no. 2.

The Animal School: A Fable

George Reavis

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of a "new world" so they organized a school. They had adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum, all the animals took all the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming. In fact, better than his instructor. But he made only passing grades in flying and was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming in order to practice running. This was kept up until his webbed feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school so nobody worried about that, except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running but had a nervous breakdown because of so much makeup work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of the treetop down. He also developed a "charlie horse" from overexertion and then got a C in climbing and D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class, he beat all the others to the top of the tree but insisted on using his own way to get there. At the end of the year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well and also run, climb and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian.

The prairie dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their children to a badger and later joined the groundhogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

Does this fable have a moral?

Japanese Schools - Towards an Inclusive Debate

Yoko Isobe

A growing number of teachers and researchers believe that it is necessary to make more use of the knowledge that already exists in schools. They feel it is important to stimulate further dialogue and spread local experiences of inclusion internationally. In this article, Yoko Isobe shares some of her experience from Japanese schools. She highlights an approach that is helping teachers to work together and learn from each other, in their efforts to become more inclusive.

The Japanese Context

Japan is one of 92 governments which endorsed the 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. It is also a major international donor. Some inclusive education projects in the Asia and Pacific region are funded by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT), initiated in 2002 by the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau of Education. However, although the special education system in Japan is well developed, the issue of inclusive education in Japanese schools has not been discussed much internationally.

My fieldwork in Japanese primary schools revealed that most teachers were not aware of, or had only recently become aware of the term inclusion. In the context of Japan this is quite likely to be a matter of language. This is because few international documents are available in Japanese, and international education concepts such as inclusion are not always easy for people to understand.

The latest UNESCO report, *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all* (UNESCO, 2005) defines inclusion as “a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity” (p.12). The translation of diversity in Japanese is *tayousei*, which literally means ‘many kinds’. But this word is not commonly used in daily life or in education debates. Also, Japan is often described as a less diverse society in relation to language and ethnicity. The official language is Japanese, 89.5% of Japanese citizens describe their standard of life as middle class, and there is only a small proportion of foreign residents (non-Japanese citizens). Issues relating to foreign residents and ethnic minority groups (such as Koreans) in Japan are still largely hidden and not discussed.

Currently, about 80% of Korean pupils in Japan attend Japanese schools, like Suzuki primary school. The rest attend Korean schools. However, some who attend Japanese schools hide their ethnicity as they worry about the reaction from Japanese pupils and teachers. Ten years ago, when I was a student at a Japanese secondary school, a friend’s parents told her she was North Korean. She had not known about her ethnicity before; they had chosen not to tell her. But when she reached her 16th birthday, her parents had to register as ‘foreigners’, so they told her the truth. This illustrates the hidden nature and sensitivity of historical issues relating to ethnicity, which some believe should be addressed openly. Let me share the story of Suzuki primary school, which is working to be more open and inclusive of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Suzuki Primary School

In this primary school, ethnicity is a sensitive issue. The school has North Korean students who come from a sizeable North Korean population living in the area. To help all children from all ethnic backgrounds to feel comfortable and enjoy the school, teachers have conducted practice-based research known as ‘lesson study’ for more than 20 years.

Lesson Study

‘Lesson study’ involves the concept of teacher self-improvement, stimulated by colleagues. It has its origins in Japanese elementary education. Teams of teachers systematically and collaboratively conduct research towards certain goals. The goals and the nature of ‘lesson study’ vary according to individual schools or classrooms. In Suzuki primary school, the focus is on recognising the needs and rights of the North Korean pupils, and so ‘rights of [all] the children’ is the common objective.

In Fuji ‘lesson study’ involves a small group of colleagues who teach the same grades. They meet once a week for several hours to improve their teaching and knowledge regarding children’s rights. The process is: 1) teachers jointly plan; 2) they conduct lessons called ‘research lessons’, which are observed by other teachers and external observers; 3) all teachers gather and discuss the ‘research lesson’ to help them achieve their chosen long-term goal.

Here is an example. The 'mini-soft-volleyball' physical education lesson in Year 4 involves 6 systematic lessons across the year. Ms. Sato decided to use the third lesson as a 'research lesson', while the other teachers observed.

○ Planning Phase

Miss Sato's teacher group consisted of senior teachers of Year 4. To achieve the long-term goal of the year ('education for individual children's rights') she tried to understand the situation in her class. She felt that while some children were active and had clear opinions, others had feelings which they could not express or act upon.

To make physical education enjoyable for all of them, in the first and second of the six lessons she asked children to create their own rules to help themselves and others to enjoy playing mini-soft-volleyball. After the game she took time to reflect with her pupils about how they had played. They also discussed how they could improve the game to include somebody who is often excluded, so they could enjoy it with the others. To enhance this experience in physical education effectively, she also decided to introduce 'speech time and duty' in morning assembly to encourage pupils to listen to others and to write instead of speak

○ 'Research Lesson' Phase

The carefully prepared lesson plan was studied by all members of the group. Miss Sato then conducted her lesson in the gym while the group members and other teachers watched. The person in charge of physical education from the municipality was also invited as a consultant.

○ Discussion Phase

When the 'research lesson' was over, a discussion was held to exchange opinions about the lesson. This began with an explanation of the lesson objectives given by the teacher. Then, the observing teachers gave their opinions or asked questions in turn, commenting on the basis of their own experience.

Influence of the 'Lesson Study' concept

In this example, Year 4 pupils learned about the importance of peer power (they had created and followed their own rules for their class). They also learned about co-operative activities for responding to differences (they

had reflected on how to include previously excluded pupils). The teachers in the group, including Miss Sato, gained more positive views about the benefits of group learning, as a way of helping children to raise their own issues to be resolved by themselves.

More importantly, all teachers discussed and evaluated lessons, which enabled them to share important topics throughout the whole school. Currently, most Suzuki teachers understand each child's situation and share roles regardless of which class or grade they are assigned. The music teacher, for example, often took a Korean boy in Year 5 home after school, because she knew he experienced emotional problems and that his parents worked late.



Picture courtesy of Yoko Isobe

There are still some children who hide their real names, as these would reveal their ethnicity. However, the head teacher comments that whether children have changed their names or not, all feel comfortable and enjoy Suzuki primary school. With regard to inclusive education, Suzuki primary school is moving towards providing better environments for individual children. The effectiveness of collaboration between teachers during 'lesson study' is widely recognised as being a strong element in developing an inclusive and welcoming school culture.

Inclusion often requires radical changes of policies and practices, but existing local and low-cost resources such as 'lesson study' can also facilitate inclusive education. We still have many things to learn from existing practices already applied in our schools!

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Empowering Teachers to Advocate for Inclusion

Vandana Saxena

Sarika, a Post-Graduate in Physics, was a cheerful, bubbly and active participant in her physics pedagogy classes. She had many queries, often raised questions and freely shared her opinion on the various issues that emerged during the classroom discussions. Soon it was time for her group to go to school for their school experience programme. There they were required to teach the subject along with many other observational and analytical tasks. Just like everyone else, Sarika was nervous yet excited. She went to the school and got classes IX and XI and was to teach physics. Usually the initial days are considered to be the adjustment period and pedagogy classes are full of lively discussions. Pupil-teachers adopt various adjustment strategies, but Sarika was unexpectedly quiet, till after a few days she asked her pedagogy teacher for some time in private. It is during this meeting that she discussed the presence of two visually challenged learners in her class. She was worried. She did not have any personal experience with people with disabilities. They were never her classmate or her neighbours. The regular teachers told her not be bothered about their presence, since the learners with disability) anyway attended a special school in the evening. This appeared strange to Sarika. She was committed to creating an appropriate learning environment for all learners in her class. She worked hard all through her programme and quiet successfully created learning opportunities for all the learners in her class, without compromising quality. At the end of her teaching practice she was not only a more effective practitioner but also a better human being.

Anyone would be tempted to raise several questions from this experience. Why and how was Sarika initiated into teaching the children with special needs? Did she feel overburdened? In such a short period of school experience, 35 days spread over three months, could she actually learn and plan something useful and effective? Would she, benefit, in her future professional life? These are only some of the prime questions.

The Process of Initiation:

The reason for her initiation is actually very simple - The Presence. "Out of sight, out of mind" is an old saying which remains relevant today. The presence of learners with diverse needs in regular schools automatically influences policy, administrative and organizational decisions. Infrastructural provisions showcasing a barrier free environment at least ensures the presence of all, everywhere. Presence is a must whether through reserving seats or through building ramps/escalators and toilets. Presence alone would raise our level of comfort and take us to the threshold of celebrating diversity.

The recently renovated building of Sarika's teacher training institution is still with staircases which help one to reach the first floor of the building. It is without any ramp and not even a single toilet can accommodate a wheelchair. The newly built corridors have no indicators for visually challenged students. These simple provisions would have given her peer group an opportunity to endorse inclusion in later parts of their life when in decision making positions.

According to census 2001, approximately 3% people of the total population in India have impairments of different intensity. This implies that in a class size of 60 students there could be a maximum of two children with different impairments. Clearly inclusion would not overcrowd the classrooms with children with disability.

With various policy decisions and educational and vocational opportunities there is a rapid increase in the number of inclusive classrooms. The number is likely to increase and as we hope soon all classes would be inclusive in character. For a successful implementation of these provisions on the one hand we need to assess the readiness of teachers already in school and on the other hand there is a need to critically reflect upon the existing teacher training programmes. Suitable modifications are required at pre-service as well as in-service teacher training.

Exploring the possibilities of empowering teachers

Any pre-service teacher training programme is significantly shorter than an individual's life span. So while the role of social and community experience is extremely powerful in an individual's life, the contributions of such programmes are of critical importance towards developing an effective practitioner. Basically during the programme trainees are oriented towards classroom processes and possible ways to maximize learning through various classroom interactions. The different components of the course, conceptual knowledge building, the school –based teaching practice and various other field experiences first sensitize and then empower future teachers to create more dynamic teacher - learning environments within their respective schools.

The existing teacher training programme is for one academic year. The students are engaged in a series of activities and field exposures which enable them to plan various curricular and co-curricular experiences for their learners in school. The focus till now has been non-inclusive regular school settings with some fragmented provisions to also discuss children with special needs through a small part of the foundation course and another optional course chosen by some 5-7% of the total student group each year. In addition, teacher educators' own level of knowledge and skills in inclusive methodology are very important.

If inclusion is adopted as an institutional philosophy then even within the given time framework, teachers can be prepared for

inclusive classrooms. The foundational courses would enable these future teachers to address issues related with diversity in a classroom; the pedagogy courses would prepare them to plan inclusive classroom processes and the field experience would place them face to face with the real world. And then inclusion would become a way of living inculcating in us the peace related values, contributing to self-development, taking us to a more harmonious and diversity-responsive tomorrow. We shall all then be ready to collectively advocate for Inclusion.

Sarika made simple yet effective interventions. She learnt to use Braille printer, prepared need based assignments, used peer tutoring and made some modifications in the question paper for an end-of-term assessment. All these interventions proved to be effective for all her students including the ones with visual challenges. Yes, she did have complains but even her complains were more inclusive than those of her other classmates, She did not do more work, she actually learnt to better organize the human and material resources to optimize learning according to ability ,as per the needs of her learners.

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Picture courtesy of Simon Baker



It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no person can sincerely try to help another without helping herself/himself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Inclusive and Rights-Based Approaches to Education: an Example of Good Practice from Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam

Ta Thuy Hanh

Today is a special day for Vu and Minh. They are very happy. They are enrolled in Luong Dinh Cua Primary School in district 3, Ho Chi Minh City. This gives them the opportunity to study together with friends of their age in a big, nice school. This is very different from their earlier experiences of alternative classes occasionally organized in the shelter's corridor.

In response to the movement to support the education of children vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion in Ho Chi Minh City, Luong Dinh Cua Primary school provides equal education opportunities to a group of disadvantaged children living in the neighbourhood. The money would come from the school's fundraising activities "Helping those in need". At the suggestion of the Committee for Population, Family and Children, the school management board decided to support the education of a group of 18 working children from migrant communities. They were living in a shelter and just received some alternative schooling.

Ms. Hanh, the head-mistress was concerned about the quality of education these children received. The classes were irregular and the teachers were not trained. Most of the children were reported to be slow learners, and there were problems of misbehaviour and being absent from school, although the group was managed and attended to by 9 staff of the local Youth Union.

Ms. Hanh started to think about how to improve the education for these children. Her school is big with 2000 children another 18 children could therefore easily be included. She would love these children to have the same learning opportunities as all other children. Being born in a poor family should not be a reason for a child to be deprived of his/her chance to a quality education. She made up her mind to enrol these children in Luong Dinh Cua school. This was a real breakthrough. However, how would the other children and their families react?



Courtesy of Save the Children Sweden

Ms. Hanh made up her mind and took immediate action. She convened meetings with teachers and with the parents association to inform them about the children in the shelter and to share with them her concerns in order to get their support. At these meetings, she talked about the situation of these children, her concerns over the quality of education they were receiving and shared her thoughts. After sharing, she invited volunteers to assist and help the children.

Having done all this, Ms. Hanh invited the children to attend classes in her school for a month, then consulted with them to find out whether they wanted to continue or not.

The feedback was positive. All 18 children showed remarkable progress in their studies and they enjoyed taking part in excursions and other activities organized by the school.

Courtesy of Save the Children Sweden



"I was very worried when two girls from this group joined my class. They were both much older. They looked thin and a bit "dirty" and "wild". I wondered what would happen. Could they really be included? Would they be able to follow my teaching? Would the other pupils accept them? These were my big worries. However, when I met them, I was impressed by their pro-activeness and innocence. They greeted me with grace and told me about their experience from the previous school. It was their "innocence" that "calmed me down" and brought them close to the other children. And the other children offered to help these girls too. I was extremely happy when one of the parents asked if they could also do something to help these girls." (Teacher)

"When I left the alternative class organized by the local youth union to move to Luong Dinh Cua School, I was a worried and nervous. I am different from the other children regarding age, social background and my family background. However, my worries quickly disappeared as I was welcomed by the teachers and the classmates. Now I feel very happy to be in this big and nice school." (Vu)

"I like Minh and Vu a lot. Although they are different from us, they are our classmates anyway. They are a bit naughty and the language they use sounds a bit strange. Their clothes are not always clean. But they are nice, kind and hard-working. They always share when they get new toys so we learn and play together and we help them when they do not understand the lessons." (classmate)



Courtesy of Save the Children Sweden

"I am very happy to be admitted to this kind of school. I am very grateful to the teachers for taking me in. I am very very happy, I think I have something to tell myself." (Minh)



Courtesy of Save the Children Sweden

"At first when I heard about the school's plan to bring in children from the shelter I did not really care and I was not well aware of the impact. However, when I heard my child joyfully tell about the new classmate, who was shy, nervous but well behaved, I started to understand the impact this must have had on the disadvantaged children's psychology as well as on our children. This fosters humanity, empathy and a sharing attitude." (Parents)

This year, Ms. Hanh plans to bring 45 children under her school roof. She says: "Money is not a problem, we can raise funds. There are about 400 children like this in the whole district and if the 15 better-off schools in the district do the same, we can improve the education of all these children. What we need is official guidelines from our supervisors, and the belief that "where there is will and a heart, there is way"!

Luong Dinh Cua is one of the schools in Ho Chi Minh City participating in the Child-Friendly Learning Environment initiative.

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Education for All in an Inclusive Setting in Islamabad - Pakistan

Terje Magnussønn Watterdal and **Prof. Muhammad Rafique Tahir**

Millions of children age 7 to 15 remain out of school in Pakistan while millions more are in school without learning to their fullest potential. Therefore in an effort to reach the goal of quality Education for All in Islamabad the Federal Directorate of Education [FDE] and IDP Norway initiated an institutional co-operation programme on Education for All in an Inclusive Setting in late 2006. The programme, which is funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will continue until early 2009.

The programme will initially target ten primary schools in Islamabad. The Directorate General of Special Education [DGSE] and Sight Savers International [SSI] are already working with four of these schools - mainly related to the inclusion of children with visual impairment. This initiative will be further strengthened by participating in teacher training and re-orientation workshops and other activities organised by the Federal Directorate of Education FDE] and IDP Norway.

The programme will provide training for head-teachers and teachers on inclusive and child-friendly education - with special focus on being pro-actively inclusive seeking children who are excluded from learning and find school placement - ensuring quality learning.

The Federal Directorate of Education has already successfully implemented child-friendly school [CFS] programmes in many schools throughout Islamabad. However, these programmes have not focused enough on

being pro-actively inclusive, which is the first dimension of a child-friendly school [CFS].

The Six Dimensions of a Child-Friendly School [CFS]:

1. Pro-Actively Inclusive - Seeking out all children who are excluded from learning
2. Healthy, Safe and Protective
3. Community Participation
4. Effective and Child-Centred
5. Gender Responsive
6. Child-Friendly Systems

To make sure that more children will have access to quality education the Pakistan-Norwegian programme partners promote the idea of opening the ten pilot schools to all the children living in the neighbourhood of the schools, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, health status as well as their social, economic, cultural, religious and language backgrounds.

The purpose of the programme is not "just" to implement inclusive and child-friendly education in ten schools but also to identify opportunities for and barriers to innovation and change in schools, communities and education authorities.

The Programme was launched with a National Workshop on Education for All in an Inclusive Setting in Islamabad in February 2007.



The Honourable Ms. Anisa Zeb Tahirkheli, State Minister of Education opened the National Workshop. More than one hundred senior government officials, university lecturers, head-teachers and teachers from throughout Pakistan participated in the workshop together with representatives from UNESCO, UNICEF, Sight Savers International, Save the Children Sweden and the Pakistan Disabled foundation [PDF]. Prof. Mel Ainscow from the University of Manchester was the main facilitator during the workshop.

A few days after the inaugural workshop Brig. [R] Maqsood-ul-Hassan organised a meeting with more than hundred and twenty head-teachers and teachers from the ten pilot schools to talk about inclusive- and children-friendly education. During the workshops Mel Ainscow talked about having the “collective will to make it [inclusion] happen” which became the unofficial theme for the discussion. The participants were all in favour of inclusion but felt that they needed more training - they wanted to learn how to teach children with different abilities in an inclusive setting. They discussed in groups and made plans on how they could find children who are out of school, help children who are in school but not learning and make their schools and classrooms more inclusive and child-friendly. During a break one head teacher told us: “... I am concerned with the pressure many of my girls feel in school as the academic expectations are so high and the competition so tough ...” a teacher wrote an e-mail saying: “... I support inclusion but I am worried about disabled children being bullied by the others would they not be safer in a special school?” These are all valid concerns. The fact is though that children with disabilities are safer living at home and going to a neighbourhood school with their siblings and peers than going to a special school often far

away from home - living in a dormitory - or not going to school at all, being hidden away at home. The pressure on children to perform well in tests and exams and the merciless competition to get into the “right” schools is a major barrier to learning, development and participation for most children - creating “losers” rather than winners. We will address these concerns as well as a number of other issues that have been raised by the head-teachers and teachers in a later workshop - Training of Trainers [TOT] - scheduled for the first week of June in Islamabad.

The Government of Pakistan is keen to further improve its education system, addressing issues that keep millions of children out of school and ensure that it is able to meet the challenges of the future.

Over the next three years EENET Asia will follow the development in these ten schools. Action research done in connection with the initiatives will be shared with EENET Asia readers. We would therefore hope that we will be hearing from you in the months to come. Can we perhaps begin by asking you to share your views on how teachers can find children who are out of school as well as help children who are in school but not learning? How can teachers make their schools and classrooms more inclusive and child-friendly? In addition we would also like to include some voices expressing their fears and concerns, like the ones expressed by the teachers above.

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Braille as an Instrument of Learning

Nikhil Jain

Education is the fundamental right of all children. Gone are the days when persons with visual impairment were at the mercy of society. Begging was considered to be the only means of bread earning for them. Learning music and recitation of religious songs was seen to be their only talent. They were considered as totally dependent, a burden on the economy of their families and countries. They were thought to be incapable of learning what sighted people can do. A consequence of this was a denial of their right even to elementary education. This was fought by a few individuals who wanted to change their situation. Louis Braille of France - the inventor of Braille - was such a person.

What is Braille?

When looking at written Braille, all that is seen (or felt) is a jumble of dots! However, like other codes, Braille is based on a logical system. Raised dots represents the letters of the alphabet, punctuation and numbers. The dots are based on the 6 patterns of a dice, enabling people with visual impairment to read by touching and to write by using an embosser. Braille makes independent learning possible. It is used in most languages. It provides individual freedom and belonging to mainstream society and offers learners with visual impairment a much needed tool to excel in life.

Availability of Braille material in India:

The situation for students with visual impairment in India is still grim. The number of schools open to them is limited. Students with visual impairment in schools suffer from lack of text books in Braille. They don't have access to the same story books, novels and magazines sighted peers can read. As a consequence their intellectual development is hindered. Even the schools and institutions which have a Braille Printing Press do not provide enough Braille material. Lack of government aid and grants is responsible for the limited production of Braille material. Many of these schools have poor libraries with few books and other reading material and improper management. The situation in schools that are not well established is even worse. Children do not even get basic text books in Braille - This has a direct effect on their academic performance and future careers.

Pursuing higher education becomes even more difficult as the further division of subjects in a number of specialized branches results in greater scarcity of reading material for under graduate courses and above. In fact there is no government policy making it mandatory to produce Braille material - no funds are being allocated for this purpose. Students are therefore forced to make their notes on the basis of recorded material or asking help from their sighted friends.



Picture courtesy of Nikhil Jain

Promotion of Braille:

The Indian Government and its agencies have not done enough to promote Braille - no policy of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or any equivalent institution has been made to include Braille as a part of the curriculum (as an optional subject of learning). As a result, Braille has merely been the script for persons with visually impairments. If Braille was introduced as an optional subject matter it could help bridge the gap between sighted people and people with visual impairment. It would also help education a generation of resource persons to help producing Braille material and teach Braille in school. However, some sighted volunteers, learn Braille on their own. Schools should also make it mandatory for the parents of the visually challenged students to learn Braille.

Relevance of Braille:

With the arrival of jaws and other assistive technologies, a debate has started about the utility and relevance of Braille. Since screen readers enable us to access reading material more effectively, the relevance of Braille has started to be questioned. Do these questions hold ground? Has Braille lost its utility? An analysis of these queries pushes us to have a more profound perception of Braille. In fact Braille is a culture which enables people with

visual impairment to overcome challenges and succeed in life. Braille has for decades sown the seeds of empowerment of persons with visual impairment and it has enabled them advance in science and technology. Considering the financial position of most persons with visual impairment, acquiring personal computers with screen readers is still a distant dream. Most of community computer centers still don't have even a single computer devoted for this purpose. So even though new technology has come it is still not in easy reach of the common man. Even for those who can afford this new technology, Braille is still important for communicating with other persons or keeping a hard copy record of their documents just as it is for sighted people. Braille reduces their dependence on others for maintaining their small day to day records.

Life has a lot to offer. This is precisely what Braille teaches us. It removes dependence on others and ensures self reliance. It provides us the strength to challenge the disabled approach of society towards persons with visual impairment and strive for a new social order where rights prevail and the discrimination of persons with disabilities is eliminated.

Mr. Nikhil Jain is a lecturer in the Department of Political-Science Dyalsingh College at Delhi University. He is the president of the Sambhavana Foundation that is concerned with issues related to disabilities. He can be contacted via email on nik31@rediffmail.com or post: House No. 937, Sector 14, Faridabad. Haryana 121007 India

From the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

[<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/>]

Article 24 - Education

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life long learning directed to:
 - a. The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
 - b. The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
 - c. Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:
 - a. Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
 - b. Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;
 - c. Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.
4. [...] States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. [...]

EENET Asia Interview

with Yu Mei Yue, Xu Meizhen, Yunying Chen and Gio Xiao-Ping
by Anupam Ahuja, Els Heijnen and Terje Magnusønn Watterdal

During the South-Asia Workshop on Inclusive Education and Child-Friendly Schools in Delhi in November 2006 we had a chance to sit down with the Chinese delegation invited as observers to the event to talk about their plans to make schools in China more inclusive and child-friendly.

The Chinese Delegation comprised of Yu Mei Yue from the Department of Basic Education [Ministry of Education], Xu Meizhen and Yunying Chen from the China National Institute for Education Research and Gio Xiao-Ping from UNICEF.

What do you plan to do regarding inclusive- and child-friendly education when you go back to Beijing?

Based on information from this Workshop, a National Seminar held earlier on Inclusive Education and Child Friendly Schools [co-hosted by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF] as well as the results of a five year pilot programme we would like to draft national standards for child-friendly schools for students, age 6 to 10.

The pilot was implemented in five of the income poorest provinces of China. 5,000 head teachers and teachers received training and more than 30,000 have benefited because their schools have become more child-friendly.

How do you plan to incorporate inclusion into the child-friendly education model you have implemented so far?

We will adapt 'Embracing Diversity - UNESCO Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments' and use it together with the material we have already received from UNICEF. We will develop indicators for the following five aspects:

1. Child Development
2. Quality of Teaching
3. School Management
4. Safe and Protective Schools
5. Community Participation

We are now in the first year of the latest 5 year National Development Plan. This is the 11th Five Year Plan in the People's Republic of China. The plan now emphasises quality

education but also access to education as this remains a challenge in income poor parts of China.

How is the pilot implementation of child-friendly schools monitored?

We are using the first five dimensions of a child friendly school:

1. Proactively Inclusive - Child Seeking
2. Healthy, Safe and Protective
3. Community Participation
4. Effective and Child-Centred
5. Gender Responsive

Have the experiences with the child-friendly schools had any effect on existing teacher training and education programmes?

Until now we have focused mostly on in-service training programmes but we are starting to think about how inclusion and child-friendly education can be incorporated into pre-service teacher education. Some of the new ideas for teacher education are quality education as well as child-friendly and harmonious education - However, we are still looking for more appropriate terminologies in Chinese.

How do you tackle the challenge of new and progressive teachers being held back by their head-teachers and teacher colleagues?

We try to include these head-teachers and teachers in the in-service teacher upgrading and training programmes to make sure that they have the latest knowledge and information - we hope that by taking part in these programmes will help them to support innovation and change in their schools.

Much of our attention is on rural schools and schools in income-poor areas where change is welcomed. We also work with the province/district level Teacher Support & Learning Centres to make sure that schools are positive to change.

How do you involve parents? How do you co-ordinate the changes in school with the way children are raised at home?

We teach about child rights in schools. Many parents complained. They said that their children had changed. We learned from this

and are now working much more closely with parents, involving them as trainers, which has helped them to change their parenting practices - focusing on positive alternatives to discipline.

We face many challenges in rural areas where children often live with their grand parents while their parents are working in the cities. Some of these children have to care for their grand parents and are therefore not able to come to school.

In urban areas the challenges are different. Boys are preferred by most parents. These boys with no siblings often have two parents and four grand parents who care for them. They tend to become spoiled which creates a different set of challenges for teachers and schools.

The first dimension of a child-friendly school is pro-actively inclusive and child seeking - In addition to the children who have to care for their grand parents which children are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion in China?

Children with more severe forms of disabilities and children in remote areas are still very vulnerable to exclusion in China.

372 districts have not yet achieved 9 years compulsory education for all. The government is now investing an extra 10 billion Yuan to make sure that these districts catch up with the rest of the country.

In some remote areas they have started home based distant education programmes and residential schools are being built.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences with us.



Picture courtesy of IDP Norway

In this interview we have asked a number of questions to the Chinese Delegates to the Workshop in Delhi - some of these questions may be relevant to many of you as well. We would therefore like to hear from you - please send us your thoughts on the challenges faced by our Chinese colleagues and on some of the solutions they have found. Please send your input to: asia@eenet.org.uk.

Events

Regional Workshop on Inclusive and Child Friendly Education

New Delhi, India 21-23 November 2006

This South Asian regional workshop was co-organized by UNESCO, UNICEF and Save the Children. The purpose of the workshop was to share experiences of inclusive and child friendly education practices in the South Asia region and to develop recommendations on how to further promote more rights-based approaches to education in the region within the framework of EFA. Participants of the workshop included policy makers, practitioners, teachers, researchers as well as representatives of NGO's, INGO's, UNICEF and UNESCO.

During the workshop the following was done:

- 1) The potential of inclusive and child friendly approaches as a means to improve the overall quality of education and improve education systems to ensure education for all was discussed.
- 2) Child friendly approaches to formal and non-formal education were shared and promoted.
- 3) Recommendations were developed for how to implement inclusive national EFA plans of action building on recent regional and national initiatives.
- 4) Child friendly approaches to education in emergency situations were discussed.

After the opening session a series of plenary presentations and discussions formed the necessary background for the participants before the working sessions. During these presentations the three core topics of the workshop: early childhood care and education, teacher training and inclusive approaches to emergency and recovery situations were given particular attention. The participants developed in the working sessions recommendation for each country. The content of the plenary presentations and the recommendations developed can be found in the full workshop report.

In addition to the development of the country specific recommendations, one of the most important results of the workshop was that it

successfully helped bring together efforts on inclusion in South Asia in three important aspects:

1. Terms and ideas - Child Friendly, Child Rights, Inclusive Learning Friendly Environments, Child Friendly Schools. The terms are many and the confusion can often be a problem, especially for policy makers and practitioners. A common question has been: are these competing models or different names for the same things? The workshop sought to bring these terms together in a broad holistic definition aiming at creating more inclusive learning for all, both in classrooms and in other "learning environments". The title of the workshop reflected this, being a mixture of the UNICEF term "Child Friendly Schools (CFS)" and the UNESCO term "Inclusive Learning Friendly Environments (ILFE)".
2. Vertical cooperation - As the workshop was a collaboration between UNESCO, UNICEF and Save the Children, and including organizations such as PLAN, IDP Norway, and various INGOs and NGOs, researchers policy makers and practitioners the workshop was able to bring together people who work with inclusive education in different ways and across different levels of work and allow them to share and learn from each other.
3. Regional cooperation - Bringing together people across countries was perhaps one of the most important outcomes in it self.

The full workshop report including the recommendations that were developed and the complete information on the speakers, presentations, participants and conclusions will shortly be available at www.unescobkk.org/ie and for further information you are also welcome to contact the author of this article at k.bergsvag@gmail.com or Johan Lindeberg, UNESCO Bangkok at j.lindeberg@unescobkk.org.

Indigenous Education and Knowledge Transmission

'We need to find innovative ways on how to transmit our Indigenous Knowledge to new generations if we do not want to loose it'

This is one of the main concerns voiced by Indigenous Practitioners during a recent Regional Conference on Indigenous Education in Maehongson, Thailand. It was also one of the main challenges voiced in the various working groups; Rotational Farming, Healing and Herbal Medicine, Indigenous Seeds, facilitated by the IKAP Network (Indigenous Knowledge And People).

Picture courtesy of Marc Weitz



More than 40 Indigenous Practitioners from the 6 network countries met for the first time and shared their own Indigenous Knowledge Transmission Systems with each other. They also discussed their experiences in revitalizing the traditional institutions and finding ways how to include Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into the modern school curriculum. Many of the partnerships with the national education systems go beyond being involved in mother-tongue based bilingual education initiatives. It also includes transmission of indigenous belief systems, history, livelihood skills, arts and crafts.

UNESCO-Bangkok shared its toolkits for 'Inclusive Education' and 'Multilingual Education' and Maehongson Provincial Education Office their 'Alternative School for Disadvantaged Children' project. The participants agreed that the most common obstacles for the transmission of IK

were often that their own communities (especially young people) give less and less value to IK and that attitudes, policies and laws from the national government and ethnic majority group were not supportive.

Indigenous Education is not necessarily restricted to 'traditional' knowledge, but should also be understood as Indigenous Ways of transmitting 'new' knowledge

An important component of the conference was to visit Indigenous Education activities in local Karen and Lua communities. The field trips gave the participants the opportunity to learn other aspects from the life of local indigenous people as well as to form new alliances..

Main voices from the participants were:

- Indigenous People do not know enough about the existing government policies, laws and programs
- Low interest in IK among children and young adults
- Limited time allocation and importance of IK in the school curriculum makes teachers decide to leave out this part of the curriculum
- Lack of teachers speaking indigenous languages
- Many organizations are supportive to promote IK inside and outside of the national education systems, however best practices are almost not known to interested Indigenous People

On the last day participant's shared their needs and ideas on IK transmission systems:

- Document and share best practices in-between Indigenous People in the Region
- Handbook on Indigenous Education Revitalization for Indigenous People
- Carry out regional advocacy campaigns for Indigenous Education
- Provide funding opportunities and technical support to Indigenous People interested in launching their own initiatives
- More collaboration with the government to enforce the existing laws and policies
- Use modern IT for the promotion of IK in children and youth
- Recognize community rights to manage education

- Set up a data base and website for learning materials and information on resource persons with links to related websites
- All communities do have indigenous resource persons however they need technical support in new pedagogical methodologies
- Translate existing publications and manuals into indigenous languages
- Create opportunities like internship for learning and sharing

IKAP will organize a 5-day Regional Conference on 'Inter-Generational Transmission of Indigenous Knowledge and Skills'. More information on this event and on IKAP can be found under www.ikap-mmsea.org or by contacting secretariat@ikap-mmsea.org.



Picture courtesy of Marc Wetz

For further information contact Mr. **Marc Wetz** [marcwetz@yahoo.com]. He is working in the Region on Quality Basic Education and Child Friendly Communities and is involved in IKAP.

Moving Towards Mother Language Education for Indigenous Children in Bangladesh

21. February 2007



Picture courtesy of Save the Children Bangladesh

In Khagrachari Hill District of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in south-eastern Bangladesh, around half the population belong to various ethnic indigenous minority communities, while the rest

are Bengali. Indigenous children can be turned away from school because they do not speak Bangla, which is used as the language of instruction.

At school, being surrounded by an unfamiliar language without help to learn it means that children do not pick up the national language, and find learning anything very difficult. Many indigenous children quickly lose interest in school and leave. As a result, dropout rates in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are as high as 60 percent.

Evidence from all over the world shows that it is vital to begin education in the language children know best – their mother tongue. Save the Children is promoting multilingual (also known as mother-tongue bilingual) education in several Asian countries, including Bangladesh, India, China, Vietnam, Mongolia and Myanmar.

This approach means that children first develop a strong foundation in their mother tongue, and then move on to learn the national language while continuing to learn other subjects in their own language. This allows children to progress well through school, keep their own language and identity

alive, and gain access to the language of business and government.

Where indigenous languages are not written down, bringing them into schools often means producing new alphabets. On International Mother Language Day (21 February 2007), alphabet charts for three major language communities were launched at a workshop focusing on "Mother Language First" which was jointly organized by the Khagrachari Hill District Council, Save the Children, and local NGO Zabarang Kalyan Samity.

Picture courtesy of Save the Children Bangladesh



The workshop and launch was part of an awareness raising programme in support of education in children's mother tongue. Zabarang Kalyan Samity, with the support of Save the Children, has opened 60 pre-primary

centres in partnership with local communities in remote areas of Khagrachari district. These centres use the children's mother tongue as the language of instruction, giving indigenous children strong foundations for learning and development.

Also launched during the workshop was a book explaining how multilingual education works in practice, jointly published by the Khagrachari Hill District Council, Save the Children, and Zabarang Kalyan Samity. The book is in Bangla and English, and is available from h.pinnock@savethechildren.org.uk

International Mother Language Day is celebrated widely in Bangladesh and known as the Language Movement Day since it commemorates the 1952 protest to protect Bangla as the state language. In 1999, UNESCO recognized the Language Movement Day of Bangladesh and declared 21 February as International Mother Language Day. Today, some 188 countries observe this day.

For further information please contact Mr. **Terry Durnian**, Head of Education, Save the Children Bangladesh. Email: terry@savethechildren-bd.org or postal address: Save the Children House 9, Road 16, Gulshan 1 Dhaka 1212 - Bangladesh

Picture courtesy of Save the Children Bangladesh



EFA in an Inclusive Setting in Indonesia

EENET Asia - Indonesian Working Group

2nd May is the National Education Day in Indonesia. It is often celebrated for an entire month. A string of events and initiatives marked this year's celebration highlighting the rights of all children to quality education.

EFA Global Action Week

According to the Indonesian Constitution as well as the Education Law [2003] ALL children have right to quality education. However, today more than 4.5 million Indonesian children, age 7 to 15 remain out of school. Millions more are in school but not learning. The President has set the target of 9 year compulsory education for all by 2008.

Merely 17 months remain until the end of 2008. To discuss what needs to be done to reach the goal of 9 year compulsory education UNESCO Jakarta and IDPN Indonesia [Indonesian Foundation for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination in Education] together with government and non-government partners organized a string of events in South Sumatra, East Java and East Nusa Tenggara. The events started during the EFA [Education for All] Global Action Week in late April and they highlighted the need for concentered and practical action:

Kabupaten Musi Banyuasin [South Sumatra] Representatives from IDPN Indonesia and ICRAIS [Indonesian Child-Rights Advocacy and Inclusion Studies] met with members of the District Parliament, Planning Department, Education Authorities as well as Head-Teachers and Teachers to discuss what they can do to make sure that all children in Musi Banyuasin have access to quality education.

In addition to the goal of nine year compulsory education Musi Banyuasin has now decided to provide twelve year free education for all. They will connect education programmes with health, social and welfare services - one of these efforts are free health care for all. Musi Banyuasin still face challenges to reach their goals but with their commitment, dedication and practical approach to planning and implementation we are confident that they can make it - on time for 2008!

Kota and Kabupaten Malang [East Java] Head Teachers and Teachers in Inclusive Pilot Schools in East Java have formed their own association to promote inclusion and child-friendly education in East Java. To support their initiative UNESCO Jakarta, IDPN Indonesia and the East-Java Preparation Team for Inclusive Education [TimPOKJA JaTim] organized a workshop and round-table discussion in Malang.

The Participants made the following Recommendation to the National, Provincial and District/Municipal Government:

1. There should be more awareness campaigns on Education for All that reach all layers of society.
2. Professional educators and support staff on inclusive education should be sufficiently provided.
3. Materials and devices like speech-enabled computers, Braille printers, Sign Language resource books etc. to support children with special needs should be sufficiently provided.
4. A model for evaluation and certification that highlights the abilities of children - not their disabilities - should be developed.
5. Government officials should give more financial and technical support to inclusive schools.

This is one of the many grass root initiatives found throughout Indonesia that promotes the rights of ALL children to quality education in their home communities - Giving a voice to and support to these initiatives will help Indonesia reach the goal of Education for All.

Kota Kupang [East Nusa Tenggara]

Most children with physical / motor impairment in East Nusa Tenggara do not have access to school. In an effort to highlight the issue of segregation and discrimination in the school system UNESCO Jakarta, IDPN Indonesia and BILiC [Bandung Independent Living Centre] brought together children with and without disabilities to interact and have fun together. The purpose was to make children with disabilities visible in the community and to raise awareness on how important it is that ALL children can go to school, play and grow up together. The children painted statements and made drawings on a 15 meter long banner. The children themselves decided what to draw and write without any interference from the adults.

Through this activity they learned to work together and talk with each other - as soon they started painting it didn't seem to matter anymore if the children had disabilities or not. It was so much fun that the education officials, parents and university lecturers that had a round-table discussion on Early Intervention, Care and Education [a prerequisite for successful EFA] at the same time decided to join in at the end. The event was supported by the Provincial Education Authorities and the University of Nusa Cendana [UNDANA]. Following the activity UNDANA has committed to work with the Provincial Education Authorities to promote EFA in their study programmes for teacher education and in the community to raise awareness of EFA.

Indonesia - Towards Inclusion: Commitment of Districts and Municipalities

Five municipalities and district signed commitments to implement inclusion in their schools and communities. After signing these wide ranging commitments they were awarded with Certificates with the Distinction of 'Communities - Towards Inclusion' - The Certificates were awarded by the Ministry of National Education, the World Bank, IDP Norway and EENET Asia.

The Heads or Mayors signed the Commitments on behalf of their Districts and Municipalities. The Municipality of Cimahi, District of Jember, District of Musi Banyuasin, Municipality of Payakumbuh and Municipality of Sukabumi committed themselves to the following:

1. The diversity found in our districts/municipalities should be reflected in our schools. In the spirit of Indonesian culture and our faith ALL children regardless of their abilities, disabilities, health and HIV status as well as their social, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds will have the right to play, learn and grow up together in an inclusive and child-friendly environment;
2. No primary and lower secondary schools in our districts/municipalities will therefore have the right to refuse entry to any child living in the community surrounding the school regardless of their abilities, disabilities, health and HIV status as well as their social, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Moreover, schools will gradually provide access for all children

including wheelchair accessible classrooms and toilets, access to Sign language education for children with hearing impairment and access to books in Braille as well as assistive devices for children with visual impairment;

3. No primary or lower secondary school in our districts/municipalities will have the right to expel children from school whatever the reason may be;
4. Our districts/municipalities will proactively seek children who are out of school and those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion and make sure that these children are enrolled in school and receive the support they need to develop their full academic, social, emotional and physical potential;
5. Inclusion will be the fundamental principle that provides the basis of all district policies and regulations in our districts/municipalities;
6. Based on comprehensive data collection programmes the education, health, social welfare and public welfare sectors in our districts/municipalities will, in close collaboration, develop comprehensive early detection, assessment and intervention systems - realising that early intervention is of vital importance for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of children with disabilities as well as for many other children with special / individual learning needs, and;
7. Our districts/municipalities will develop comprehensive and systematic plans to build support systems for children with special / individual learning needs as well as for their teachers and parents in an effort to achieve quality education for all. These plans will be followed up by budget allocations and practical implementation.

These are just some of the activities that have taken place during the EFA Global Action Week and the National Education Day [Month]. Concrete and practical action must now follow so that ALL children by the end of 2008 will be able to go to school, learn and develop to the fullest of their potential regardless of their abilities, disabilities, gender, health and HIV status as well as socio-economic, ethnic, religious, cultural and language background.

EENET Asia - Indonesian Working Group can be contacted via email: eenet-asia@idp-europe.org or by post: EENET Asia, Jl. Panglima Polim X No. 8, Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta 12160, Indonesia

Readers Response



Dear Farida

I am Zahid Majeed, Lecturer Special Education in Allama Iqbal Open University, (www.aiou.edu.pk) Islamabad, Pakistan. Yesterday it was late night when I picked the EENET ASIA NEWSLETTER-Issue 2, April 2006 and read your article on above mentioned title. It inspired me as a teacher trainer and asked me to read more about this project and training.

I like the following features of the project:

1. Support from parents, other teachers, children and the community.
2. Step by Step Approach
3. Activities and interacting games
4. Teaching methods
5. Approaches for other teachers
6. Helped the Children to be self-reliant, open and active.
7. Working in pairs, small groups and clusters.

I like and agreed with your strong believe that Parents should be a Teacher's 'Right Hand' and helpers to their children. We have almost the same circumstances of inclusive education in Pakistan. I am interesting in your study and want to read more about it. May be your experience will be helpful for me and my profession to do something like you for the country. I am more interesting in the training modules, activities and games for children in the classroom and techniques to involve the parents in the classrooms. Hope we will keep in touch with each other in future too.

Thanks

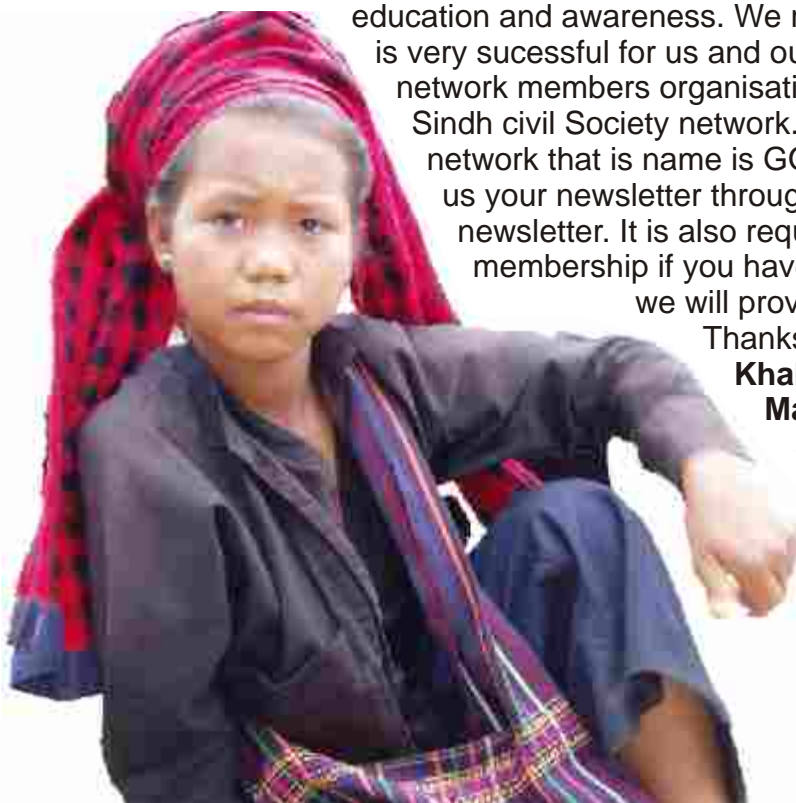
Zahid Majeed, Lecturer Special Education, Room-12, Block-5, Allama Iqbal Open University, Zip Code: 44000, Islamabad, Pakistan. Phone: +92-321 6840501, Email: zahidmajeed007@gmail.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are the member of a network that name is SINDH Rural Development Society (SRDS). This network is actively working on education, especially in rural areas it mian them only advocacy of education and awareness. We read EENET asia new letter, really that is very sucessful for us and our organisations network members. Our network members organisations are 31 and also we are the part of Sindh civil Society network. We are published newsletter from our network that is name is GOONG. So it is request that please send us your newsletter through this mail and your message for our newsletter. It is also request that we are intersedt for your net membership if you have need any information from our side we will provide to you.

Thanks

**Khalid Shafee, Chairman, SRDS Haia
Matari Sindh Pakistan, Cell no +92 300
3085788, Ph +92 2233 32146, Email:
khalidshafee@hotmail.com**



Pictures courtesy of Simon Baker

Readers Response



Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from the Sri Lanka Batticaloa YMCA.

I am the CEO of the Batticaloa YMCA. We are running a school for deaf children for the past 7 years. We are in the conflict area for the past 30 years and day to day life is very hard. The initiation of the school came due to the fact that the facilities for education to the deaf children was neglected and they did not have any facilities.

We have teachers with basic trainings to teach deaf children and we are looking for suitable trainings in the field short or diploma courses in teaching deaf children/speech & language therapy or audiology. We shall be grateful if you could let us know the places where we could secure such facilities. Your prompt reply will help the education of our deaf children. Attached is the annual report of our school's activities for the year 2005 for your kind perusal please.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

D.D.David, General Secretary-YMCA, 26/4A Boudary Road South, Batticaloa/30000, Sri Lanka, Email: battymca@sltnet.lk

Dear all in EENET Asia newsletter,

It is interesting to see and read what information and knowledge can we find inside this newsletter. Because of that, can we subscribe the EENET and receive EENET Asia Newsletter regularly? If so, what is the condition needed? Thank you for your kindly help. I am sure it will give significant contribution to Save the Children UK's programmes in Indonesia

Regards

Yoppie Christian, Communication Officer, Save the Children UK - Indonesia, Jl. Pejaten Barat no.8, Jakarta 12550 - Indonesia, Email: yoppie@savethechildren.or.id

Dear Sir/Madam,

I read with interest the article you wrote on Labels and Terminology on the Unesco website and found your explanation of the terms very interesting and helpful in my study of "Special Needs Education" as a part of the curriculum for Bachelor of Education through UNISA (South Africa.)

Thank you.

Sincerely

John Fairlamb, Email: jcfairlamb@xsinet.co.za



Useful Publications

HIV and AIDS

Good Policy and Practice in HIV & Aids And Education: Booklet 1,2 and 3, Paris: UNESCO,
Booklet 1: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001461/146121e.pdf>
Booklet 2: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001461/146122E.pdf>
Booklet 3: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001463/146308e.pdf>

Missing Mothers - Meeting the Needs of Children Affected by AIDS, London: Save the Children UK,
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/3936_mm.pdf

Future Forsaken - Abuses Against Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in India,
New York: Human Rights Watch, <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/india0704/FutureForsaken.pdf>

Girls' Education

Pursuing Gender Equality through the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and Pacific,
Manila: ADB, <http://www.unescap.org/esid/gad/Issues/MDGs/Pursuing-Gender-Equality.pdf>

Mainstreaming Gender For Better Girls' Education: Policy and Institutional Issues, Kathmandu:
UNICEF, UNGEI, http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/unicef_issue4_mainstreaming_gender.pdf

Measuring Gender Inequality in Education in South Asia, Kathmandu: UNICEF, UNGEI,
http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/unicef_issue5_measuring_gender.pdf

Girls' education: Towards a Better Future for All, London: DFID,
<http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/girls-education-progress-report.pdf>

Education for All

Every Child Needs a Teacher, Johannesburg: Global Campaign for Education,
http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/gce_EveryChildNeedsTeacher_CampaignBriefing.pdf

Integrating Gender into Education for All Fast Track Initiative Processes and National Education Plans,
Kathmandu: UNGEI, http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/ungei_FTIRReportAS0407_Final1_with_Annexes.pdf

EFA National Action Plans Review Study: Key Findings, Bangkok: UNESCO,
http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/appeal/IE/Publications_and_reports/EFA-NPA_review_study1.pdf

Child Labour

Education as an Intervention Strategy to Eliminate and Prevent Child Labour: Consolidated Good Practices,
Geneva: ILO, http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipec/prod/eng/2006_02_edu_goodpractices.pdf

Combating Child Labour in Asia and the Pacific: Progress and Challenges, Geneva: ILO,
http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipec/prod/eng/2005_combating_clasia.pdf

Addressing Child Labour in the Bangladesh Garment Industry 1995-2001, New York: UNICEF.
Geneva: ILO, http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/publ/download/2001_syn_bgmea_en.pdf

Right to Education

Compendium - South Asia: Conventions, Agreements and Laws Guaranteeing All Children Equal Right to Quality Education in an Inclusive Setting, Bangkok: UNESCO. Jakarta: IDP Norway,
<http://www.idp-europe.org/compendium/south-asia/>

Home Truths: Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka, Colombo: Save the Children in Sri Lanka,
http://www.savethechildren.lk/pdf_files/home_truths_full_report.pdf

Children's Rights: A Teacher's Guide, London: Save the Children,
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/4311_crattg.pdf

Should you have difficulties accessing the publications please contact EENET Asia via email on asia@eenet.org.uk

World Development Report 2007 - Development and the Next Generation, Washington: The World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/wdr2007>

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Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the Right to Education, <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/medu.htm>

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